

THE GOSPEL OF INTELLIGENT WORK.

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[From a report of an Address delivered at Chautauqua, N. Y., on National Army Day, August 19, 1899.]

I come to preach the gospel of intelligent work; in the first place, the gospel of work, and in the next place, that that work shall be intelligent. I need not say that the work, unless it is work for righteousness, must necessarily be work for the devil. There is no middle ground. If you are not working for what is decent, that very fact means that you are allied with the forces of unrighteousness. Do you recollect a law passed by one of the great democracies over two thousand years ago, that in any time of civic tumult the man who did not take sides was to be adjudged a traitor and expelled from the republic? I half wish we had such a law now. I am not a bit afraid of what the verdict will be whenever the American people makes up

its mind to take sides; sometimes I do feel a little afraid when the American people chooses to sit by with its hands folded and say, "Oh, the politicians are very bad, but we don't care to take any part in politics." Or, "we are not responsible." I want to repeat to you something I have said twice before this summer to similar audiences: Never lay the flattering unction to your souls that you can hold yourselves apart from anything that is wrong in the nation; that there can be a stain on the honor of the flag and not a stain on each one of you. Exactly as you can not hold yourselves free from stain if the honor of the flag is stained, so you can not say that you are all right, that the people are all right, if the politicians go wrong; you can't blame them, because they do just exactly what you let them do, and no more. If, indiffer-

ent, you do not take the trouble to find out the facts, if you do not have the principle to stand up for the right, or if you have plenty of principle but have not the common sense to stand up in a way to make yourselves felt—in any one of those three cases you are just as much to blame if your representatives go wrong as if you yourselves made them go wrong.

I am not here to preach to you how to best avoid having a rough and a hard time in life. On the contrary, I am here to tell you that what you must look for is to do your duty, not to have an easy time; to find out what is right for you and right for the nation to have done, and then to do it. We do not glory in the memory of men who led easy lives. Look back at your own life; at what you have done that you are proud of. How much of it came as the result of ease; how much of what fundamentally gives you most pleasure now came from the effort merely to get pleasure at the moment? Practically nothing. What you have done that you are proud of came from toil, from effort, from disappointments manfully faced, from failure at last successfully overcome, and you won your ultimate triumph out of repeated defeats in many a case.

This Chautauqua here—which has made the name Chautauqua a noun of multitude of gatherings all over the Union—do you think it came by chance or by the work of dilettantes, men who were willing to do a little if it did not interfere with their personal comfort? It came just exactly as I recollect a certain political movement in New York coming. There was a time quite early in my career when I took part in an effort to get a certain evil overthrown in a given assembly district in New York, and we rallied a great number of men and overthrew our adversaries. Then we met to make the organization permanent, and the excellent man who meant very well but who habitually meant well sitting in his parlor, said that he did not believe we ought to have an organization; we ought always to trust to the spontaneous uprising of the people; and we explained to him that never in our lives had we worked quite so hard as we did to bring about the particular spontaneous uprising in question. You have had to work; to spend your best thought, your best effort, your best conscience, your best life to get this Chautauqua started; you have had to go through months and years of disappointment, times when things did not go as you hoped they would, times when success was almost in your grasp

and then suddenly seemed to recede further away than ever; but now that you have it started, there is probably no other one educational influence in all the country quite so fraught with hope for the future of the nation as this and the movements of which this is the archetype.

I preach to you the gospel of work, and a gospel of work which shall in part treat the doing the work well as of itself a reward. Other rewards will come; it is right that you should look for other rewards; but the best job will always be done by the man who glories in doing a particular job well—whether he is a man plowing a furrow on a farm or whether he is a great leader in religious and secular thought trying to found an institution, the principle applies exactly the same.

There is a sentence in Ruskin of which I have always been fond, wherein he points out that those marvellous Gothic cathedrals, which make in the aggregate certainly the greatest architectural inheritance the race has ever received since the days of Greek decadence, were built, not by architects whose names are handed down for all time, but by men whose names have perished, by men who were simply master masons, who worked for a certain wage, doubtless expecting and receiving praise for the time being, but a praise infinitesimal in proportion to the work they did, who worked primarily because they gloried in doing the work and whose reward was found in having done that work well.

