

12

LIVING TOGETHER.

"Be kindly affectioned one to another with brotherly love; in honour preferring one another." Romans 12:10.

If we had no more of the Bible than the Sermon on the Mount, the twelfth chapter of Romans and the thirteenth chapter of I Corinthians we would have enough to make a heaven of this old world if people would just live it. Dr. George Stuart tells a touching story of a mountain woman called Grandma Henderson. She had a leaf torn from an old Bible with part of the twenty-third Psalm, which she read over and over. When he gave her a New Testament and Psalms in large print she walked the puncheon floor of her cabin and shouted for joy. How precious the Bible would be if we had only scraps of ^{it} left. But now, that we have the whole book, we let it gather dust on the book shelves.

If people would only put into practice the twelfth chapter of Romans it would transform any neighborhood into a paradise. Can you vision a neighborhood where all the buying and selling is done in a wholly unselfish spirit? A shrewd horse trader had a boy who could make a horse do almost anything the trader wanted it to do. It was the boy's job to try out the horse for the customer. One day the boy came up after a new horse had been bridled and saddled. When he mounted the horse he bent over in the saddle and whispered, "Are you buyin', or sellin'?"

A minister found a group of boys in a hot argument over a ball game. Thinking he might act as peacemaker, he asked what the difficulty was. The boys pointed to the

offender and said, scornfully, "He wants four strikes!"

We want four strikes when we are at the bat, but three, or less when we are in the field.

We like to sell high and buy cheap. We like good wages and low prices. The high standard of living in America is based on good wages and low prices. It is doubtful if there is any other place in the world where a day's labor will buy so much. Mass production has filled our warehouses with merchandise, streamlined distribution has lowered the price of goods, high wages has given our people a purchasing power never possessed by the masses on earth before. If any link in this chain is broken our standard of living is bound to fall.

Selfish interests would have us believe our standard of living has gone as high as it can go. They say the cost of labor has reached the point of diminishing returns. During the thirties we saw wages pushed down, down, down, till a man's labor would hardly buy bread for his family. Did it bring prosperity? Was our standard of living any higher then than it is now? Our grain elevators were full of grain, our packing houses were full of meat, our warehouses were full of merchandise, but we had no customers. We did see the wages of men pushed down to the point of ^{diminishing} returns.

So long as each raise in pay is accompanied by a corresponding raise in production greater than the raise in pay, wages will never be too high. The production of a day's labor has been rising rapidly for the last fifty years. In most industry a day's wages will buy far more production than it would fifty years ago. When a dollar spent for wages produces several times as many goods as the dollar will buy

14

the wheels of industry are bound to slow down. Mass production calls for mass buying power. If the wheels of industry are to keep rolling our buying power must keep pace with our technical advance.

This is our only answer to Communism. If we allow wages to be forced down till our people cannot buy the things our factories and farms produce, we are arming the Communists with a two-edged sword. Our standard of living is still too low. It must continue to rise. We still have too many children without good schools, too many people living in slums, too many who are underfed.

We are witnessing a ^{mighty} struggle between capital and labor. The outcome of this struggle may determine our future destiny. It is the days of stress and strain that always mark the steps of progress in the race of life. When we are at ease we are afraid to try anything new. It is men and women who are not afraid to live dangerously who turn the world upside down.

When have we seen high wages slow the wheels of industry, as low wages did in the thirties? We have had a few strikes that slowed down some industries for short periods. But these hurt the strikers more than they hurt the public, and all were of short duration. The Great Depression lasted almost ten years and cost this country more than both world wars put together.

The most often cited example of wages reaching the point of diminishing returns is the coal industry. Coal mining is one of the most ^{hazardous} occupations we have. The damp air and lack of sunshine makes wrecks of strong healthy bodies. There are more widows and orphans among

15

coal miners than any other occupation. No fair minded person would say that the coal miners are being paid too much for such labors as they are required to perform. But the price of coal has risen till other fuels are driving coal off the market. Suppose the strong unions of coal miners is broken, and the men forced to go back into the pits at the old wages. There is no use mincing words. That is what many would like to see. This would bring the cost of coal down some. But it would retard the mechanization of the coal industry more. More and more men would have to go down into the pits to keep fuel for our homes, factories and furnaces. We would have four strikes and the miners none.

But suppose the coal unions hold their gains. This will force forward the mechanization of the coal industry till coal can compete with other fuels. This will take thousands of men out of the pits and put them into more healthful and safer occupations. Would that be bad? Which do we want?

At the end of the Second World War it was found that America was fifty years ahead of Europe in technology. Why was this? It was high wages that forced us to put more and better machines on the job. At Moundville, Alabama there are some mammoth piles of dirt that were put there by primitive man not many centuries ago. It is said that this dirt was put on these mounds with baskets carried on the heads of men and women. One of our giant dirt moving machines will move more dirt than a thousand men and women with baskets on their heads. Should the man who operated the machine be paid the same wages as the man who carried dirt in a basket? In Europe they have contended the increase in production should go to the man

16
who furnished the machine. In America we have divided the increase with labor. That is why we are fifty years ahead.

Those who are clamoring so loudly for free enterprise surely have not thought how many artificial props there are under our economic structure. Free enterprise would call for abolishing every labor organization in this land. This would include every bar association, every dental and medical association, every manufacturer's association and every combination of skill or capital that is for the purpose of holding up prices. It would also call for free trade. If we are going to have three strikes for one, let us have three strikes for all.

The only large segment of labor that is not strongly organized and protected against competition is the farmer. He is now protected, in a measure, by price supports by the national government. And they are threatening to take that away from him! Then the farmer will have only one strike and the rest four. The farmer was blamed for the high cost of living when he was being paid a fair price for his produce. Who is to blame now? The farmer is going broke because of low prices of his produce, and food costs almost as much as it ever did. If it were not for price supports many a farmer today would be facing ruin.