

CHANGE

Time, we are told, consists essentially in change; or, as the well-known phrase has it, "Time is a changeful image of a changeless eternity." However, to form a complete and comprehensive definition of time, entirely divorced from its attendant effects, is apparently beyond the power of the human intellect. In this paper we shall consider time, not purely in its own sphere, but chiefly in its connection with that law, whose commands are universally obeyed, the law of change.

To treat of all the forms of created matter that are subject to this law, would be to discuss each and every class of creatures in this world. Every created object must, in the very nature of things, contribute to change; for, to deny the existence of change is to deny the existence of time, as we understand it. In this article I shall confine myself to change, as it affects the human race.

There are, without doubt, periods in history in which time apparently moves at a swifter pace than is its wont. As an example of this, we may quite appropriately cite our own twentieth century. Although the century is still comparatively young, yet it is probable that during no other century have so many changes, both in the social world and in the world of science, taken place, as in the last twenty-five years. In the one generation we have seen such changes in our social and mechanical worlds as would normally require the passage of centuries to bring about.

We have many evidences of this change, which has affected all our human institutions during the past few years. On the one hand, we have experienced a gradual social upheaval, and a general unsettling of that mental equilibrium, which served our ancestors in such good stead. We hear murmurs of dissatisfaction with our existing moral and religious institutions; we have also, in our time, noticed a growing spirit of disregard for lawfully constituted authority. The horrible crimes and robberies which are being committed daily are the effects of a radical change in our methods of thinking. And the significant fact in this is that the above noted change affects almost exclusively the youth of the world; or in other words, it is since the beginning of the twentieth century that this

spirit of so-called radicalism began to permeate public opinion in general.

Let us leave the social question and pass on to the changes and phenomenal progress made along scientific and mechanical lines. We are living in an age of progress. Science is fast overcoming the remaining barriers of nature; mechanical contrivances, the submarine and the airplane, have explored the depths of the sea, and the reaches of the air. Telephone, radio, and many other such inventions have joined the different countries of the world into one large community. Distance may well be said to be annihilated. These instances are but a few of the startling innovations of the last quarter century.

Many and various opinions and explanations have been advanced to account for the unusual progress and social unrest of the twentieth century; many attribute the generally increased disregard for law to the herculean struggle of 1914-18. Certainly it may have given an added impetus to the many evil influences operating during the past decade; but the origin of these evils cannot be attributed to the World War. Rather may we impute both those occurrences to a common cause, which had its inception years before the results became apparent.

At this point I would propound a question to the student of Sociology: Are the extraordinary changes and fluctuations of the standards of thinking, during the past quarter century, a result of the equally startling discoveries and progress made in the realms of science and industry? or vice versa? or is it only a coincidence that such unusual activities have attended both those lines over the same period?

For my part, I incline towards the last explanation. Progress in any one line of human endeavour is generally accompanied, but not necessarily caused by progress in others. But to find the original cause of all progress or retrogression, as the case may be, we must seek further afield; and finally we shall discover that all such movements and disturbances in the natural order are merely the fulfillment of that rule, that this world may not stand still. We must advance or retrogress; in this ultimatum the direction of the movement is not specified. But whatever be the direction, whatever be the motive, the movement was caused primarily by that law which has governed this world from the beginning of time: the inexorable law of change.

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