We are confronted at the end of this century with another century about to open, a century big with fate for the whole human race, a century big either with disaster or with glorious triumph, as we ourselves or our children may choose to make it. We are brought face to face with social unrest, with bitter social discontent, with idle dreamings of an impossible Utopia, with men who make it their trade to inflame caste against caste, class against class, or section against section, and many a remedy is proposed. Most of the remedies that are proposed will and can avail but little. A few will avail much, for a good deal can be done by wise legislation; more can be done by wise combinations of individuals for the helping of all. But most can be done and in the long run the situation can be fully and adequately met only by instilling into the great bulk of our citizens, not alone the doctrine that the moral is always above the material and must be, but the doctrine that each man should

think most of his duties and least of his rights—he must think of his rights (I would be ashamed of him if he didn't), but of his duties first—the doctrine of believing in doing useful work for the sake of the moral uplift it gives to him, of doing the work for the pride taken in having been not a drone but one of the men who made the machinery of our civilization revolve that is to bring us no matter by how small a fraction of a step nearer the goal. When you can get that instilled as the law of life into our average man, you will find that that average man will be able himself, together with his fellows, to work out a solution of the problems that confront us. And until the bulk of our people have that spirit in them, until they strive to do righteousness, until they strive to live in accordance with the higher moral law, until each man strives not only for his own rights but to preserve the rights of others, until he realizes his obligations to his brother and to the state as well as to himself and his family; until we come to that you may be sure that the best system will work imperfectly and harshly.

There is always a little temptation to tell a particular audience to abhor the vices to which it is not in the least inclined. I do not have to tell you to strive for decency. I have to tell you to be practical, to strive intelligently, to make yourselves felt. The other day I met a very good head-in-the-air friend of mine and I was asking him why in the world he voted in a certain way, and he said he always voted as his conscience bade him. I told him I earnestly hoped he would always follow his conscience, but that if his conscience perpetually impelled him to do something foolish I hoped he would look into the conscience and see if he could not help it out. And I wish that each man here would recollect that the bad man pure and simple never has won and never will win any victories by himself in American life. He wins his victories—any amount of them—because he can so often count upon the active or passive support of excellent people who mean well but who literally don't know. When once we have trained our public opinion to the point where it will recognize in the able man who goes wrong merely a human wolf to be hunted down, when it will recognize that the successful scoundrel, often the scoundrel who just keeps clear of the law, may be a worse foe of the nation than the man behind the bars in the penitentiary—not recognize it here, not recognize it as an abstract matter in talking it over among our-

selves, but recognize it in actual life by shunning and avoiding such a man, by holding him disgraced, by making him feel the intolerable weight of public opinion against him, we will have taken the longest stride possible in putting both our social and our political life on the plane where we have a right to expect that they will be.

In addition to working, and to working for righteousness, you must work intelligently. All the patriotism, all the valor of the men who fought the Civil War could not avail until they had developed by sea and land the mighty chiefs who could lead them to victory. And so all the fervor, all the strenuous endeavor, all the fearlessness of the reformer who works all his life for an ideal will avail nothing if he does not work with intelligence, with common sense; if, while fixing his eyes upon the ideal, he is not also careful to see that his feet do not stumble as he walks over the practical everyday common-place earth.

I do wish people would learn by history. They won't learn, or at any rate only a little, partly because they do not care to read history that is not pleasant. I have sometimes wished, when I have heard a certain type of public man saying that at any moment the nation could improvise an army and a navy within thirty days which would meet any power on the face of the earth, that he could be made to go through with you the months of drill, the campaigns that did not succeed, suffer from the blunders, suffer from the failures, and see how long a time it took before you weeded out the worthless and got down to a working basis. And so I wish it were possible to make some of our best reformers profit by the study of the reforms of the past, paying heed not only to the glory that was won, but also to the mistakes that were made. Almost all of you know something about the first crusade, the great movement for the recovery of the holy sepulchre which was preached by Peter the Hermit. Peter the Hermit did a very great work; he preached that crusade; that was his trade; he could do that to perfection. Then he slipped up; then he started to lead it in company with a comrade, Walter the Penniless. He led his Crusaders through Hungary and Greece—the Grecian Empire then occupied about the ground the Turkish Empire now occupies—and here is a lesson to many reformers of the present day: Instead of getting his crusade where it could fight the Turks he used it all up in fighting the Hungarians and the Greeks who were also having

