

INDUSTRIAL CONFLICT

Bright Sunday Sermon By Rev. John D. Long.

Some Wholesome Advice About Present-Day Problems—Discontent and Remedies.

BABYLON, L. 1.—In the old days of the Babylonian Empire, Sunday morning the Rev. John D. Long, preaching on "The Industrial Conflict," the text was from Ecclesiastes 10:2: "What hath a man for his labor?" Mr. Long said: "The writer of this text is asking us the rewards of life. Let us accommodate to the conflict now waging between capital and labor. It is the old question of the laborer and his reward, as the teachings of Holy Writ on the question?"

Here, as elsewhere, we believe that the Gospel applies, for as Ruskin suggests, the Gospel bears upon us at every point, and is either good for everything or good for nothing.

Civilization is based upon labor—human, animal, mechanical. What we call capital is at bottom the accumulated labor of the laborer who makes a wage. The laborer labors for the sake of a wage, and that becomes capital. Mechanical labor, by which most of the world's work is now done, is human labor invested in machinery, and working through the same.

Of course, money or capital is secured not only through saving and investment, but in many other ways. Human effort is harnessed to it, and it becomes a sort of call upon the bank of labor. Was it not Emerson who said, "He that hath a dollar for master of all the extent of that dollar?"

Vast fortunes have been piled up by those who have invented machines by which mechanical labor has been displaced. This the inventor is enabled to draw the wages of thousands. We all know how largely the machine has superseded the naked hand in the manufacture of a thousand and one articles of daily use. Take, for example, pins and needles and nails.

To be sure, many great fortunes have been made by other means than by machinery, but in the main the wealth of modern times is founded upon mechanical labor.

Before asking what the letter or spirit of the Bible teaches on the labor question, let us face the situation of today. Organized labor and capital are in conflict. There are strikes and lock-outs everywhere. Each strike is a battle in the way.

It may be well to observe that organized labor is as yet only a fraction of the total labor army, but it is a fraction that is increasing.

Why this warfare? Because labor on the one hand is dissatisfied with its share of the product, and because, on the other hand, capital desires to reduce the cost of production by opposing the demands of labor.

Other factors, however, enter into the situation. One arises from the introduction of the modern corporation. Whether corporations have souls or not, they lack the large measure of the element of personality and the personal interest which work for a corporation are working in the main for an unknown entity. Now, we remain that among the old-time Romans the word for stranger was also the word for enemy.

Further, there has been much dishonesty in corporate dealings. Take such things as the corrupt practice of bribery, the sale below value, the increase in cost of necessities of life by reason of unjust combinations to keep up prices. These and other similar crimes have led the community have done much to inflame not only labor, but the general public against capital.

Also, the rising standard of life, by which the living wage is further and further from the bare minimum that would enable the laborer to constantly demand a more and more generous wage.

Still other grounds of hostility might be referred to, such as the natural, though sinful, envy of the rich by the poor; the temptation of the poor, the growth of class distinctions between the rich and the rich and the inequality of pecuniary rewards. The men who discovered the process of internal combustion, who found that surgery might be rendered easier by the use of such agents as chloroform and ether—gained but little money from their discoveries. They were content with what they traded on the world's fair, and were satisfied with the patent laws and secrecy secured without the dreams of avarice, but to their honor that they did not.

On the other hand, the men who introduced such improved and cheapened methods as the Bessemer process of producing steel gained money by the hundred millions. So people are tempted to envy the men who were rather selfish, to say the least, in the acquisition of their wealth. And they are not far from being right.

Before we go further let us ask what is to be the probable outcome of the war between labor and capital? Is it an irrespressible conflict, or is the situation likely to be reconciled? The answer is already being given. Take such a situation as may be seen in the coal trade of Chicago. After bitter fighting the dealers and the teamsters have come together to monopolize the coal trade of the city and keep out all competition. Wages and profits have been put up at an excessive rate, to the profit of the public. This is likely to go on more and more.

The ultimate outcome, unless the tendency is checked, will be organization all along the line. The great industrial units will be organized in various ways, and individual initiative and personality will be restricted to an extent that will largely arrest the progress of civilization.

