

CHAPTER IV

THE REDEMPTION OF MANKIND

CHANGE

The greatest obstacle that has been thrown in the path of the reformer is that word *change*. The man who wishes to bring about a reform knows something must be changed. When he appeals to the elector, he will find, as a rule, that the small but powerful and intelligent class of the community may be utterly opposed to the change which his reform would bring about. He may get the support of many of the people the reform would benefit; but on the other hand, it is just as likely that many of those who would benefit by the reform will give him no support for it. This means, in all countries, that there is a very large section of the proletariat, eligible for the electoral register, "fit and proper persons," to cast a vote but who are, so far as their own interests are concerned, utterly incompetent at any time to make a decision as to what is good for them. For more than half a lifetime I have studied this great mass. In two countries I have been in close touch with them, not only as a candidate but as a lecturer; and I am free to state without hesitation that the class I refer to should be disfranchised in the interest of what is called political democracy. In this country the class has always been associated with the very worst forms of corrupt organizations.

Judge Jeremiah T. Mahoney, the unsuccessful

Democratic candidate for Mayor of New York, in a recent election, said that the Democratic Party of the Borough of Manhattan, aided by Tammany for a century and a half, must be reorganized under a new name, new rules and new leadership, because "the word Tammany has become a national symbol for all that is crooked, slimy, unpatriotic and sinister in politics in any machine-ridden city."

ATTITUDE OF POLITICIANS

When you talk to the politician about change, you find that change, to him, is a pendulum that oscillates only between two extreme points: the one is marked more bureaucracy, more relief; the other, is less bureaucracy, less relief. When you go to the man of affairs, the captain of industry, and speak to him about change, you will sometimes find that he is quite willing to make almost any change, so long as no change takes place in his condition. He is not unlike the child who wishes to take its toys to heaven. Consequently, whether you go to one section of the community or another, to discuss change, you will find that the very word is enough, in most cases, to make your hearers prefer the ills they have already, to others the majority will not accept at any price.

So when people ask me what the effect of a change would be if another Moses or Ezra came upon the scene, I, unhesitatingly, say that for a long time things would be much worse than they now are; but there would undoubtedly be this advantage: that the worst would come soon, and the lingering process would be cut to a minimum. Things will be worse, reform or no reform. Everybody, who has the courage and the intelligence to see things as they are, must realize that this system is in

decay, and that the politicians are undermining their own foundations. But, so long as the attitude toward the condition is "it will last my life-time," the lingering process will go on for a few more generations perhaps. But no one heeds that "perhaps." I say no one, but I should say no politician. There are many who are troubled, and who appreciate fully the significance of the "perhaps," but these people are not politicians. Mathematicians, historians, physicists, economists, and other serious thinkers have, in recent years, recorded their opinions, and many of them have gone beyond the abeyant "perhaps," and believe the end will be catastrophic when it comes, and that the time for fundamental change is urgent.

MANKIND'S SALVATION

One of the saddest things concerning the attitude of the electorates today is the absurd belief that salvation for mankind can come through political action. There may be instances of politicians who have, for the time being, helped the people over a crisis; but surely all history shows that under the political system, new crises arise and, no matter how many champions of the moment there may be, the crises still arise and the conditions of the people, as we see today in every country, become worse and worse. Spengler points this out clearly in *The Decline of the West*. Millions, in every country, believe that if wealth can only be taxed away from the rich and distributed among the poor, all will be well. This is no new idea. It was tried in every civilization that has gone to limbo and, as no genius has come forward in the political arena to tell us how it may now be done successfully, we may be sure that our civilization will do just what those of the past have done: finish the job

in the old-fashioned way. New tricks of dealing with monetary values, credit, exchange, and price-fixing only prolong and increase the agony. Although inflationary booms, up to a limit, may delude many people that all goes well while dividends are produced, which can be taxed away to the parasites, it will soon be realized that these artificialities and subterfuges are only making it harder for the people when the next depression overtakes them.

Wrongs which have endured for thousands of years cannot be set right at a session of Congress or Parliament. Things do not work out that way. At least, we can say with certainty that so far as the old civilizations were concerned, every expedient failed, and all the wisdom of the men we revere and quote so much, could not save the State. The evil of the political system is that it never produced a man who could save it. There is no room in that system for a saviour. All that the politician of the best type can do within the system, is to carry on. Continuity of injustice seems to be a law to which he is shackled!

BACK TO THE LAND

Frankly, I know of no other reply than this: it can be changed only by man changing himself back to what he was, before the State devoured him. Alas, there is no record of what he was. All that condition must be left to the imagination. Still, there are records of redemption. To mention only two which can be read by anyone, and which are set down in language so simple that a child can understand: first, there is the going back to Canaan; then, there is the great restoration of the time of Nehemiah. There are others, but let these suffice.

