

THE HISTORY OF LABOR DAY ITS ORIGIN AND THINGS IT STANDS FOR

WHEN, on that September day thirty-two years ago, the scattered groups of wayfarers along Broadway watched the ranks of workmen march down the street, but a few thousand in number, with little of noise and display, the man must have been a dreamer, indeed, who could see from that small beginning America's great Labor day of the present.

But, as far as can be learned, this parade, Sept. 5, 1882, was the first time that the labor unions set aside a specific day devoted to the goddess at whose shrine they worshiped, and turned out in full force that all the world might see. And this demonstration was confined solely to New York city.

Time Was Auspicious. It was on the occasion of the annual meeting of the Knights of Labor, which was held there that year. This organization of labor had been founded about fifteen years before by some striking garment workers of Philadelphia. It was born at a time when the laboring man was beginning to do a good deal of hard thinking for himself and wonder quite a deal whether all this talk about the blessings of poverty and the lowly poor being God's own was quite as true as its smug-faced teachers had, for generations, been dinning into the ears of the man behind the hammer and the shovel.

And so the Knights of Labor, filled with those doubts, thrived again. At their head was Terence V. Powderly, now occupying a responsible position in the new Department of Commerce. "It has been stated at various times that Labor day had this or that man for its father," said Mr. Powderly, when asked concerning this occasion of momentous birth. "But the day had no father, or rather," he corrected with a smile, "it had many fathers, and I think I should know, having been present at the birth."

"Labor day, as we know it today, was a growth, born from the perception of many men at the same time of the need of such a day. Of such movements, it is always hard to fix an exact moment when they spring into being—when, from a vague idea they become the practical thing. But of Labor day it can be said with certainty that it was born in New York city Sept. 5, 1882."

In Honor of Knights of Labor. "At that time the Knights of Labor, of which I was grand master workman, were holding their annual convention in that city. The labor unions of New York determined to give a demonstration in our honor, and so, on the afternoon of the day mentioned, they paraded to the number of several thousand."

"So eagerly had the idea been grasped by the labor folks of New York that the whole day was practically given over to labor—just as the Fourth of July is given over to the consideration of our national independence."



Terence V. Powderly.

"We were deep in deliberations on that day. I well remember, for the cause of labor, before that time an infant in swaddling clothes, was beginning to walk erect, and its inarticulate cry of the past was framing itself into sentences for the world to listen. Therefore, when we were informed that the laboring people of New York had made the day a virtual holiday and would parade in our honor, we adjourned to review the procession from the stand erected in Union Square."

"Upon that platform were, among others, Hugh F. Pentecost, Robert Price, a coal miner of Pennsylvania and member of the General Executive Board of the Knights of Labor, and General Worthy Foreman Richard Griffith, a veteran in the cause. "As the procession passed by, its

numbers, few for these days, but imposing then, so aroused the feelings of Price that he leaned over to the rest of us and, addressing Richard Griffith in particular, exclaimed: "This is Labor day, Uncle Dick! Labor day now and hereafter!"

"That moment I have always considered to be the instant when Labor day was born. The incident, trivial in itself, was the nucleus of many a conference. Each of us worked to the end of having a particular day set apart by law devoted to the consideration and interests of the laboring classes."

But it was not achieved immediately. Each year more and more lodges in more and more cities of the country fell into line with the suggestion and set apart a day. There was no action taken by the states. Indeed, the movement for a Labor day had reached continent-wide proportions before it was even broached, with any result, in the legislatures of the various states.

Typically American Idea. But the genius of the American people was behind the idea. Oliver Wendell Holmes, greatest of genial philosophers, in speaking of the inborn desire of the American people to perpetuate some idea that is dear to them by the dedication of a special day to it, says somewhere that if a party of Americans were shipwrecked upon a desert island the first thing they would do would be to hold a meeting and organize. Their proceedings they would then ratify in a formal banquet, even though they feasted on nothing but raw crawfish, and they would conclude the whole thing by setting apart that day as hereafter to be annually kept holy in memory of their adventure.

And so, in keeping with this American spirit, the leaders of labor, backed by their followers, more and more spread the propaganda of Labor day; each year they held their day holy, demonstrating the faith that was in them by a parade of all the crafts.



Samuel Gompers, President American Federation of Labor.

And this grew until the lawmakers of the country must needs take notice of such an insistent call.

Accordingly, on Jan. 4, 1887, a bill was introduced in the legislature of New York state, providing for the setting aside, as a legal holiday, devoted to the interests of labor, the first Monday in each September—the first notice taken by any state of the Labor day movement.

But though New York was the first to take up the matter, she was not the first state to formally adopt it into her laws. For faraway Oregon, in whose legislature a Labor day bill was introduced January 17, passed it into a law by the signature of its governor February 21, thus writing her name at the head of the states in adopting the movement as a formal state measure. It was not until May 6 of the same year that the New York bill, introduced in January, was passed and signed by the governor of that state.

Two States Divide Honor. Thus New York and Oregon may be said to divide between them the honor of first formally recognizing Labor day—New York by introduction of the first bill, Oregon by the passage of the first law.

After these two states had formally set aside a day the others followed with more or less alacrity. It should be said, in justice to these latter states, that their delay in passing a measure which, it was then clear to the world, was desired by a large body of desirable citizens, was not due to any organized opposition against such a measure on the part of any political party or class of people, but was due to two natural causes. One, the congestion of many bills in the various legislatures, whose consideration, from local causes, was a matter of great urgency. The other, that, as the day had become, by common consent of the people throughout the country, a day of holiday, any ratification of such adoption by the people was a matter of pure formality.

