

“Vanity of vanities; all is vanity. What profit hath a man of all his labour which he taketh under the sun?”—*Eccl.* 1. 2,3.

“So I returned and considered all the oppressions that are done under the sun, and behold the tears of such as were oppressed, and they had no comforter.”—*Eccl.* 4.1.

THE MEANING AND HELPLESSNESS OF
S O C I A L I S M
... AND ...
THE POWERFUL AND PRECIOUS CONTRAST
... OF ...
T H E G O S P E L .

An Address (Revised)
At The Examination Hall,
Water Lane School, Stratford.
Nov. 24th, 1919.
By PERCY W. HEWARD.

“The Gospel... is the power of God unto Salvation to every one that believeth... for therein is the righteousness of God revealed.”

—*Rom.* 1. 16,17.

“Christ, the Power of God, and the Wisdom of God.”—

1 *Cor.* 1. 24.

“In Thy presence is fulness of joy, at Thy right hand there are pleasures for evermore.” *Ps.* 16. 11.

THE REAL MEANING AND HELPLESSNESS OF SOCIALISM.

“ VANITY OF VANITIES,” “ UNDER THE SUN,” & The Powerful and Precious Contrast OF THE GOSPEL.

Passages read—

Prov. 1. 20-33 ; Eccl. 3. 16-18 ; 4. 1 ; 2. 10-11 ; Psa. 16. 5-11 ;
1 Thess. 1. 1-10.

OUR subject, dear friends, at least in the earlier portion of its title* seems so disappointing. It has a ring of sadness, but the sadness is a background. There is a gladness beyond, a gladness in God's real provision to meet a real need. The world IS in need. Men may hide their eyes from this, but they are not manifesting wisdom in so doing. The condition of earth must be viewed with sadness by any who really think. The Book of Scripture from which some verses have been read, Ecclesiastes, is not always pondered as it should be. Here is a very wonderful book, setting forth simply, yet plainly, the emptiness of the best which earth can show and give, and the unsatisfying character of the highest heights of wealth, of knowledge and of power, without the blessings which are in the higher than the highest sphere, the blessings that are heavenly, true and lasting beyond measure. Ecclesiastes presents plain evidence of the world's ruin, and if a man can read the book through and still feel merry, and still have a rejoicing of a natural and ordinary character, I question gravely his soundness of mind, or if that seems to be a point we should not question, I must question his sympathy and kindliness of character. The issue must be one or the other. The man who can be merry in the light of existing affairs, the man who can be merry in view of the circumstances of thousands of years of a ruined earth, that man is either mad or

* Copies of the announcements of Bible addresses to God's glory, will be gladly sent, the Lord enabling.

cruel, he is either insane or careless. The condition of others is too sad to allow of another alternative. The world is too sad for earthly merriness. And so Ecclesiastes has a ring of pessimism throughout it. Solomon tells us how he had everything he desired, and then he examined the whole, and he found that all the earthly advantages SUMMED UP were but vanity and a striving after wind, for there was no solidity in them, they had no abiding character, there was nothing to satisfy *the heart*. He did not know what would be after him. His labour had been laborious, but he tells us that to a man who had not laboured therein the work must be left. "This also is vanity and a great evil." And then he puts it like this:—"In much wisdom is much grief, and he that increaseth knowledge increaseth sorrow," or, to take another aspect, in another passage:—"When goods increase, they are increased that eat them, and what good is there to the owners thereof, saving the beholding thereof with their eyes?" Or ponder another passage, "A man to whom God has given riches, wealth and honour, so that he wanteth nothing for his soul of all that he desireth, yet God giveth him not power to eat thereof, but a stranger eateth it. This is vanity, and it is an evil disease." Or take yet another verse, "The eye is not satisfied (not filled) with seeing, nor the ear filled with hearing." Or again, "If a man ... live many years, so that the days of his years be many, and his soul be not filled with good,"—ah, how empty it all is! "He cometh in with vanity and departeth in darkness, and his name shall be covered with darkness," yea, though he live a thousand years twice told, (first beyond Methuselah, and then a further Methuselah's life) there is nothing to satisfy him. Yet more, "All the labour of man is for his mouth, and yet the appetite is not filled." Again and again we have the condition of man brought before us, and he vainly and frivolously goes on his way "because sentence against an evil work is not executed speedily," and so he is unmindful of the AFTERWARDS. "Yet it shall NOT be well with the wicked, neither shall he prolong his days." Another passage may bear its painful testimony:—"This is an evil among all things that are done under the sun, that there is one event unto all; yea, also the heart of the sons of men is full of evil, and madness is in their heart while they live, and after that they go to the dead." These few selected verses will explain in measure, the standpoint of the book. It marks out the absolute lack of satisfaction in the things of earth. The heading over it sounds forth very definitely with a unique repetition, "Vanity of vanities, saith the Preacher, Vanity of vanities, all is vanity. What profit hath a man of all *his*