crusades of their own. Of the whole host of hundreds of thousands of men who followed him when he left Eastern Europe to go to the Orient, not one in a hundred succeeded in passing through the friendly Christian countries of Hungary and Greece. You have to have the man with an ideal; you have to have the inspired prophet to preach the movement; you have to have many of them. But those who refused when they had the movement started to look to the practical methods of putting it into effect failed absolutely to bring any practical result from what they had done. The victory rested with, the great deed was done by, the men who could be stirred to a passionate following of the lofty ideal, but who had it in them to follow that ideal in practical ways.

To you who work for decency now in social or civic matters, I wish that that lesson could be brought home. This audience could perfectly well establish a standard of living in a state to which it could live up, but there are sections of the state that either could not or would not live up to it, and in making a system work you must take into account other sections as well as yours. You must go out and meet the men who have different ideals from yours, perhaps much lower ideals, perhaps ideals that are on the same level but of a different type. Meet them in a two-fold spirit of fervor and of charity, passionately believing in righteousness, and in justice; bent upon putting down corruption, bent upon raising the general social level, but recognizing in a spirit of the broadest charity that there are bound to be differences even among good men, and that in addition to that you need to take into account not merely difference of principle but difference of prejudice; and, furthermore, the fact that there are some men who are weaker than you, not able to go as far as you could perhaps go. Try to set up your standard high enough to make it worth striving for and yet not make it so high that the level upon which it is can't be attained. In other words, you must work, but your work will be of a value exactly proportioned to its sanity. You must do sane, wholesome work or the result will be nothing, or next to nothing. Charity, liberality, toleration, — they are great words. I don't mean charity of a mere sentimental kind; I don't mean toleration of wickedness; I don't have much in common with the sentimentalist view that would hold the man who does wrong as being about as good as the man who does right. You want to keep the standards of right and wrong sharply

defined, but you want to draw the line in important matters and to make yourself understand that in all but the most vital matters you can well afford the broadest charity toward those who are striving toward the same goal as yourself even though by different paths. It is by doing that in every way that our nation is to be built up.

I have preached to you then the gospel of work, of righteous work, of intelligent work, the gospel of work along the lines of the broadest and deepest Americanism. Just one thing more. As you despise and scorn the individual who shrinks from work because it is difficult or dangerous, so the nation that shrinks from doing its work because that work is difficult or dangerous is to be held as of small account among the nations of the earth. As the United States grows more and more, while it must not for a moment forget the absorbing and vital importance of the problems that it must face within its boundaries, yet it can't help facing the problems that come to it without its boundaries also. One of the great masterful races of the world, one of the great world nations, must play its part as a world nation if it is to work out its destiny as its destiny should be worked out.

People have said to me that the Spanish War has left in its train to us a legacy of troubles. So it has. You recollect what I said to you at the beginning of my speech, and I asked you to look back in your life and see whether what you were proud of had been accomplished in times of ease or in times of trouble. We have been left with problems to face, and if we are a great nation we will face them and solve them. We put our pick into the rotten foundations of Spanish rule in the East and the West Indies, we tumbled the buildings down, and now if we go away and say "Let the ruins clear themselves," we had better have left the work undone. We must build in the place of those ruins a temple of orderly liberty and justice and we must not flatter ourselves into not doing it by saying, "Oh, the people around about, they must be left to build that temple; they have not any tools, to be sure, and they have been kept as slaves so long that they cannot build it; nevertheless we must let them build it in the name of liberty." If we do that, we will show that we have sacrificed the substance to the form, that we have given up the deed to the name, that we are not fit yet to do a great nation's great work.