

ONE HUNDRED BEST SERMONS FOR SPECIAL DAYS AND OCCASIONS

WITH ACCOMPANYING CYCLOPEDIA OF
CHOICE ILLUSTRATIONS

CHRISTMAS, OLD YEAR DAY, WATCH-NIGHT, NEW
YEAR, EPIPHANY, VOCATION DAY, YOUNG PEOPLE'S
SERVICE, LINCOLN'S BIRTHDAY, WASHINGTON'S
BIRTHDAY, LENTEN SEASON, PALM SUNDAY, GOOD
FRIDAY, COMMUNION SUNDAY, EASTER, ARBOR
DAY, ASCENSION DAY, WHITSUNDAY, TRINITY
SUNDAY, MOTHER'S DAY, MEMORIAL DAY, CHILDREN'S DAY, COMMENCEMENT, INDEPENDENCE DAY, AGED PEOPLE'S SERVICE, THE SABBATH, LABOR DAY, RALLY DAY, ELECTION DAY, THANKSGIVING DAY, UNIVERSAL BIBLE SUNDAY, FOREFATHERS' DAY, CORNER-STONE LAYING, CHURCH DEDICATION SERVICE, DEDICATION OF CHURCH BELLS, SERVICES FOR LEADING FRATERNITIES, ETC.

COMPILED AND EDITED BY

REV. G. B. F. HALLOCK, D. D.

EDITOR OF "THE EXPOSITOR"

Author of "The Evangelistic Cyclopedic," "The Homiletic Year," "Christ in the Home," "Journeying in the Land Where Jesus Lived," "The Teaching of Jesus Concerning the Christian Life," "Beauty in God's Word, etc."



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**ONE HUNDRED BEST SERMONS
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the attitude of Columbus when he intrusted his tiny boats upon an uncharted sea. It is the forward-striving, hopeful, expectant aspect of faith. To possess faith one must be willing to take some risk for a cause. It is of the essence of business enterprise and of the creative spirit in science and art. Despite human frailties and weaknesses, despite follies and irrationalities, despite selfishness and greed and profiteering, despite false ideals and paralyzing indifference, we must go on with our task whether it is our business, our politics or our religion, believing that God is with us and in us. Everywhere we must keep on hoping and striving and believing that improvement will be made. We dare not be pessimistic or discouraged. God is with us. When we give up that faith we are done with life, or at least with that part concerning which we have lost faith. The kind of faith which we must hold is buoyant, believing and undaunted.

Thus, God, who cares for the "fifth sparrow," is still ruling in the world and expects us to help him bring about more idealistic conditions. Like Jesus, we are to have great reverence for human life, unlimited love for our fellowmen, and buoyant, undaunted faith in God that eventually all things will work together for good for those who love the Lord.

THE CHURCH AND LABOR

By Rev. James I. Vance, D. D.

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

What has the Church to say today in view of labor troubles? It is easy to say nothing, to be dumb, to ignore the situation and go on preaching the simple Gospel. This is what some of the brethren advise. But what is the simple Gospel? Is it a corpse? Has it nothing to do with real life? John the Baptist did not think so. When the people came to him and asked: "What shall we do?" someone might have said to him: "Do not be too specific; just preach the simple Gospel." But John was very specific, and 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 was very personal, and 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: "John, be diplomatic, or he will cut off your head." But John was very undiplomatic, and, turning on the old scoundrel, 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.

It is easy to say nothing, but it is easier to say too much, to go to extremes, to become a partisan either for labor or capital, to assume functions which belong to the State, to become meddlesome and oratorical and inflammatory. It is easy to say things which make the situation worse, to start a fire which cannot be put out.

Between these two extremes of a Church that is dumb and a Church that is garrulous, between a Church that says nothing and a Church that says too much, there is room and need for a Church that arraigns labor and capital at the bar of God, and calmly and fearlessly and faithfully attempts to interpret to men the teachings of the Bible on the questions which to-day rend society.

There are two facts underlying our present position which the Bible assumes.

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 belong to the idle rich or the idle poor. "If any man will not work, neither shall he eat." That is, the most primitive right, the right to keep from starving, is denied him. God is on the side of labor. He lives with the men who work. If you think you can keep labor down, you reckon without your host, for you have left the Almighty out of your calculations.