labour which he taketh under the sun ? ” One generation succeeds another generation, and yet there is nothing permanent, nothing to meet the deep quest of needy man ! Earth is full of confusion, full of disorder. Some of the psalmists entered into what this meant, and they give us the record of their feelings. Possibly the best known psalm of this character is the 73rd. Asaph there tells us of an attempt to take in hand the problems of earth, and he puts it thus, “ I was envious at the foolish when I saw the prosperity of the wicked, for there are no bands in their death, but their strength is firm. They are not in trouble as other men, neither are they plagued like other men ” (Psalm 73. 3-16 read). There we have the break in the psalm. After that verse (16) the psalmist tells us how he went into the sanctuary, and received a different view of everything around. But, by inspiration, he records in the earlier verses the miserable condition which he reached when he tried to deal with earth’s problems, and tried to explain earth’s confusion, and left God out, and left God’s wisdom on one side. There are so *many* problems in earth, there is *so much* confusion in this world. Surely every man walketh in a vain show, surely they are disquieted in vain, he heapeth up riches and knoweth not who shall gather them. With such words another psalm sets forth the terrible condition of affairs. Nor do we find any verse of Scripture which gives to us any hope for man in man. Man has tried year after year, and century after century, to scheme out his own way. People will sometimes tell us that there is confusion around, and they add “ After two thousand years of Christianity.” We would answer “ Nay ; after six thousand years of MAN.” It is not a question of two thousand years of Christianity, but two thousand years, added to four thousand years previously, 6,000 years of MAN. Man is the same, whether he takes the garb of heathenism or Christianity. Man is a ruined wreck throughout, and as we look around on the history of the present time, yea, of the few years in which we ourselves have lived, we see a ghastly climax of civilisation. Everything is plainly a ruin. Oh, dear friends, it is easy to hide our eyes from the real state of affairs, but is it prudent so to do ? The man who seeks to drown his cares with a temporary drunkenness has many a parallel among those who are intoxicated with temporary advantages, and temporary riches, and temporary pleasures, and do not take a *real* view of the *real* state of things in a ruined world. You may say, Look at this advantage, look at some other form of prosperity, look at the monetary gain, and so forth. But is it well ? Let the last few years answer. Civilisation lies

