

BETTER THAN BOLSHEVISM

The International Sunday School Lesson For September 7 is "The Kingdom of God."—Matt. 13:31-33, 44-50.

By William T. Ellis.

A sense of humor, a sense of fair-ness, and a sense of patriotism would save all the world from the blight of Bolshevism.

For Bolshevism is unworkable, over any large area and over any long period of time, because it is merely autocracy turned bottomsides up. It carries the seeds of its own destruction as truly as does the aristocratic order which it seeks to supplant; because its motive power is not love, but selfishness. Despite all our stupidities and blunders, the mass of us are folks with enough common sense to know that we cannot run the machinery of life with hate for a motor.

Everybody with a real head on his shoulders is asking himself why and what Bolshevism is, and since it appears bad, how the world may escape it. The old order of life seems to have been rejected by a large proportion of mankind as not a success, from the standpoint today. Something different is desired. Myriads are seeking a new deal for mankind. Their cry is that of Tennyson:

"Ah, when shall all men's good Be each man's rule, and universal peace Lie like a shaft of light across the land. And like a lane of beams athwart the sea, Thro' the circle of the golden year?"

Reviewing The Nations. In a peculiar sense, I am in the midst of this world ferment. I have been travelling through the very center of it, having come through restless Europe to the turbulent regions of the Near East, which the western world knows best as Bible lands. It is my work to investigate changing conditions. If I dared be one-sided I could confine myself to the glorious emanations effected by the war—the new passion for liberty and nationalism amid the ancient submerged and oppressed people, which, if given free expression is the surest of guarantees against Bolshevism; the new breaking down of old isolations and antagonisms, so that tolerance and community spirit have come into vital existence; the emancipation of woman, so swift and dramatic as to be incomprehensible; the emergence of a spirit of social responsibility in the Orient, as expressed by the native orphanages; and the awakening to the need of education for all people. It is a shining page that is to be written of what wonders have been wrought by the upheavals of recent years.

On the other hand, if I dared be a pessimist I could write a heart-sickening tale of the persistence of the old arrogance of imperialism and self-aggrandizement on the part of nations whom the war should have taught better; of the unchastened spirits of peoples who have suffered most in the past five years; of the ruthlessness of business allied to politics; of the oppression of weak peoples; of heartless and deadly profiteering; of amazing disregard by Christian nations of sacred pledges; of the persistence, in short, of the state of mind that made possible the world calamity.

Birth Pangs or Death Throes. Jeremiahs are plentiful in the Near East nowadays; and frequently I have listened to men; mostly British officers, expounding a rather popular theory that civilization is about to revert to barbarism; and that, as one man expressed it, "In ten years the world will be back where it was three hundred years ago."

This raised the basic question, Are the pains which society is now suffering, birth-pangs or death throes? Is what's good in process of dying, or is something still better now being born? Is the twilight hour in which we dwell the forerunner of sunrise, or is it the aftermath of sunset and the portal of the world's darkest night? Faith and facts unite to convince the careful, unpanicky observer that "The best is yet to be. The last of life, for which the first was made."

Something new and wonderful is coming to pass which may be called by many beautiful names, but the

truest of them is the kingdom of God. An all-wise, over-ruling and beneficent Being is working out his glorious purposes for man. The earth is undergoing a sort of divine house-cleaning; and because we had accumulated so much rubbish (some of which we ignorantly esteemed to be priceless heirlooms), there is a deal of dust raised, and vast quantities of heinous possessions are being sent to the trash-heap. But when house-cleaning is over, this will be a wonderful world in which to live.

Getting The Big Idea. One who tries to keep his vision clear to study the times in which he moves is troubled by the prevalence of petty programmes, and by the failure of so many persons to discern the real bigness of the issues involved. Every social panacea that has ever been evolved, no matter how absurd or lawless, is being brought forward solemnly as a cure-all for the present world disorder.

Whereas, the real truth lies on the surface, as well as at the heart of the most complex phenomena—namely, that only the kingdom of heaven idea and spirit can possibly be adequate for our new necessities. The ailments of the world, which may seem new, need the old remedy of an applied gospel. The principles which Jesus laid down as the basis of a new order of life are the only ones that can possibly avail us in these days. If the kingdom is not set up then none of our new nations and forms of government can last.

A word of warning is in order here. Some Americans are still so habituated and so unaware of the vast significance of recent events, that they think that the way to promote the kingdom in this crisis is to increase the machinery for multiplying in the world the number of Methodists, or Baptists or Presbyterians or Episcopalians or Catholics, or whatever their own religious communion may be. That is the inference to be gathered from stray publications that have found their way across the seas. I read of some uninformed persons who sincerely believe that the Russian problem, for example, is to be solved by introducing a certain American religious denomination into that wandering nation!

