SOCIAL PROBLEMS.

AND THE RELATION OF THE CHRISTIAN CHURCH THERETO

Socialism in the Pulpit. A Rousing Sermon by Rev. E. A. Oliver at St Simon's Church, Toronto.

On the evening of Sunday, the 21st ult., Rev. E. A. Oliver, of St Simon's Church, delivered one of the most outspoken and fearless discourses on the Social Question ever heard from a Toronto pulpit.

St Simon's Church has one of the most fashionable and wealthy congregations in the city, so that Mr Oliver's sermon has been the occasion of not a little comment and criticism.

The subject of the sermon was "The Church and Social Problems," the text being, "Thy kingdom come." Matt. vi. 10.

The preacher, in opening his discourse, drew attention to the increasing amount of interest being aroused among thoughtful people by the Social Problem. It was a libel on the Christianity of the age, that the same evils which had been vividly depicted by Charles Kingsley had not long ago been abolished by an awakened public conscience. Sweating, and all the evils of competition were still rampant, and the church needed to be aroused to her plain duty. He referred to the wide spread interest taken in such publications as "Looking Backward" and Gen. Booth's book, "In Darkest England," as hopeful signs; Dr Westcott, Bishop of Durham, an avowed Socialist, in a masterly address, at the last Church Congress had said, that it was the duty of believers to show that Christianity, which had hitherto dealt with individuals, should deal with the State, with classes, with personal conditions, and not merely with personal character. Everywhere men are anxiously asking, are there no means for bridging over this dreadful and ever deepening abyss between rich and poor? Are there no means for securing for the wage earner a larger share in the comforts, rational pleasures and alleviations of life? Must we sit by with folded hands with the fatalism of a Moslem or with the stolidity of the Egyptian sphynx, whilst ever increasing masses of our fellow men are sinking into hopeless, intolerable poverty? A day's labor has no fixed value under the law of competition; the denser the population becomes wages have always a tendency to decline to the lowest figure at which it is possible to exist, for there are always men with starving families eager for a job at almost any price. But not only does competition meet the workman from below. The concern must pay big dividends to clamorous stockholders, and what more obvious way than to squeeze "the hands;" or it is in competition with other concerns and everything must be cut down to the very lowest to enable it to crush its rivals or hold its own amidst some ... It is a ... shameful fact only one quarter of the entire income of English labor is paid to the productive wageworkers who produce and distribute the wealth. Thus is the wage earner ground beneath

THE UPPER AND NETHER MILLSTONE

of competition. But it is not simply strong men who suffer but little children shut up all day in close, unhealthy confinement until there is nothing of the sweetness of childhood left in them. The bishop of Bedford has told us pathetically that there is no child life in East London, and there mothers are sitting at home from early morning till far into the night plying the needle ceaselessly trying to make twelve shirts a day, at the rate of a penny a piece. Home, did I say, what mockery to apply that sweet word to the dismal cells of tenement houses, with their rotten crazy staircases, their filthy odors—the complete absence of the most ordinary sanitary conditions—dens of pestilence where grim death and loathsome disease hold high carnival, the death rate being three, four and five times greater than in districts but a few hundred yards away. In these places where the proprietors would not think of lodging their dumb animals, men, women and children are herded together like sheep—forty-one out of 100 families live each in a single room, and they are actually made to pay a higher rent in proportion to income than those in any other part of the community. The poorest pay more rent than the richest for each cubic foot of space and air. These facts put it beyond question, that in the name of a common humanity and as sure as there is an ethical element in Christianity at all, there are social sins and human equities which have a more urgent and imperative claim on the consideration of ecclesiastical councils and of weekly sermons than any questions of discipline, ritual, hymnology or ecclesiastics.

Concurrently with the growth of poverty the material prosperity and wealth of the country has increased by leaps and bounds. Never were there so many millionaires, never such lavish expenditure, never such wasteful and idle luxury. I am creditably informed that $10,000 were expended in a single night at the inauguration of a certain club in the city of Toronto, and no doubt our cousins across the line would laugh at such a modest expenditure. Nor is wealth now a days the reward of honest industry, but rather of cunning or chance. The manipulation of stocks, the spreading abroad of lying rumors, e.g., the effects of frost on the late harvest in Manitoba. The Astor estate grew to its present fabulous value by being simply left to accumulate. The Duke of Westminster has derived most of his millions by the falling in of long leases of property in the heart of London. He thus comes into possession of land and buildings, to whose tremendously increased value he did absolutely nothing to contribute. Such are a few of the beauties of our boasted nineteenth century civilization. Has organized Christianity