rent and torn through international strife. Thousands upon thousands, thousands upon thousands are lying dead. Is THAT the goal of civilisation? Is THAT the climax of man's prudence and skill and organisation? Shall man's wisdom be spent in ingenuity of DEATH? Is that the aim in view? Shall man still further progress, whether it be in knowledge or in skill, only to have a more terrible display of his greatness in that which sets forth the reverse of peace and concord and harmony and joy and rest? Torn hearts, anxious hearts, hearts of malice,—such are the products of thousands of years of *man*. And shall this be the continual experience of centuries? Shall there be, after a temporary lull, a further unveiling of what man IS? Man THINKS he is becoming greater, man THINKS he is progressing. But how does he use his "progress"? If we turn aside from all the sad confusion which has rent nations, and come within the scope of one nation, is any individual nation illustrating the beautiful peace of restful concord? Do we find the hearts of men united to one another with a deep affection, or is there intrigue of class against class, of leader against leader, of man against man? Is there a rejoicing which is peaceful, or is there a mad mirth one day, and a mad discontent the next? Those who look beneath the changing surface realise that there is in the heart of men of all nations a seething discontent. Centuries of boasted progress, human advancement on lines of man's skill,—as men say,—these have not brought rest to the heart. "The eye is not satisfied with seeing, nor the ear filled with hearing." As man goes forward in certain parts of his knowledge, his cravings increase in quicker PROPORTION, and he remains thereby more dissatisfied. Ah, dear friends, we cannot look around and feel there is any real solid comfort in the state of affairs. Who can be restful and happy, if his rest and happiness depend on man and on man's day? Did we not rightly draw the inference at the beginning of our subject that the man who can be merry is either mad or heartless,—one of the two? The man who can enjoy himself and settle down, and feel there is comfort in a ruined world with all its death and anguish and heartburnings, that man has either an insanity, or is carried away with a temporary drunkenness of pleasure, or he is *cruelly* self-centred and selfish. Earth is too sad for natural merriness. The world is too ruined for worldly delight. Various methods have been attempted, those methods have plainly failed. History records the rise of empire after empire, and the different schemes and plans of man, and afterwards the waning of *this* kingdom, and the loss of *that* system, and the frustrating of a third

purpose, and so forth. But though centuries have seen different methods, they have not found a real cure for earth's ruin. And so it is that many turn aside and hope to discover that which will be a cure, that which will bring health to a disordered world, and not a few light upon that which is untried, persuading themselves and feeling sure that it will satisfy. From the outset it appears attractive. Most untried methods seem to be better than they really are. All can SEE the failure of other attempts; and thus not a few would turn aside from the past, with hopeful relief, and seek to introduce some form of that which they characterise as Socialism. But, dear friends, there are those of us who believe that we have solid grounds for asserting that the necessary failure of the present systems would only be followed by the necessary failure of Socialism, and of any and every other scheme which man's ingenuity can devise and apply.

The growth of different forms of Socialism is not strange to a believer since it is prophesied. The second chapter of Daniel implies it, and there are plain evidences that God foreknew all the varied events which are passing in this world's strange history. It is so easy for a man, disappointed with present day circumstances to turn to an untried arrangement, and hope this will be infinitely better. But is it not vain to try the untried in practice, until it has been first *tested* aright, as to its true and intrinsic value? There are those of us who rejoice to believe and know that testing requires a standard, and that God has given a standard which sets forth that which is real, and quickly detects that which is faulty. In speaking of Socialism I do not wish to refer to its baser forms. I want to make myself perfectly clear on this point. I do not know the condition of the hearts and minds of those who are present. Doubtless in some cases it may be there are those among us who are disappointed with social conditions, and have great hopes as to Socialism. It may be others present have in some cases applied it on a small scale, and found it wanting. It may be there are those who have examined it in the light of Scripture and been brought to realise that it does not go deep enough, nor high enough, nor far enough. But there is no gain, there is no wisdom in simply speaking of the baser forms of any "ism" of man. It must be sorrowfully acknowledged that *everything* has its baser forms, sad illustration of the tendency of the human heart, a tendency that often uses attractive words to be a cloak of selfishness. There is a nominal Christianity which is unchristian, and there is much nominal Socialism which is MANIFESTLY selfishness. But I am not re-