But the Bible definition does not confine work to manual labor. He is a cheap thinker who shouts that the only man who has rights is the man with hands, because the only man who works is the man who works with his hands. This is not the 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. Indeed, 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. Don't waste your sympathy on working men. They do not need it. The saddest thing that can happen to any man is to have nothing to do.

II. The second fact the Bible assumes is the sanctity of ownership, whether it be public or private. God says: "Hands off of your neighbor's property." What one owns is his. If not, Sinai would never have thundered out, "Thou shalt not steal." There can be no such thing as theft in a world where everybody owns everything. It may be a pleasant sensation for an anarchist, who has nothing himself, to ignore property rights and regard his neighbor's garden as his own, and help himself. But God's law looks on that as stealing, and says the thief is dangerous. Ownership is sacred, and the man who wantonly destroys his neighbor's property registers himself as an outlaw.

Ownership is a trust as well as a right. In using what is his own, a man must have regard for his neighbor as well as himself. No one has a right to hoard, or profiteer, or even use his property only for himself. Property is a trust, and we are stewards.

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. These two things are fundamental. They are at the foundation of civilization. They cannot be ignored without tearing down the world. Recognizing the dignity and the rights of labor on the one hand, and the sanctity of ownership on the other, the Church has a threefold message.

1. The first is justice. "What doth 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 God draws between men is whether they do well or ill. Any other line is absurd. 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 knaves. The selfish millionaire and the bum who throws a bomb are in the same class. God's first requisition on all men is to do justly, to do right.

Justice means a square deal to labor. The employer who is not giving a just wage to his employes is not honest. Labor is not guilty of treason when it tries to better its condition. It may make demands that seem preposterous, but it may be enduring wrongs that are outrageous. The question of wages will never be settled right until justice holds the scales.

Justice also 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 must not be regarded as the foe of humanity because he chooses to exercise certain rights which are his. He may be a capitalist, but he has rights, nevertheless, and is entitled to justice. Labor will never permanently better its condition by wronging its employer.

Justice is the reign of law. No man can afford to break law, even for his own financial advantage, for law is his only protection. When labor is riot, lawlessness, and disorder, it pulls down the roof over its head. When a rich 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 to-day. We must behave ourselves and play fair. We must restrain ourselves, and give as well as demand a square deal. We must stand for the majesty of law and the authority of courts as against the violence of mobs and the rioting of unruly men. Only as we do this can we hope to build for ourselves and others a better order.

2. The second message is mercy. "What doth the Lord require of thee but to love mercy?" Something more than justice is needed, 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 people. Let us strive to promote good will rather than hate.

It also means the practice of 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 unto us. It is wonderful what this will accomplish. Without it all our laws fall short of a cure.

God requires more than justice in human relations. He requires mercy. He insists that we be as profoundly interested in our neighbor as ourselves. Indeed, he demands more. He asks that we put self aside to serve our neighbor. He wants us to

love mercy, to be merciful not because it is commanded, or expedient, but because we are in love with it. Mercy will tear down barriers and slay hate. It makes men brothers. "Blessed are the merciful."

3. The third message of the Church is God. "What doth the Lord require of thee but to walk humbly with thy God?" There is something bigger than justice, bigger even 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 to 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 build a social order that will last if we leave him 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 an 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 hopelessly religious. His deepest need is God, and no man's plight is so forlorn as his who is without God.

A DAY'S WORK AND A DAY'S WAGES

By Rev. Robert C. Hallock, D. D.

Texts: "As an hireling, his day." Job 14:16; "He that reapeth receiveth wages." John 4:36.

Two men, two day's work, two spirits in working, two kinds of wages! One man works as "an hireling," toiling mechanically and only for his "dollar," longing for the "shadow" and the flung-down tools. The other, a man not a machine, interested, animated, inspired, works as artist, idealist, enthusiast. For him the day is too short, and the shadow of the setting sun comes all too soon.

"John Jones, what do you get out of a day's work?"

"A dollar or two, curse it! Hard work and poor pay!"