NO MESSAGE TO DELIVER

on these social problems? Must we be content with gentle whisperings on social inequities, mild talk in church about loving one's neighbors for fear of offending the sensibilities of our congregation, or of being charged with sensationalism? Must the exercise of Christian love be confined to doling out charity and counselling the poor to resignation and comforting them with the hope of a better hereafter? Shame, I say, on such a conception of the religion of Him who is the enemy of wrong and selfishness, the power of righteousness and love. There is no denying, says Bishop Huntington, in the *Forum* that Christ did see the two classes which the world had sundered, and that He made His choice between them. Deliberately, emphatically, uniformly He stood on one side of the dividing line, and placed there the moral foundations of His empire of love. He lived there, sought His companionship and helpings there, was at home there, bestowed there His honors and benedictions. There is no beatitude that reads, "Blessed are the rich for theirs is the kingdom of heaven." No rule of selection proclaiming "I have chosen the rich of this world." There is no malediction saying, "Woe unto you poor men, hardworking men, ill-clad men, unlettered men." Men that are managed, bought and sold, men at the mercy of capitalists and corporations; men dictated to, kept down, taken advantage of, with small chance in a law suit, or if accused of a theft forced into a class whether you like it or not. It is all the other way, the whole gospel, from the lowly yet triumphant magnificat of the virgin mother to the unbounded and impartial invitation to free waters of eternal life at the end of the Apocalypse. There can be no doubt as to what the attitude of the church of Jesus Christ should be in the present relations of labor and capital, if she is to fulfil the end for which she exists—if she is to regain her hold upon the masses and thus to be really Catholic. Is it not a significant fact that a short time ago at a great meeting of workmen in New York the name of Jesus Christ was cheered and that of the church hissed? What must be our aim? Our aim must be to substitute for the anarchistic individualism of competition which now reigns supreme, the true social order which will have for its basis, not the accumulation of wealth through self interest and competition, but human progress and well being through self sacrifice and association.

SOCIALISM AND INDIVIDUALISM CONTRASTED.

Dr Westcott contrasted socialism and individualism as follows: "Individualism and socialism correspond with opposite views of humanity. Individualism regards humanity as made up of disconnected and warring atoms; socialism regards it as an organic whole, a vital unity formed by the combination of contributory members mutually interdependent. It follows that socialism differs from individualism both in method and aim. The method of socialism is co-operation, the method of individualism competition. The one regards man as working with man for a common end, the other regards man as working against man for private gain. The aim of socialism is the fulfilment of service, the aim of individualism is the attainment of some personal advantage, riches, place or fame. Socialism seeks such an organization of life as shall secure for everyone the most complete development of his powers, individualism seeks, primarily, the satisfaction of the particular wants of each one in the hope that the pursuit of private interest will in the end secure public welfare."

The goal is not so far off as some may suppose. The days of privileged classes are surely drawing to a close, and the dawn of a brighter, happier civilization for the toiling masses may be seen upon the far off horizon—when the only man who will not eat will be the man who will not work—when every household will have such an environment as will render possible the growth of morality, temperance and thrift; when the hours of labor shall be so curtailed, and that home to the workingman will be something better than a squalid lodging house, when rational pleasure and healthy enjoyment shall successfully compete with the wild orgies of the saloon. Does some one say that all this is pure moonshine—that it is impossible, visionary? To such I would say that I envy not your faith either in God or man. Do you mean to tell me that it is God's will that millions of immortal souls should be born and live all their lives in such conditions as render impossible the elementary virtues of modesty, purity and temperance, not to speak of the cultivation of the higher, intellectual and spiritual faculties? No, no that is the talk of