ferring to such intrigues. I want us to realise that if Socialism could be brought to its very highest ideals, it would be an utterly miserable failure because its highest ideals are an attempt to create that which is not existing, through lacking the POWER so to do,—and all the while ignoring that living power in the Gospel of the Grace of God which CAN deal with the condition of an individual, and which tells of Him Who will yet deal with the condition of a ruined world. For some of us feel very strongly concerning this, namely, that every “ism” of man involves a setting aside of God’s tested provision. We are not dealing with that which is untried when we are speaking of the Gospel of the Grace of God, but that which has been proved the reverse of wanting, times without number, in the experiences of those who can permanently rejoice in so great a salvation. But if Socialism be viewed in its highest form, as men would characterise it, it does not go back far enough, it is not righteous in that it does not deal with the *past* sin. Any scheme of improvement which does not provide a righteous dealing with iniquity in the PAST is itself unrighteous, it is glossing over. But who is the man that can dare to come forward and say, “If there is to be a meting out of punishment I shall escape!” We must all acknowledge that, judged only by our own faltering standards, we have fallen very far short. Every man is conscious of a selfishness within himself, yet there is no provision in any “ism” of man to deal *righteously* with the past lives of those who are brought together in a new scheme whereby some wish and expect to uplift the world. It is only the Gospel of the Grace of God which deals with the *past* sin in a satisfactory way: it is only the Gospel of the Grace of God which looks back *far* enough, and which does not ignore a single evil of a single man.

I go further. Socialism does not go DEEP enough in the PRESENT. Indeed, how can it? Every scheme of man attempting to organise man to secure a right to live with any measure of nominal earthly comfort, is attempting the impossible while there exists a SELFISH HEART. You can deal with circumstances, but you well know if you have any acquaintance with the world, that circumstances do not change the condition and wishes of the heart. Yea, if there could be an improved world of man’s arrangement, would it not only provide a vaster scope for man’s discontent? Oftentimes earthly advantages, and earthly levelling, only awaken a sense of desire and craving all the more, and the gratification of one wish causes the birth of two wishes, and so the man remains still helpless, and still disappointed. Indeed Socialism is powerless

on this account. It does not deal with the heart. You cannot make man's heart right by an 'Act of Parliament, nor can you make man's heart right by circumstances, you cannot make man's heart right by theories. Various arrangements have been tried, all along the ages in varied spheres, yet there remains sufficient proof that the human heart is persistent in its undefinable selfishness, so that in the most encouraging surroundings there will be those spring forth who illustrate a deep and deeply-rooted self-seeking.

I go a step further. All human attempts *must* falter because man cannot see deeply enough. There is one Scripture which very remarkably refers to a judge as "unrighteous." This seems a strange statement, but other Scriptures give the key. No man can detect all the circumstances. You apportion punishment according to acts. Why should acts of the hand be punished, and acts of the mind not be punished? The mind may go yet further than the sudden impulse of the hand, yet no judge can penetrate to the mind. Again, every man is affected by his knowledge and his surroundings. A righteous judge must have a perfect knowledge of all surroundings and all past history, and the proportion of defiance wrapped up in every action, otherwise there cannot be a principle of intrinsic righteousness. Here every system of man must falter, and there is only one tribunal which can be perfect in its righteousness. Every system totters to the ground in view of this. When God appointed a kingdom, the kingdom of Israel, He arranged for the judges to have a Court of Appeal,—that Court of Appeal was His own Court, and He was pleased to rectify their mistakes when they were conscious of His direction and His control. But by that very arrangement God marked out the essential faultiness of every thing of man. I recognise, and recognise thankfully, the providence of God in all the varied circumstances of government. God's hand all along the ages has prevented the outburst of human wickedness which would have made earth unendurable. God has controlled much through forms of government, however varied those forms have been, and His people giving thanks unto Him for kings and for all that are in authority (1 Tim. 2. 1,2), feel grateful that One Higher than the highest, not only has His way among the armies of heaven, but also is over the inhabitants of earth, who are subject to a "Hitherto shalt thou come, but no further, and here shall thy proud waves be stayed." But though God has been pleased, in His providence, to hold men within limits, He has also shown the faultiness of man, and the passage we have just noticed in Psalm 73