It may be too late now for people who will read

these stories to understand what is meant by the old cry "Back to the land." Even so, the least intelligent reader might notice that those who followed Moses out of Egypt were imbued with the notion that the land to which they were going back was the Promised Land. In a sense, the earth is man's Promised Land. But man, yoked, snaffled and tethered to his machine, has become its slave and his intelligence is so blunted, that it is impossible for him to realize that he is first and last a land animal, and the land his natural habitat. When Canaan was settled, the last thing that Moses and Joshua thought of was a State. Search the Pentateuch, after expurgating the glosses of the priests, and you will find it impossible to put your finger upon a passage which indicates, in any way, the setting up of a State organization. Why? Because the Israelites had had all the State they ever desired in the land they had left. Moses was a genius. He knew when he had had enough. There was to be no Pharaoh in the Promised Land. Alas, the experiment did not succeed, because some men desired others to work for them! Anyway, there is this to be said of the episode: that an attempt was made to set up an orthocratic State, the basis of which was freedom to produce; and the severest laws, the most terrible penalties, against taking a slice of your neighbor's land. Indeed, the command which carried the heaviest penalty was that regarding the removal of a land mark. "Thou shalt not remove thy neighbor's land mark!" It is unnecessary here to go further into this matter because, as I say, anyone who desires to know about the settlement of Canaan can read (it is to be hoped with sense and understanding) the story as it is set down in the Bible. Nevertheless, it may be as well now to say that the records show that the economic basis of the settle-

ment of Canaan was the one that was adopted by all peoples before the political State came into existence. The same basic economic law is to be found in the histories of Egypt, Greece, Rome, China, and India.

MAN'S ACHIEVEMENTS

Is it admissible to say that what man has been, man can be? That is the point to be decided. Looking back, we cannot fail to see the mighty things man has achieved and, when we have regard to his past and what he accomplished, we might adapt the phrase of Clive and say, "We are amazed at his moderation." It is unnecessary in this respect to urge the reader to search the pre-Christian records; it is enough to mention only what he has done within our era. The colossal achievement of man, after the fall of Rome, in creating the culture of Western Europe is a story of wonder and thrill beyond comparison. It is a pity it is not better known, for the fact is greater than the legend, and the fact remains in his works still preserved to us. The Gothic Cathedral, as it was in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, was an epitome of a universe of man's miraculous powers.

THE LAW OF NATURE

The law of Nature is production: "Earn thy bread in the sweat of thy brow." If man is to be the creature of the State, if he must look to the State for subsistence, why was he so mightily endowed that he existed through all those milleniums before a State was ever heard of? If there is one thing more certain than another that we hit upon in our imaginings of what man was, and how he overcame his vicissitudes, it is this: that he was intended to be an intelligent being, and to think out his own

problems, and solve his own difficulties! He had a mind, and he had to use it.

No one tries to explain why man should be selected, of all creatures, for this mighty endowment. I admit it is dangerous ground and the trespassers here may encounter discomforting evidence. We know what inquiry in this domain led to in the days of the jurisconsults, and we have only to turn to Sir Henry Maine to realize that we might find fundamentals which are alien to the mind of the legalist and the apostles of the State. The law of the jungle, which has been interpreted to mean "get where you can," was never the law of an endowed being who was to be master of his own fate. With man, therefore, the endowment of mind suggests not only productive power, and that in the exercise of that power he should strive to satisfy his desires and needs with the least exertion; it also suggests the power of establishing an order for his security, not only with regard to his subsistence, but security, also, against every physical and elemental menace against his person. What a creature! What astounding powers! So we reason that there was given to him a magical instrument which we call thought. When he witnessed that the beast was not required to think of the morrow, that it could, with or without violence to its kind, take where it would, and that Nature, sometimes prodigally, set out the where-withal for its sustenance, he realized that the law of the jungle was no law for him, if he desired to succeed as a producer.

EQUALITY OF OPPORTUNITY

Now in thinking out a system of order which would be suitable for him and his fellows, one that would give them occasion for their living in amity, they hit on the system of equality of opportunity. He and each of his

fellow individuals were to have equal right to use the earth for their subsistence. The law of liberty of production is perhaps the oldest of fundamental laws. We can account for the similarity of economic systems in all early civilizations in no other way than by imagining what inspired early man to establish this system. No matter where we look for these fundamentals; no matter how widely separated the civilizations were; no matter how they differed in race characteristics, in the matter of climate, whether the terrain were inland or near the coast, on hillsides or in the valleys, the same thought of the same system of order is to be found. Therefore, we are forced, whether there be tangible evidence or not, to the conclusion that man was endowed with the gift of thought, and that he was meant to use it always to enable him to solve his problems. This is perhaps one of the most interesting trails we find in reading the works of the historical school of jurists. When they record the desire of Roman jurists to search out a system of "a type of perfect law," we can scarcely fail to speculate on the nature of that law. My notion is that it was a law based upon an economic fundamental, and that fundamental was equality of opportunity or, call it, economic justice.

We might consider with some advantage a statement that Maine sets down in *Ancient Law*. He says:

"There are some writers on the subject who attempt to evade the fundamental difficulty by contending that the Code of Nature exists in the future and is the goal to which all civil laws are moving, but this is to reverse the assumption on which the old theory rested, or rather perhaps to mix together two inconsistent theories. The tendency to look not to the past but to the future for types of perfection was brought into the world by

Christianity. Ancient literature gives few or no hints of a belief that the progress of society is necessarily from worse to better."

The significance of this statement lies in the last sentence. Legalists take notice! The jurisconsults of Rome were nearer to the fall of many civilizations than we are now. They knew what took place, and why it took place.