THE ATHEISTIC PESSIMIST,

not of the believer in the God of love. But you dishonor your race by such thoughts. The popular heart in the end always decides for justice, liberty and truth. Perhaps the greatest service that organization is rendering to the workman is that it is teaching him the value of self restraint and self sacrifice. And on the other hand there is an increasingly large number of those burdened with great possessions, who, quickened by a noble self denial, are realizing the responsibilities of wealth. With such a combination of forces as organized labor, consecrated wealth, educational culture and the power of intense spiritual influence brought to bare upon men's consciences, what could not be accomplished for the social regeneration of the world? At any rate, we have a right to demand of you an earnest sympathetic study of social problems, and not to prejudice that study by first of all asking yourself, "How would reform affect me?" We ask you not to sneer at those who have a wider conception of the aims of Christianity and its power to accomplish those aims than you have, who believe that reconstruction of unjust degrading social conditions must go hand in hand with the reconstruction of individual character. We have a right to demand of you that you ... judge organized labor by the ... tendencies, the crimes it may be, of indiscreet ... members or of demagogues who may ... at times use it for their own ... How would the church herself fare ... judged by that standard? ... faith in God, have faith in men, and ... will know as others cannot, that the greatest thing in the world is love.

IT WAS TOO TRUTHFUL.

SOMETIMES realism comes too close to home. A despatch from Berlin, of the 8th inst., says: "A riot ensued during the performance of Wildenbruch's drama, Die Haubenlerche, at Krotoschin, in the Province of Posen. In the fourth act there is a representation of a factory scene, and in it a rich manufacturer makes an improper proposal to a factory girl in his employ. The language and circumstances were so strong and pointed that the ladies and gentlemen in the stalls tried to leave the theatre, thereby wishing to show their indignation at the whole subject. But the workmen occupying the pit would not permit them to leave, and shouted loudly for the ladies to keep their seats. One man cried out: 'Stay here and see the picture that your own infamy has made.' No attention being paid to the cries or threats, the workmen blocked the passage way and the doors, brandished sticks, and violently denounced the rest of the audience. The manager appeared on the stage and implored everybody to keep in their seats and remain quiet and maintain order. Further performances of the play have been forbidden."

THE PRICE OF EDITORS IN MICHIGAN

JUST before election we received a card from a paper called the *Interna*, of Detroit, calling our attention to the fact that Rowland Conner, of Saginaw, who was running for member of the Legislature, had, at an editorial banquet in Saginaw last summer, said that any editor could be bought for $300, and urging us to use our editorial influence to defeat Mr Conner for that place. We did not use our influence as requested, for the reasons that in the first place Mr. Conner had made no such sweeping assertion that all editors could be bought for that sum, but stated that a large majority of them could be so purchased; and in the second place, if he had said it the remark could not possibly have made him any less capable of fulfilling the duties of the office, if he said it believing the assertion to be true and in the third place, what he did say was eminently conservative and mild, when compared with the real truth, and our Legislature needs a whole hundred of just such men who have the courage to speak the truth about such matters. Up this way we can buy a whole barn full of so called editors of the so-called newspapers for $300. Such a munificent sum would rake in enough of them to fill the biggest poorhouse in Michigan. The fact is the regular ... price of them up here is about one annual subscription to their little sheets, or a fifteen cent advertisement for two or three months. And now let some of them or all of them jump onto us if they dare.—Manistee *Broadaxe*.

BEATING AROUND THE BUSH

CAPITAL pundits, like middle age physicians in the presence of a malady which their science did not yet enable them to understand, are making curious diagnoses of the present diseased financial market. Chauncey M. Depew thinks the reason lies with the immense extension of steam and electricity, whence the currency of the country has become utterly incapable of meeting the demands of legitimate trade. Senator Sherman shakes his head, and is of the opinion, that while there should be no decrease of the volume of the currency, too great an increase of it would do more harm than good. Senators Aldrich and Hawley attribute the trouble to the fear of ill advised financial legislation by Congress. Last, not least, among the set, Edward Atkinson suggests an extension of the method of granting clearing-house certificates.

While the doctors are wrangling, no end of old wives are at the same time throwing in their little thoughts and suggesting their unfailing home medicines, and they all feel happy.

Yet the disease is simple, the cure plain. Money, under the individual and competitive system of production, is not as it should be, a medium of exchange; it becomes a commodity, universal and all important, with a power of attraction and suction, which, in the development of the system, reaches a point where it becomes irresistible, drags everything in its wake, and in the process convulses the body economic. Place the production and distribution of wealth upon a social collective basis, then money becomes a voucher for labor performed, as incapable of being a subject for speculation as water is incapable of exploding; and then the malady will vanish, and with it the 'doctors' and the old wives.—N. Y. *Workmen's Advocate*.

THERE can be no grosser injustice than in increasing the toll upon a man's labor in proportion as his industry increases. Such proceeding is the prolific cause of tramps. To impose burdens upon honest labor, so as to take nearly all it produces, is to discourage thrift and industry, and foster idleness, shiftlessness and crime.