emphasises the inequalities of earth, and the unfairness whereby one may be openly unjust, yet openly prospered ; and another may be seemingly honest, yet crushed down and despised. The only possible rectification is by a Higher Court, and God's " afterward." The condition of earth shows sufficiently a plan to prove a Mighty Worker, it shows sufficiently a ruin to prove the effect of sin ; and therefore with these two things together we are compelled to say an after life with Divine judgment must be viewed as a necessity, and, thanks be unto God, a revealed necessity as a warning whereby some are brought to look back to their judgment on the cross of Calvary, instead of onward to bearing the doom themselves.

Again Socialism falters, not only in that it lacks the power to lift up the heart of man and compel an unselfishness, but it lacks the power to control in any measure its arrangements unless it introduces forms of force and compulsion which it would disapprove, or, if it did not theoretically disapprove, would break its highest ideals in carrying them out. There are those who will sometimes refer to the precious words of the Lord Jesus on the Mount, and propose them as principles to govern an earthly nation, reorganised that it may seek after socialistic heights of hoped-for affection. But, dear friends, the whole conception is impossible. The context in Matthew is plain. " Blessed are they which are PERSECUTED for righteousness' sake "—far from implying arrangements to organise the world, it contains God's plan for the blessing of a suffering minority in a disorganised world. God has been pleased to provide His clear teaching that *His redeemed people* may not be discouraged, though they are discouraged when they fail to look unto Him Who is their Encouragement. The Address on the Mount, furthermore, brings before us principles which could *not* be carried out, except in a sphere quite distinct from earthly arrangements of glory. No earthly kingdom can crystallize the plans therein set forth,—principles which deal with the heart and mind and the INNER thoughts. These are brought into judgment ! So comprehensive is the Lord's programme of the kingdom of the heavens ! And to return,—the principles of willingness to suffer, if they were carried out in a socialistic state, would give just the opportunity for the worst elements of the kingdom to assert themselves in varied forms of mob rule. The very principles which are there set forth, of willingness to suffer, if taken up by a state, would be the annihilation of that state. They would involve necessarily*the opportunity for those who, with bitter selfishness, desired to sweep away before them all who were willing to be crushed

down, and thus there would be the forming of the reverse of a kingdom,—utterly disorganised ruin. You may think that in so speaking I almost seem to cast a slur on the Address which the Lord Jesus gave ; but no, beloved friends, its height of preciousness is that it sets forth adequate arrangements for **THOSE TO WHOM IT WAS AND IS ADDRESSED**. Where is the glory of anything which provides imperfectly for those to whom it is addressed, and refers to others instead ? Surely that would be a failure and a defect in the address. Its glory is that it meets the needs of those to whom it is Divinely given. It is **NOT** given to those who have an earthly grandeur, but to those who are willing to be with their rejected Lord **OUTSIDE THE CAMP**, bearing His reproach, because they have an infinitely higher and heavenly calling (Heb. 3. 1) having been delivered out from this present evil age (Gal. 1. 4) and made to sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus, so that, as the Lord's pilgrims on earth, they are waiting for Him to fulfil His precious promise, " Surely I come quickly." As such, they find the address exactly meets the need. It contains Divine guidance which encourages to joy and delight amid all the sufferings and trials in which the Lord is the sustaining power of His blood-bought people.