But let us take a breath and turn to the Bible. What are the teachings of the Bible in regard to the "wage of the worker?" The Old Testament is plainly an individualist. In proof of this you have but to read the laws regarding capital in the Book of Leviticus—laws that, enforced, would compel plain living as surely as the iron coin of Sparta. Hear what was laid down there. Land was allotted in small parcels to the families of the tribes, and could not be alienated except to the tribe to which it belonged. "And ye shall hallow this fiftieth year, and proclaim liberty throughout all the land unto all the inhabitants thereof; it shall be a jubilee unto you; and ye shall return every man unto his possession, and ye shall return every man unto his family." (Leviticus 25:10-17).

Interest could not be charged on loans. "And if thy brother be waxen poor, and fallen in decay with thee; then thou shalt relieve him; yea, though he be a stranger, or a sojourner; thou shalt not lend him upon usury, nor lend him thy victuals for increase." (Leviticus xxv:35-44).

Finally, there was the statute of limitations with reference to loans. "At the end of every seven years thou shalt make a release. And this in the manner of the release: every creditor that hath lent, whether unto his neighbor shall release it." (Deuteronomy 15:1-2).

The attitude of the Old Testament toward wealth is quite different from that of the modern world. It is not that poverty is a curse, but that it is a blessing. It is not that wealth is a blessing, but that it is a curse.

I need hardly remind you that the great characteristic dominating every page of the New Testament was a poor man, without house or home. His attitude toward labor was the one hand and capital on the other hand was to be despised. It was well put by Henry J. Van Dyke: "I rest on a golden bed. Never in a hermit's cavern have I eaten idly bread. Born within my ivory stable, where the cat-tled round me stood, Trained a carpenter in Nazareth, I have toiled and found in gain the sweat of labor where my feet have trod; They who work without complaining do the body of my God." (Proverbs xxiii:18-24).

Where the man was together, there I am among my own; Where the tired workman sleeps, there I am with him alone.

THE SUNDAY SCHOOL

INTERNATIONAL LESSON COMMENTS FOR AUGUST 14.

Subject: Obadiah and Elijah. I Kings xviii. 16-28. Memory Verses. 2. 1-2. Obadiah on the Day's Lesson.

I. Obadiah goes to meet Ahab (vs. 1, 2) 1. "Many days." The waiting time would have seemed long to Obadiah. "The third year" is supposed that he dwelt by the Cherith about a year and six months. It was now in the third year since he went to Zarephath. "Go," Elijah made no move until he had directions from God. The time had come when the people were in a state of mind to receive the benefit God intended them to receive through the terrible calamity that was about to befall them. "Unto Ahab." The King had remained obdurate and unreformed. Another opportunity was to be given him of repentance and a great repentance he declared to him the cause of the national judgment and to promise him, on condition of his removing it, the immediate blessing of rain.

2. "Elijah went." A marvelous proof of the natural integrity of this prophet, or his moral courage and his unflinching confidence in the protecting care of God, that he ventured to approach the presence of the raging lion. "Sure famine," which it is clear, from chapter 17:12-14, that the famine extended beyond the Kingdom of Israel, it is stated that it was especially oppressive in Samaria and the provinces immediately adjacent. Corn must have been obtained for the people from Egypt and from the coast, else life could not have been sustained so long.

II. Ahab and Obadiah searching for food (vs. 36). "Obadiah." There are no less than six instances in which he is referred to in the Old Testament. The most conspicuous among them was Obadiah, the prophet. Governor. He was an officer of high rank and great influence in Ahab's court. "Feared the Lord." It is, indeed, very remarkable that Obadiah, a devout worshiper of Jehovah, was allowed to remain in the palace, and that he was able to preserve every effort to rid the country of God's true followers. No doubt it was because Obadiah could be trusted. He was a man of great industry, and the sort of a man that Ahab would wish to appoint over his household. It is not uncommon to find wicked men and hater of God's church employing Christians preferably to others, simply because it is to their interest to do so.