UNDER a materialistic system every new invention that would lessen the hours of labor, and cheapen the cost of production would be hailed with delight, for all would be benefited, under the individual monopolistic system the laborers fear new inventions, because the more labor saving machines there are the less opportunity their will be to obtain work.—*World's Advance Thought*.

AMERICA TO-DAY.

THE ROTTEN RIPE REPUBLIC IN THE POWER OF MONOPOLISTS AND POLITICAL HIRELINGS

A Democracy in Name Only. Labor Robbed of its Rights. A Threatened Crisis in the History of the United States

(*Mrs Elizabeth F. ... in the ...*)

We are plunged into a sea of national anarchy. We have a country the richest on the globe. A country rich in agricultural resources, with millions left of unclaimed acres. We are rich in the products of a temperate and of a tropic zone. Rich in wealth of mines of gold, of silver, of copper, and of coal. Rich in the diffusion of universal education, with none so poor he may not become rich, none so humble he may not aspire to the highest office in the gift of the people. As a people we are untrammeled by social or legal disabilities. A people so blessed should be the happiest nation on the earth.

WHY THEN IS IT NOT?

For twenty years the destiny of our country has been allied to that of a class grown rich on the spoils of war. The gradual consolidation in the hands of the dominant party of the wealth and the political power of the country finds us at the dawn of our second century of independence an enslaved people. The African no longer is in bondage, but the white man of America clanks the fetters of a bondage more cruel and despotic than ever flogged a slave or sold him from the block.

The enslaved negro was held as property. His labor, the main factor in the aggregation of wealth, gave to his person commercial value. His health, his perpetuity, appealed to the self interest of his master. His life was guarded, his interests protected. But the white slave who has largely taken the place once held by him has no guardian. No value attaches to his existence. Infirmity or death makes a gap a horde stand ready to fill.

Labor is denied its rights, refused its privileges. Justice finds no place in the vocabulary of wealth. That octopus, corporate power, fastens its thirsty tentacles upon its heart only to cast the drained carcass from out its sight to seek new prey. Hedged by every device that consolidated wealth and legislative power can summon, it forbids to labor the exercise of those privileges, inherent rights upon which itself has riveted its greedy hands—that of self protection in organization. Syndicates that exist solely by virtue of the will of the people arraign themselves against the power that creates, ... they are permitted to live. Labor, either ... ... petitioning or supplicating, is black-listed, ... citizens armed to coerce and intimidate.

THE ARROGANCE OF WEALTH

is supreme and remains unchecked. Defiant of the will of the people, Congress imposes laws subversant of constitutional rights and inimical to the welfare of the nation. Centralized power at the seat of Government grows daily, and treasonable utterances pass unrebuked by people or president. Save despotic Russia, no autocrat to-day exercises the power that marks our national legislature. Infraction of the constitution is frequent, and fundamental principles of government are trampled under foot. The right to offer amendments, the constitutional right of every right of the House, has been taken away. Bills of the greatest importance, affecting the general interests of the people, are passed without full reading. The bill to organize the territorial government of Oklahoma consisted of forty-eight sections, and of these but twenty four were read. The obnoxious tariff bill received but partial reading, while numerous amendments were in waiting. The bill to reorganize the judiciary system of the United States was passed under a resolution that admitted but a brief space for debate. The House was wholly in the hands of unscrupulous committees, willing tools of despotic masters. The House availed itself of the absence of a quorum to unseat Democratic members. It legislated mining camps into the Union as states in order to augment Republican members. It excluded other territories of larger population, because they carried Democratic majorities. In every manner power was supreme rule and right ignored, and demagogism reigned absolute. Congress conferred upon the president powers hitherto unknown ... the right to impose and remit duties upon the necessaries of life. It squandered the people's money, depleted the national treasury in order to secure to itself the purchased support of beneficiaries. But the crime of crimes was that of the passage of the infamous tariff in the interests of the rich grown richer at the cost to the poor of the necessaries of life. It endangered our foreign commercial interests. The policy of the United States should be to encourage and extend commercial interchange with foreign powers. The Force bill, rightfully named, threatened the disfranchisement of all in the south opposed to the present governmental policy.