And, furthermore, Socialism provides nothing for the future. You may say, " We only want the present,"—at least, I trust that the majority of us do not take this standpoint, but there are those who barely remember the future, and occupy themselves with the present, even as those of years ago who thought of the earth as the centre of the universe, and despised the stars because they seemed so small from **EARTH'S** standpoint. The secularist is too concentrated on the present time, like the out-of-date astronomer. He forgets the immensity of these things, which are too far off from his narrowed standpoint, and not visible to his contracted view. Socialism provides nothing to deal with the guilt of man **AFTERWARDS**, it provides nothing to deal with that thought which is in the mind of many as to the condition of that life which we individually possess with a personal consciousness, with a " choosing " oftentimes, as we must acknowledge, of that which is evil, and an accountability thereby. Socialism, moreover, provides nothing of an eternal blessedness. Socialism provides nothing after the limited range of a few years. Yet surely we cannot find in ourselves those who are satisfied to confine all to so brief a period. If we assume only a brief period, we assume unrighteousness in the state of affairs, we assume an unsatisfied condition, we assume a myriad of

inconsistencies and impossibilities. We have nothing that will really meet the need which a man in whom there is God's working truly realises.

It is therefore a pleasure to turn away from all the faltering attempts of men, with all their ingenuity, with all their enthusiasm, and sometimes with their concern and passionate intensity,—it is a pleasure to turn away from these to that Divine provision which goes back far enough to blot out all sins,—which goes deep enough to provide a power within, whereby a new creation in Christ Jesus has a new power over selfishness and evil,—which reaches high enough to secure amid the changing circumstances of a changing world, a real and heavenly rest in a consciously enjoyed communion with a living Lord,—and which reaches on far enough to unveil as a certainty that is felt in the experience of those who know Him, the certainty of an eternal blessedness in fellowship with the One Who died in the place of worthless sinners. The Gospel of the Grace of God, and that Gospel alone, has righteously met the state of affairs. Nothing else deals honourably with the fact of sin. But thanks be unto God, this Gospel DOES thus deal with sin, and there are those who have realised this in the power of the Holy Spirit. Nothing else deals with the natural wickedness of the human heart, or if I might change that aspect for a moment, with the SLAVERY which many a man has experienced, and the HELPLESSNESS, for we find in the sinner, not only a selfishness, but a slavery to sin which binds and holds. The Gospel deals with both. Nothing else but the Gospel of the Grace of God provides a real fellowship with a real Saviour, in the enabling of the Holy Spirit. You may tell me that this is ONLY a matter of faith, but why should anything be said against faith? There is no harm in faith. There is the reverse of harm. If faith has a solid foundation, faith is firm because of the foundation on which it rests. If you give me one who tells the truth, lack of faith in the truth he tells is NOT to my credit. There is no glory in unbelief. We should not be ashamed of faith, but ashamed of the absence of faith, if there is any fixed foundation. When men say, “Only a matter of faith,” they really mean “It is only a matter of fiction” on which the faith rests. But there are those who have experienced the living power of living faith, and know it is not fiction on which THEY rest, and they will not allow that others' lack of knowledge should make them willing to deny the true knowledge which they have in God's grace received. Faith to some is not a fancy, but a reality; and a living Lord is not a dream, but a Person;

and a consciousness of eternal salvation is not that which they have worked up by imagination, but that which has been brought to bear upon them in a wondrously definite and convicting way, and thereby they are able to declare, with the joy and confidence of faith, that they know Whom they have believed, that to them these things are more than things, and that they would rather doubt the sight of their eyes, and rather doubt the hearing of their ears, than they would doubt the conviction of their hearts. It is not strange, since we are so fearfully and wonderfully made, that our hearts should beat hour after hour, and our eyes behold, and our ears listen, and our mouths speak. Nor is it surprising that when there is such a wonderful mechanism of the human frame, that there should be the possibility of a personal revelation to the heart of a personal Saviour. Why should it be thought incredible in a world full of miracles,—daily miracles of every living man who walks the earth, miracles in the fact of his life, and the fact of its continuance, miracles in the production of his food,—why should it be thought strange that there is another miracle, a miracle which some know as definitely as they can appreciate things with earthly faculties,—the miracle of a real acquaintance with a real Saviour? Beloved friends, we are not ashamed of the Gospel of Christ, we do not come to apologise for it, since it is the power of God to every one that believeth (Rom. 1. 16), and there are those, who, believing, have experienced, in their very believing, that this power is no mean power, but an Almighty and conquering power, for grace REIGNETH through righteousness, and reigning grace has brought down our objections, and laid low natural cavillings, and humbled unto the very dust human attempts at reasoning, and given us the TRUE logic and the true faith. The Gospel of the Grace of God adequately deals with the individual, both as to his position before God, as to his rest of heart, and as to his relationship toward others. It provides him with a new standpoint of life, and a new power wherewith to illustrate it in heartfelt love.