4. "Cut off the prophets." The story of Jehovah's slaughter of the prophets is not given us, but it is referred to in this season and in chapter 19:10. Not satisfied in establishing the worship of Baal, this wicked woman undertook to exterminate the worship of the Lord. This persecution she had probably ordered in vengeance because Obadiah could not be found, and on suspicion that they were given to his congregation of Jews. The larger number whom Jehovah cut off were sons of the prophets, those who belonged to the school of the prophets, which we learn from 2 Kings 4:1 that was numerous and largely frequented. It was a part of these men whom Obadiah saved in the time of persecution. "By fifty." That is, he hid them in the cleft of the rock. These were they of whom the world was not worthy, mentioned in Heb. 11:38 as noble exemplars of faith. "Fed them." This was done secretly, at his own expense, and under every temptation and his life, and would, therefore, be a strong proof that he was a true worshiper of Jehovah. 5. "To the king." Obadiah, through the aid of the king, was able to rescue the prophets in the East, when a public calamity reaches its highest point, for the King himself was the chief minister to go forth and seek relief for his subjects. How high was the position of Obadiah in the service and confidence of the King.

III. Elijah meets Obadiah (vs. 7-10). "Elijah." How interesting it is to see how Christ, whom He has sent, and so come to love the fathers, that it is possible to love these questions of controversy in a way that will insure the permanent progress of our civilization.

What we need, after all, is not measures, but men. "The world wants men—large hearts, manly men." Men who can join in chorus and prolong the psalm of praise, and who can sing and dare.

To struggle in the solid ranks of truth; To conquer the monster, crank, by the throat; To bear opinion to a loftier seat; To blot the error of oppression out; And lead a universal freedom in.

"I wish some people knew just how much their faces can comfort one!" The apostle Paul has a young woman who had loved him, but she had been deceived by a friend who had many people comforted her, though they were unconscious of it. The Epworth Herald tells the story. "I often wish," said the girl, "that I were with your father, and it has been such a help to me to sit next to him. There is something so good and strong and kind about him, that I feel as though I could feel he was beside me. Sometimes, when I have been utterly depressed and discouraged, he has seemed somehow to know just what was wrong with me, but, if he didn't talk, why I just looked at his face, and that helped me. He probably has not the least idea of it, for I don't know why, and I don't suppose people half realize, anyway, how much they are helping or hindering others! There is a great deal of this unconscious kindness in the world. Moses was not aware of his face shone. The best people are not aware of their goodness. According to the old legend, it was only when it fell upon his white beard and on his face, that the saintly man's show was so clear. It is a parabola. Goodness that is aware of itself has lost much of its charm. Goodness that is done unconsciously means the most.

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EPWORTH LEAGUE LESSONS

AUGUST FOURTEENTH.

Obedying When Obedience is Hard—Gen. 22:18.

Where else is there pictured such a keen test of obedience? It makes us shudder to think of that noble man going into the land of Moriah with his son. A tedious three-day's journey it is. What a long time in which to wonder at God's command! What a chance for Satan to get in his fierce temptations! Think you the evil one was asleep during those days of agonizing suspense? By no means. But Abraham was heart against all assault. In his inmost heart he was loyal. God always defends his trusting and obedient ones.

That was the perfection of trust and confidence in God. At this climax his obedience was as thoroughly tested as if he had actually sacrificed his son.

"Lay not thine hand upon the lad," was said only after the last opportunity for faltering was past, and Isaac was saved to carry forward God's plan for the development of the race.

Abraham drew aside the curtain of the future and gave us a glimpse of the greatest events in history, though he knew it not. "God will provide a lamb." That was the revelation Centuries later away and on another mount—even Mount Calvary—the Lamb provided from eternity is sacrificed for the sins of a guilty world.

What an impression the scene on Mount Moriah must have made upon Isaac, the privilege of impressing the vital truth of atonement upon the ages was awarded Abraham as a merit of obedience.

Men seek blessings in many ways, but there is only one sure path to them; that is the path of obedience. Losses outside the path of duty are real and often very disastrous. In that path they are only apparent, and invariably issue in gain.

Obedience walks in a narrow way, but the way which leads upward to larger vision and grander experiences. At first obedience is uphill work, but having persisted in it sufficiently the gravity changes and we are drawn upward as plainly as before we were drawn downward.

The moment our lines are given to God in uncompromising obedience there comes to us a strength divine which overcomes all foes.

