

9/11/57 Sunday  
A.M. *Cliff* "The Church and Labor"

9/14/55  
7:46  
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Scripture Lesson: - Micah 6:

Text: - Micah 6: 8. "What doth the Lord require of thee, but to do justly, and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God!"

Introduction: - What has the church to say today in view of the labor troubles we are having? It is easy to say nothing, to be dumb, to ignore the situation and go on preaching the simple gospel. But has the simple gospel nothing to do with real life? John the baptist did not think so. When people came to him and asked, "What shall we do", someone might have said to him, "Don't be too specific." But he was very specific. He said, "He that hath two coats, let him impart to him that hath none, and he that hath meat, let him do likewise." When the soldiers came and asked "What shall we do", some one might have said, "John, don't be too personal; just preach the simple gospel. But John said, "Do violence to no man, neither accuse any falsely, and be content with your wages." When King Herod came, some one might have said, "Now, John, be diplomatic, or he will cut off your head." But John was very undiplomatic, and, turning on the old scoundrel of a King, denounced him for his shortcomings. The simple gospel is more than an evasion. The religion that does not go up against real evils is a sham. The church must speak out, and its message must have teeth in it.

There are two facts which underlie the present position and the Word of God assumes them both.

#### I.

The first of these is the dignity of labor. God is on the side of the worker. The worker has rights. The idler has none, whether he belongs to the idle rich or the idle poor. "If any man will not work, neither shall he eat." That is, the most primitive right, to keep from starving, is denied him. God is on the side of labor. ~~He lives with the man who works.~~

But the Bible does not confine work to manual labor. He is a cheap thinker who shouts that the only man who works is the man who works with his hands. This is not Bible teaching. Paul said, "I Labor". He was not talking about making tents, but about preaching the gospel. He says, "I am a laboring man, because I preach the Truth that makes men free". The hardest work is not with the hands, but with the brain, the soul, the self. The man whose hands are not directed by a well-disciplined mind must remain a mediocre worker. There is no room in the world for idlers. The saddest thing that can happen to a man is to have nothing to do.

## II.

The second fact the Bible assumes is the sanctity of ownership, whether public or private. God says, "Hands off of your neighbor's property." What one owns is his. If it is not his, why did mount Sinai thunder out, "Thou shalt not steal?" There can be no theft in a world where everybody owns everything. God's law looks on taking the other man's property as stealing, and says the thief is dangerous. Ownership is sacred, and the man who wantonly destroys his neighbor's property is an outlaw. Ownership is a trust as well as a right. Property is a trust, and we are stewards. In using what is his own, a man must have regard for his neighbor as well as himself.

Let capital not forget that God lives with the man who works, and let labor keep its hands off of what does not belong to it.

God has for laborer and for the sanctity of ownership, a three fold message.

1. The first is justice. - "What does the Lord require of thee but to do justly;" God is concerned with conduct rather than property. The question is not how much is a man worth, but what kind of a man is he, and how is he living? The only line of distinction which God draws between men is whether they do well or ill. An unscrupulous poor man who is out to plunder and pillage the rich, and an unscrupulous rich man who is out to oppress and exploit the poor, are both rascals. The selfish millionaire and the bum who throws a bomb are in the same class. God's first

requirement on all men is that they do justly, that they do right.

Justice means a square deal to labor. The employer who is not giving a just wage to his employees is not honest. Labor is not guilty of treason when it tries to better its condition. The question of wages will never be settled right until justice holds the scales.

Justice means a square deal for capital. The employer who is not willing for a labor union to run his business must not be classed as a bad man. He may be a capitalist, but he has rights nevertheless, and is entitled to justice. Labor will never permanently better its position by wronging its employer.

Justice is the reign of law. No man can afford to break the law, even for his own financial advantage, for the law is his only protection. When a man cheats the law to increase his profits, he plays the fool. Law must be upheld, cost what it may.

Do justly. That is what the church would say to people today. We must behave ourselves and play fair. We must restrain ourselves and give as well as demand a fair deal. We must stand for the majesty of the law and the authority of the courts as against the violence of mobs and the rioting of unruly men.

2. The second message is mercy. "What doth the Lord require of thee but to love mercy!" Something more than justice, something more than a square deal. It is mercy. Mercy is the cultivation of the spirit of good will. Let us try to see the good in other people. Let us strive to promote the spirit of good will rather than hate. It also means the Golden Rule. This is the only thing that will lead us out of the wilderness. We must do unto others as we would have them do to us. It is wonderful what this will accomplish.

3. The third message is the Church. "What doth the Lord require of thee but to walk humbly with thy God!" There is something bigger than justice, bigger

than mercy. There is something holier than our relations with each other. It is our relations with God. We must Get right with God if we are ever to get right with each other. Labor will never be just with capital so long as it is wrong with God. Capital will never be merciful to labor so long as it is wrong with God. God comes first, and we can never hope to develop a social order that will last, if we leave God out.

How things would change to-day if we would take the matters which separate us into the presence of him, to whom we must all render a final account. How issues change when we remember that this life is not all. The great thing is not wages and profits, but character. Let us not be so absorbed with building fine houses as to forget our Heavenly home. Let us not be so occupied with bigger wages and larger dividends as to fail to lay up for ourselves treasures which never rust or decay. You may scoff at this, but you are foolish if you do. Man is deeply religious, man is hopelessly religious. His deepest need is God, and no man's plight is so forlorn as his who is without God.

Let us as Christian people be more concerned about our nation that it may come back to God that is the basic need. Today the world is sick right unto death. Some miracle drug must be found. Good works moral reform is not enough. The only miracle drug that can heal the world's ills is glorious gospel of Jesus Christ. Not long ago in reviewing world trends someone said Christianity had failed. The real truth is the world has not tried Christianity. Nations are rejecting the remedy. India is closing its doors to Christianity, China is already closed

This should drive us to our  
knees in prayer. If the entire  
world rejects the message  
of Christ then all is lost. If we  
reject Him & His message  
then I fear the worst for  
our nation. To Israel the Lord  
said "prove me now" But we  
express doubt & go on stumbling  
& muddling thru making each  
mess bigger than the former  
one. Christ will not force  
Himself on individuals or  
nations. Lets give Him a  
chance. Time is growing  
short, it is a desperate hour.  
Therefore we must go all out  
to get Christs message to our  
Nation & the world. are you  
willing to give your best  
in this crisis hour?

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