But more than this, the precious words of the living God set forth God's own arrangement for dealing with the earth. Evil men and seducers will wax worse and worse, deceiving and being deceived. The climax of civilisation is seen in the last book of Scripture, and what is it? There we have the number of men 666 (six, six, six) stamped upon the history of Antichrist, in his development of proud boasting against the mighty God. What is the climax? Persecution of the Lord's people. What is the climax? Boasted riches of commercialism. What is the climax? Warfare against

God, and everything in human history is tending in this direction. Almost every form of human scheming when it has authority will persecute that which will not identify itself, and the Gospel of the Grace of God being not a native of this earth, but having a heavenly relationship, is always foreign to those who are seeking after the glories of this world. Hence it will always remain the treasure of a persecuted minority, in so far as the Gospel is held in its purity. Pervert the Gospel, broaden the Gospel, and you will have the holding back of a large measure of suffering, but if the Gospel is shown in the simplicity of truth, if there is the likeness to Him Who said "The Light is come into the world, but men loved darkness rather than light," we may well anticipate the persecution, the reproach of Christ, which, however, will afford greater riches than the treasures in Egypt. The climax of man, beloved friends, will not put the world straight, for man will ever fail to deal with man aright, and as man illustrates his power, there will be more evil, and there will be a mingled federation and tyranny, and, whether it be the tyranny of a large number or of one, the goal is the same. Man cannot control himself and he cannot control others. But God has His provision, the Only Righteous One will descend, He will come Whose right it is; to Him the kingdom will become a possession as He now has it by right. When He came before, He bought the earth, and He will come to claim His possession, and when He returns, it will be in flaming fire, for He will be the Only Righteous Judge. But then, after He has displayed His mighty wrath, He will show the control of earth, with dominion from sea to sea, with a perfect sceptre of perfect righteousness. Human attempts have faltered and will fail, but when the Lord Himself shall reign at Jerusalem then His Name will be illustrated as Prince of Peace, and there will be the realisation of the prophetic Scriptures, "Behold a King shall reign in righteousness, and princes shall rule in judgment." There is *none other* hope, and the child of God is *not* taught to attempt the impossible, or to build up a wreck of man as if to make a palace. Humanity is too far gone for improvement. The need is a new creation, and the believer cannot rectify the world. If he were to try so to do he would need to exercise force and might, which are forbidden to him in the simple path of an obedient follower of the Lord Jesus. And, moreover, if he were to attempt to rectify the world, he would rob himself of the very privileges which are marked out for him as a sufferer in the world, and lose the very glories which are held out in front of those who bear rejection with their rejected Lord. It is vain and foolish