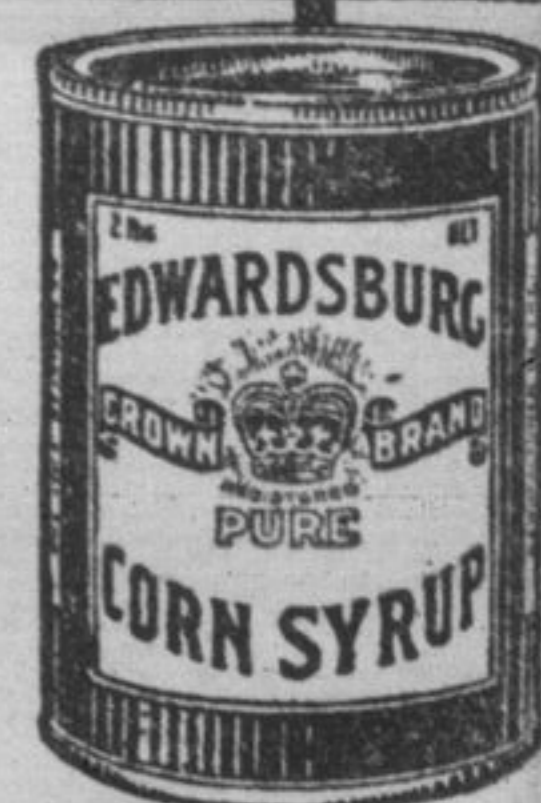
Let us speak boldly. The coming of the kingdom of God may mean the submergence of all the churches which have preceded us in the past. Protestantism, Roman Catholicism, Greek Orthodoxy, Gregorianism, and all the other forms and expressions of Christianity, are inadequate to represent and express the fullness of the kingdom of God. In that kingdom we may find much for which there was no provision in the creed of any of the churches. Already God has aroused the whole world out of its insularity into a new spaciousness and tolerance of thought. Mankind is getting the big idea that "Our God is marching on."

Characteristics of the Kingdom. When a person nowadays grows out of his former small ideas—and what a growing time for mankind the past five years have been!—and begins to get the great conception of a bigger, better and more beneficent order of human life, he finds that the kingdom characteristics outlined by Jesus still apply.

The first mark of the kingdom of heaven is the rule of the King. That is not an easy truth for our rather lawless times to grasp. There cannot be the kingdom without the King. God must be accepted on his throne first of all. The new life has to be ordered in obedience and reverence to him. All that God expressed of his character by Jesus must be received as a pre-requisite of the kingdom which has been so long in coming to its present hour. Foolish folk who want a new world without God will have to undergo a course in the kindergarten of experience to teach them that before all else and above all else, our day needs bow down in humble reverence before the living God, in whose hand is human hope.

On a ship, crossing the submarine zone during the war, I talked with an "emancipated woman" whose creed was merely lawlessness. She

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represented radically those muddled-minded mortals who think that all wrongs will be righted when all laws are abolished and everybody does as he pleases. If my mind still functions normally, despite its countless queer contacts, then one thing is clear, namely, that our world is suffering sorely, in general and in detail, from an epidemic of lawlessness. The kingdom of heaven comes with laws which must be kept. A reign of righteousness is essential to a programme of peace. Dreamers who conceive of a League of Nations, which winks at the injustices of its members are building upon sand. All the justice and truth that are inherent in the kingdom of God must hold sway when his kingdom comes. Not less law, but more and better, is the order of the day that seems dawning.

KEELERVILLE BUDGET.

Everybody Around There Coming to "Bob" Bushell's Fair.

Keelerville, Sept. 2.—Alfred Harvis is operating a wood sawing machine to-day at Edward Sleeth's. Grain cutting is about all done, but the frequent showers are delaying the getting of it in. Quite a number from here attended the harvest dinner at Leland last week.

Hugh Boal and family of Round Lake, spent Sunday at James Boal's. Mrs. David Sleeth has returned home after spending a few days with her mother at William Patterson's, Milburn. Miss Mamie Sleeth spent a few days of last week in the city. Mr. White, of Soperton, is visiting his sister, Mrs. Edward Andrews. Mr. and Mrs. James Boal and family spent Sunday at George Kirkpatrick's, Batterssea. Mr. Thomas Abbott and daughter Viola, of Batterssea are visiting friends here to-day. S. M. Anglin, of Belleville, and Miss Nellie Anglin, of Batterssea, at J. E. Anglin's.

Miss Bertha Sleeth left to-day to resume her studies at the Collegiate Institute, Kingston. Miss Mildred Anglin went yesterday to teach school near Napanee. Pauline Anglin has been engaged to teach at Carry-ing Place. Mr. and Mrs. George McFarlane and Clifford, and Mrs. William Dixon, Sr. of Batterssea, were at William Dixon on Sunday. Mr. and Mrs. Alfred Sands, of Milburn, at James McIlroy's. Isaac Simpson, of Inverary, at Samuel Yateman's. William Yateman went to Batterssea on business Saturday.

Everybody is talking of "Bushell's" big fair at Kingston, and all will be sure to go. Erwin Caird has hired with William Campbell, to run a threshing outfit at Seeley's Bay. Quite a number of tourists are fishing at Horse Shoe Lake. Robert Dixon put a new steel shingle roof on his barn last week.

A humorist says, the joke that isn't private is no laughing matter. All work and no play is apt to make a dull sermo.


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