Nor does this catalogue complete the schedule of wrongs against the people and their rights. Government placed at the head of the census, a position of greater magnitude than that of president, a man who for years has been the paid hireling of monopolies, and who by them was sent abroad to write up the miseries of impoverished Ireland a warning to low tariff sentiment. Possibly he may ride safely the storm of indignation which manipulated census returns have wrought, but the storm will be appeased ... Congress in response to the ... demand, orders a recount. The ... the late election have proved ... to be fully alive to the perils ... their franchise.

REPUBLICAN AMERICA

exists to-day but in name. ... minds regard the present ... dismay. The people will not ... mit to the abrogation of rights ... joyed. Unless the present ... warned by the trumpet tones of ... ple speaking through the ballot ... hasten to restore stolen privileges ... chises annulled, there will ... come a conflict that will either ... republic America into a despotism ... lute and impregnable, or it will ... turning point to restore to the ... erties wrested by illegal usurp... power.

Evidence is not wanting that ... hearts have in view the destruction ... republic. The New York *Tribune* ... gan of the Government, approach... subject in the following quotation ... its columns:—

"It is astonishing, yes, startling ... extent to which faith prevails in our ... ey circles that we ought to have a king.

By this is not meant a limited monarchy and a representative parliament, but ... elevation of a throne based upon the con... solidated wealth of individuals.

We need a strong central Government. The wealth of the country has to bear the burden of Government, and we shall control it."

This is the utterance of a California Senator, and the wealth to which he thus refers, and upon which he bases his claim to institute an autocratic hierarchy, is the product not of millionaires, but of the labor of those he would thrust out from the ballot box and put under his heel.

That the country is secretly and silently being placed on a war footing is evident to the careful observer. It is plainly said in the report of the war department to those who read between the lines. The construction of the magnificent war ships now the pride and admiration of the people, may be designed to play a deadly part in the conflict wealth will precipitate ere long.

MONEY RULES.

The purchasing power of gold is unlimited. It controls legislation and dominates our courts of in justice. Congress no longer remains a representative body. It is but an auction block that knocks down to the highest bidder.

Will the force of arms alone combat the encroachment of the threatened centralization of power?

Then who can foretell the destiny of our unhappy country? The threatened crisis can be met only by the people themselves, and pending revolution be turned to peaceful evolution. This transforming evolutionary process can and may be found in the silent, governing power of industrial solidarity.

Improved social and political conditions can only be reached through combined effort ... ... in the hands of the toilers. They ... cessfully meet and conquer antagonizing forces rapidly marching toward culmination. In this crisis, with every destructive force hurrying on our destiny, with business methods equally destructive as Government policy; while lawless competition remains the law of trade and neighbor preys on neighbor, the imperative duty of the social and industrial reformer cannot be ignored. A propaganda work must be inaugurated that will serve to enlighten the public mind and bring into active play that higher law of civilization embodied in co-operative industry.

LABOR IN FREE AMERICA

A REPORTER of the Brooklyn *Eagle*, in describing the working of a gang of Italian laborers under a contractor of the City of Churches, says:

So the work went on unceasingly, work which would in a week permanently break down those unaccustomed to it, and with severe enough to tell on a physique of iron. If a gang of convicts had been handled in any such fashion the prison warden who permitted it would be promptly charged with shocking brutality, and in all human probability removed from office. The Italian has to a great extent taken the place of the Irishman at this kind of labor. This is not so much because the Irishman cannot be hired for such work, but because experience has proved that contractors make a better investment of money when they pay it to sons of sunny Italy.

The Irishman will take a certain amount of driving, but beyond that point it is ... judicious to go. The Italian makes ... complaints, meekly submits to torrents of abuse and works without cessation as a pace which would wear out a steam engine. If the scene of his labors is too far removed from New York to make it practicable for him to sleep in the metropolis at night he finds shelter in a rudely constructed hut, cooking for himself a scanty meal. His bill of fare is usually limited to either stale white or ... brown bread, a raw onion and perhaps a little bacon. Stale beer, if it is accessible, will serve his purpose admirably. This beer is the draining of kegs set out on the sidewalk by saloon keepers. If the work to be done is likely to last long, there are no stores in the vicinity, a ... a great many men are employed, a ... ... store is established, and there the Italians make their meagre purchases.

IF nature is called providence, ... should be called foresight.—*Victor H...*

THE very men who would once have been conspicuous saints are now conspicuous revolutionists, for while their love and disinterestedness are their ... the direction these qualities take is determined by the pressure of the age.—*Lecky.*