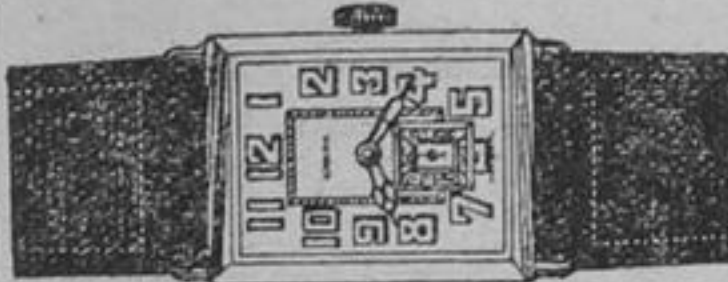


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**An Inspiring Labor Day Sermon  
By Rev. E. Ryerson Young**

Minister of Newtonbrook United Church Gave  
Interesting Discourse on Timely Subject.

Monday was Labor Day and throughout the length and breadth of this country tribute was paid to the part which Labor has played and is destined to play in the building of Canada. "The Workman and His Work" was the subject of a very interesting sermon by Rev. E. Ryerson Young of the Newtonbrook United Church on Sunday evening last and the timely address was very much enjoyed by a large congregation. "Labor is King," we are told, said Rev. Young in opening his discourse. "The modern aristocrat is the workingman. What a change from former days! Its is not so long ago that that great exponent of human life Shakespear, pictured a young gentleman, one of his heroes, threatened with death by his elder brother, being besought by an old family servant to flee the place.

"What," said Orlando, "wouldst thou have me go and beg my food or with a base and boisterous sword enforce a thievish living on a common road? For this young gentleman there seemed only two ways opened to him, a gentleman beggar or a gentleman thief. The thought of putting his hands to toil was foreign to him. And the ideas pertains in some quarters that only the "professions" are even to-day the possible places for gentlemen who are compelled to render some service to humanity for a living. But that idea is being rapidly abused and the worthy workman is coming into his full heritage. It may be a surprise to some that the Bible has always given him a noble place, even considering the master-workman a man called of God and endowed with His peculiar spirit. For a preacher of the Gospel, sent to proclaim glad tidings of a Heavenly Father's love, to be filled with the Spirit that he may perform his work aright, has long been acknowledged.

But our education in the "Ministry of God" is not complete until we turn back to the book of "Exodus," and read in the thirty-first chapter of a workman "filled with the spirit of God" to cut stones, carve timber, "to work in all manner of workmanship." So, in God's own Kingdom, there is no such divisions as men make between "sacred" and "secular" work; but wherever there is honest work to be done, truth to be proclaimed, justice to be attained or service to be rendered, the workman, called of God to do the task, is as worthy as any of his fellows of honor, reward and love.

Amongst the forces today, public opinion, Labor Unions, Socialists, and other organizations, the church is taking a full part in bringing about the true appreciation of the place and rewards of the workingman. But, in their impatience to grasp the rewards of their labor, there are organizations of workingmen who resent all other workmen who do not see with them and approve of their methods to attain their ends, and amongst those most resented have been their fellow-workmen in the church. It is merely an insistence upon first principles, but the outcome, we believe, is as different as is darkness from light. The insistence of Socialistic Labor Unions is upon fees, rewards of labor and physical conditions. The Church's first insistence is upon the nature of the work and the character of the worker. How much did he get for his labor? asks the exploiter. How much could he get for it? How much "fun" will his wage get him? The Church, on the other hand, insists upon, What did he do? How well did he do his work? In what spirit did he do it? Those, who place the first insistence upon fees and rewards of labor, who cannot think in terms of love and service and self-sacrifice, we believe, are filling the world with graft and greed, selfishness and war, with their terrible train of bitterness, disaster and woe. On the other hand, if the character of the workman and the quality of the work receive the primal insistence we believe we shall have a world wherein dwelleth justice and righteousness, the noble fruits of which will be peace, prosperity and happiness.

And John Ruskin sees the same thing. "With these people," says he, "just as certainly the fee is the first and the work in the second, as with

brave people the work is first and fee is the second. And this is no small distinction. It is between life and death IN a man; between heaven and hell FOR him. You cannot serve two masters—you MUST serve one or the other. If your work is first with you and your fee is second, work is your master and the Lord of your work who is God. But if your fee is first with you, and your work is second, fee is your master, and the lord of your fee who is the devil."

These words of Ruskin are very strong but we do not believe that they are too strong.