to attempt the impossible, or to try and patch up that which can never be truly made right, to take in hand to straighten that which will remain crooked, and all the time that which is a real power is being laid on one side. The child of God who attempts social reform, the child of God who attempts to improve the earth, is laying hold of a shadow, and attempting to use the unsatisfying shadow, and in order to take up this empty shadow he has put on one side that which is a real substance and a solid power. The believer is not holding back from social reform because of selfishness, he is not abstaining from Socialism because he desires to exalt himself, but because he sees the utter failure of everything of MAN, and has something infinitely more powerful, infinitely more precious, and therefore he cannot degrade himself to that which falls short of representing the Lord of Glory. He cannot bring himself down to the level of the natural man, nor identify himself with those who are of the earth, and whose ideals reach no higher than themselves. God's thoughts are not man's thoughts. As the heavens are higher than the earth, so are His ways higher than man's ways, and His thoughts than man's thoughts. Man attempts to patch up man with a temporary improvement, but God succeeds in saving sinful men with an eternal security; and therefore while the things of earth applied by the natural strength of a man of earth falter and fail, the Gospel is, all the time, winning its triumphs in laying hold of those who are dead in trespasses and sins, and lifting them up above the changing vanities of a ruined age into the glories of a personal relationship of an everlasting Lord. Beloved friends, there are those of us who by the work of the Holy Spirit have experienced this power, and therefore we desire to turn from the vanity of vanities to the true rejoicing, and though in earth we find that which only makes us weep, in Christ we find One Whose glories so far excel in magnitude the sorrows of earth, that amid the very anguish we are as sorrowful yet always rejoicing. For though earth contains sufficient misery to break down from all natural merriness, Christ contains sufficient glories to lift up to all spiritual gladness. Beyond the ruin of a ruined world, in its wondrous fulness there shines forth the Gospel of the Grace of God, and if you have not tasted that He is gracious, you little know how much you are missing of that which is precious beyond measure. There are those who have experienced the human attempts to deal with human failure personally and collectively, and they have been brought away from these to the satisfying realities of Christ. **THEY** know both sides of the question. They know that one

side remains a bare QUESTION, and the other side has a wondrous ANSWER, and in that answer, that unanswerable answer, they rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory, as they look up, in the daily enabling of the Holy Spirit ; yea, and intently look for that blessed Hope, even the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ, Who gave Himself for us, that He might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify UNTO HIMSELF a people to be around Him, zealous of good works!



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 “ the things concerning Himself.” (*Luke* 24.27.)

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“ Woe unto them that join house to house, that lay field to field, till there be no place, that they may be placed alone in the midst of the earth.”

These solemn words are meant to have *more than one solemn message*. Are you a selfish man? Then they speak to you. You have a desire to make “ money.” The spirit of monopoly is in your whole character. You wish to add houses, and business, and gain, and everything possible, and drive out others. God speaks through this verse. Do you hear His voice?

Or, it may be, you are engrossed with the thought of “ federation,” and would shut out all who are not in your “ union ” or “ system.” This is exactly the same spirit. The “ working man ” illustrates the very attitude against which he revolts.* If a man is not a member with you, you would exclude him from your workshop. Why?

But most who read these lines profess Christ’s Name. Do they not see that *neither capital nor labour has any room for the unselfish principles of the Lord Jesus?* How can you aim at a “ position ” in the world where He was crucified? Your rejected Lord invites you outside the camp, and the word rings in our ears, “ Have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather reprove them.” (Eph. 5.11). ’Tis not a question of separation from this union or that, or of standing aloof regarding this action or that; *the whole standpoint of a child of God should be distinct.* The Lord Jesus said, “ They are not of the world *even as I am not of the world* ”. And the command of love has no room for man’s personal selfishness, or man’s unionism. These *natural* things of the *natural* man we *expect* to find in man, but not in one born from above!

“ Surely oppression maketh a wise man mad ” (Eccl. 7.7). But the child of God should go *above the sun*, and look for Christ’s Coming, the only hope. He *cannot* marvel at oppression; under the sun it is to be expected. (Eccl. 5.8). But his comfort is that the Lord hath said “ I will arise ” (Ps. 12.5). Christ is the Personal Saviour now—Christ is the coming King—herein is the true brightness amid earth’s darkness. “ Cease ye from man, whose breath is in his nostrils ” (Isa. 2.22). Dear reader, is Christ *your* Saviour and Lord?

* Prov. 28. 3 is very striking, “ a poor man that oppresseth the poor is like a sweeping rain which leaveth no food.” Let one who has been *beneath* become *above* (in a material sense), and he is often the worst oppressor; such is man.