The high value of simple obedience is illustrated in the case of a French soldier who mounted the battlements of a besieged town without orders, which resulted in its capture. For his bravery he was made a knight, and then hung for disobedience.

When any plain command is given it is not ours to question, to reason, to wonder. It is ours just to obey. It is ours to do as ordered by Him who has a right to command. Duty is ours. Results are God's. How grand the life of habitual, unquestioning obedience!

CHRISTIAN ENDEAVOR NOTES

AUGUST FOURTEENTH.

"Obedying When Obedience is Hard" Gen. 22:18.

Scripture Verses.—Lev. 26:3-12; Deut. 6:17, 18, 24, 30; 10:19; 1:1-3; 25:15; 19:14; 24:3-5; 11:19; 12:45; 27:9-10, 16; Prov. 3:14; Isa. 48:18; Jer. 17:5-8.

Lesson Thoughts.

Men are promised, without action, do not constitute obedience. The rainbow is beautiful, but we value it most because God has fulfilled the promise which it represents. So any promise of obedience, however beautiful in itself, needs fulfillment to give it value with God.

We cannot obey God unless we know what his will is. If we wish to obey we will seek to know his will.

If the little things have a right to your obedience there is as great glory in obeying them as in obeying greater things. A ship that disregards its rudimentary regulations, is a slight thing, would soon come to ruin. Heed the smallest hint of conscience.

He who has followed God's messages on earth has at last another message to follow, and according to the faithfulness with which he has heard and obeyed here will be the confidence and gladness with which he will follow the last. "God help us so to follow every voice of his providence which leads us to his service here, that when the last voice comes, before which the human spirit naturally shrinks and sinks, we will rise up and go up, clasping the hand of the angel until we clasp the hand of Christ himself.

Obedience implies that some one else is in charge. Then some one else is responsible for the results. It may look to us as if a given course would mean failure, but we outcome rests with the one that makes the plan and marks out our part in it. If God's ways are ways of wisdom, then there is no cause for us to worry about what will happen if we follow his clear leading. His leadership insures success, and our safety is in following.

Marie Antoinette's Paradox.

A paradox used by Queen Marie Antoinette has recently been sent to a London house to be brought up to date. The stick, which, after the fashion of those primitive sunshades, doubles up of ivory, but almost covered with beautifully chased gold, studded with turquoise and garnets, and inlaid with the people of Frederick's Hall, Louisiana county, Va.

Latchwood says that he was pursued by dogs, snakes and people until he deemed it advisable to get off the earth. He chose a tree as the most convenient method. As he declined to come down, the people bring him food regularly and put it at the foot of the tree, where he gets it when the coast is clear.

Lassoed His Big Catch.

Frank Rogers of South Orington has quite a fish tied up at his wharf on the river shore. He caught a sturgeon 3 feet long, weighing 250 pounds, in his salmon net, and has him fastened by a rope so that he can swim around in the creek. People who wish to see him pull him ashore, and after the inspection of his big sturgeon wiggles back into deep water. The sight is quite a treat to those who have never seen quite so large a fish, and many embrace the opportunity.—Kennebec Journal.

THE GREAT DESTROYER

SOME STARTLING FACTS ABOUT THE VICE OF INTEMPERANCE.

"I am Beer"—A Remarkable Parody on Longfellow's Hiawatha Which is Especially Applicable to the Present Situation—Poverty in Bumpers.

Like the strokes of heavy hammers On the solid rock pavements, Fall the iron-circled hoof-beats Of the brewer's mallet funnels. With the jangling of the harness, And the crushing, grinding thunders Of the Juggernaut behind them, Rushing from the lofty portals, Wide and high, arching portals Of the brewer's gloomy castle, Built with dead walls far extended, Like the towers of the Bastille, Mined beneath the reeking dungeons, Fat-infested reeking caverns, O'er whose bricki-rah resounding Drives the monster wain deep-loaded.

Wide and high and strangely freighted! Who so comes with bustling thunders! What so ponderous encumbers! How like a tower of the Bastille, Till the stagnant air must shudder! Wind, wave and spire all shudder! And a voice from out the black vaults Hollow and low, but dread and near: "I am Beer!"