Let us take up point by point these different contentions. There is first the primal insistence upon the character of the workman and the nature of his work. If place, power and the privilege to enjoy the rewards of labor or were of first consideration then Herod, the King, should be the ideal above Jesus, the Carpenter of Nazareth; for his power enabled him to increase his sensuous pleasure by taking his brother's wife and when threat came to his sovereign power, he was in a position to see that all opponents of his policy, and truth-seeking and truth-telling preachers were beheaded. On the other hand, Jesus, a humble carpenter grew "in stature in wisdom and in favor of God and man," and brought forth such a fruitful service that it is as a new stream of blessing plunged into the turbid currents of human life. He showed that there is no honest work, however humble, but it may be for the fashioning of a noble soul. It were better, says the church, to be a humble village carpenter, more loving, kind and truly religious than Herod on the throne clothed in fine linen and fawned upon by many friends, for one has heaven within his soul and the other hell, and only the light of God's day is needed to reveal the truth. But this is preaching "other world lines," says the impatient laborer. "The laborer is worthy of his hire," give me that and let me spend it as I like. So the workman cries for his fee but how soon the end has to be faced! Even those who sport and laugh during their day soon find the shades gathering and then hear their cry! Harry Lauder, one of the world's leading comedians, says that there are but three goals for men. Drink, Despair and God. But I fear that if the truth were told, Drink is but a porch of the charnel-house, Despair. Thus the great comedian points out that the end of the fee-seeker is the same as Ruskin declared.

But the Church does insist upon the workman receiving his due even here. "The laborer is worthy of his hire," it says with emphasis, but it also says "If any man will not work, neither let him eat." In the words of a modern workman, the church most emphatically declares "Life without labor is sin." "I work the works of Him that sent me," says Jesus, and so says every other true workman. The Bible most emphatically states that it is only the workman who is entitled to the rewards of toil, to the very bread by which men live. Let all others perish.

But the spirit of God in Bezaleel was not satisfied with simply performing a task. He was an artificer indeed, bringing to highest possible perfection the grace and beauty of his work. Thus he fills out the ideal of the noble workman: "Life without labor is sin; but labor without art is brutality." The true workman in love with his work, is not as the ox that seeks but a full manger and a bed of clean straw he, seeks to bring out the fullest possibilities of his work, and, in that very act, perfects his own character, bringing out its fullest and most glorious manhood.

And this thought leads us to the highest conception of the Bible. In what spirit did the workman work? For his fee, to please men or with the glory of God in his soul? If a man has God in his thoughts, and the glory of God his highest and most persistent endeavor, even the most broken life on earth, as men see it, is a success. For after all it is, as Lauder says, God to whom we have to go. He is the Master-Workman. But instead of going to Him as a last resort we should go to Him first. Behold His

workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works the cruel raw materials of gentile manhood are "aliens," "strangers," having no hope" and lost even to a sense of God's presence the world. In Christ Jesus these are "brought nigh to God," "reconciled," have access to the Father in Heaven, become "fellow-citizens with the saints" and are "of the household of God." Compare the workman seeking worldly pleasures as his rewards with the man who has done his day's toil and walked with God! Compare the home where each seeks his rights and personal pleasures with the one wherein dwells the spirit of Christ. Truly the "household of God" is a foretaste given to men of what their hamlets, their cities and their world may be, if they would but set the primal things in their place. "Seek ye first the Kingdom of God and His righteousness," then the rewards will be given, and, better still, then and then only will men be in a position to fully appreciate and most thoroughly enjoy those rewards.

But the weary conflict is still bitterly raging. The forces of darkness, the deceitful mirages, are holding the minds of multitudes of men, of sincere and struggling workingmen. World-visions of blessing and the binding together the workers of earth in to one great brotherhood are abroad. It behoves the "children of God" to diligently spread the light and to proclaim the truth that they possess. The Spirit of God will not be satisfied with half-victories. The slave is freed; but so must be the child. The mother must be lifted to her place of fullest honor. All who toil should receive their due; and all should toil, and in their toil rejoice. While there is much to be said about "the movement of the masses," the making and enforcement of wide-sweeping laws, the CHURCH STILL INSISTS that the PRIMARY THING is to FIRST PASS THE WORKMAN THROUGH THE HANDS OF THE MASTER-WORKMAN. When man can say he is of GOD'S WORKMANSHIP, created anew in Christ Jesus unto good works, when he is thus right with God, he will soon set to rights the things of this world. But it is in the insistence upon this primary need that the Church is so often misunderstood by the hasty reformer of the workingman's conditions. It is not too much, however, for us to say, and say it again and again until it is fully comprehended, that all other plans are bound to fail. The world's confusion, bitterness, distress, will recur as truly as a circle is round. It is only the straight path marked out by God that will lead men upward and onward to the goal of individual and mutual blessedness, to be shared to the utmost by every child of man.

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