It was much like the case of Decoration day. The spirit and sentiment of the people in the South, where most of the graves of the Civil war were dug, crystallized upon a certain time in the early summer to honor the memory of the dead by decoration of the cemeteries, alike of Confederate and Union dead. In the course of years a certain day was formally adopted by law by the various states; but few people can recall when their particular state passed such a law.

INTERNATIONAL SUNDAY SCHOOL LESSON

(By E. O. SELLERS, Director of Evening Department, The Moody Bible Institute, Chicago.)

LESSON FOR SEPTEMBER 6

THE GREAT COMMANDMENTS.

LESSON TEXT—Mark 12:28-44. GOLDEN TEXT—"Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy strength, and with all thy mind; and thy neighbor as thyself." Luke 10:27.

This lesson considers a third question asked of our Lord; two others in this connection we studied last week. It was not so much a question of placing one commandment in competition with another, but rather which commandment most clearly epitomizes or reveals the final principle in law. It was the business of this scribe to know the law and to interpret the commandments. Jesus in his reply quotes from Deut. 6:4, and from Lev. 19:18, which are both in a sense an exposition of the Decalogue.

Love the Basis.

I. The answer of Jesus, vv. 28-34. The scribe's question seemed to be quite specific and so the Lord strikes at once at the heart and by his quotation reveals to us the fact that the principle which is the inspiration of the law is that of love. In passing we have here another illustration of the master's ready use and knowledge of the Scripture. Jesus makes a four-fold summary. Man must love God with (a) the heart, e. g., in sincerity and uprightness; (b) with the soul, with the warmth of the emotions, and the feelings; (c) "with all thy mind," the intellect, not as a blind devotee; (d) with "strength," viz., with intensity of service, with energy. "To love God with all the heart and soul and mind and strength is to have supreme desire for and delight in God's glory, making everything else second to that." This statement is but half, for the complement of our love of God is to love man. Man created in God's image was "so loved" by God that he gave his son (John 3:16); man can do not less and must express that love in service to others. To fail in the first is to break the greatest of the commandments and therefore to be guilty of all, Rom. 8:23.

Human and Deity.

II. The question of Jesus, vv. 35-37. Our Lord's question in return was a Messianic one and he grounds his argument on the 110th Psalm, a Messianic one. Jesus is inferior to David as his son according to the flesh but superior to him as lord of the kingdom of which David himself is a subject and not the sovereign. Christ is both human and deity; his kingdom is spiritual and earthly sovereigns are honored if they are his subjects.

III. The teaching of Jesus, vv. 38-40.

The word "doctrine" in verse 38 is translated "teaching" in the revision. These words of warning are full of solemn significance. The scribes, and they have their imitators today, sought the places of preferment, the seats of honor in the synagogue and the chief places at the feasts. The motive that governed them was a selfish one. They devoured widows' houses, and sought to cover their covetousness and dishonesty by long prayers and a pretense of piety. This brought upon them the "greater condemnation," Matt. 23:23. Law and love is here again in contrast. Law must become life.

IV. The view of Jesus, vv. 41-44.

Jesus had one look of love and compassion for his friends and the needy and another that was exceedingly terrible for his enemies. Thus it was as a master teacher that he saw right at hand an illustration for his lesson, an application of the truth in the case of the widow who gave out of her penury and because of her love for God, supporting these carping, selfish scribes. She had two mites (about fourth-fifths of a cent) and might have withheld one except that the rabbis forbade the offering of a single one. Her love, however, went beyond the "tenth" and she gave "all," therefore in proportion to their means she "cast more than they all," see II Cor. 8:12. Offerings are needed still for the Lord's work. Jesus is "over against the treasure" and "sees" who it is that "casts in" how much they cast and the motive behind the gift. The master's standard of a commendable offering is not according to our superfluity, but our deficiency, not what will be missed but what of sacrifice and in proportion thereto. Not to please man, but God. Read II Cor. 8:1-3. Our Lord's valuation of gifts cast into the treasury remains for all time the true standard of measurement.

The love of God unites a man. We love because he first loved us, and in proportion as we truly apprehend his love, all that we have of heart, life, strength and mind, yes, our whole nature will unite in love. It is this which unites society. To love him that begets is to love him that is begotten. To love God is to love man and to keep all of the divine commands that concern our relations to him.

As this woman left it is possible that she was ashamed of the smallness of her gift but it pleased the Lord.

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PAPER ITSELF WAS EVIDENCE

In This Case Examiner Required No Pledge That Student Had Done the Work Itself.

At a certain college custom ordains that at examination time each of the candidates shall write the following pledge at the bottom of his papers: "I hereby declare, on my honor, that I have neither given nor received assistance during the examination." One student, after handing in one of the papers, suddenly remembered that in his haste he had omitted to write the oath. On the following day he sought out one of the examiners and told him that he had forgotten to put the required pledge on his paper. The examiner looked at him over the top of his glasses and dryly remarked: "Quite unnecessary. Your paper in itself is sufficient evidence. I've just been correcting it!"

Proof Positive.

"Hold on a minute," said a man to his party over the telephone, "central's on the line."

"I ain't, either!" exclaimed the indignant central.

Sentimentally Broke.

"It seems to me that Fred doesn't pay you the compliments he used to."

SISTER'S TRICK

But It All Came Out Right.

How a sister played a trick that brought rosy health to a coffee fiend is an interesting tale:

"I was a coffee fiend—a trembling, nervous, physical wreck, yet clinging to the poison that stole away my strength. I mocked at Postum and would have none of it."

"One day my sister substituted a cup of piping hot Postum for my morning cup of coffee but did not tell me what it was. I noticed the richness of it and remarked that the 'coffee' tasted fine but my sister did not tell me I was drinking Postum for fear I might not take any more."

"She kept the secret and kept giving me Postum instead of coffee until I grew stronger, more tireless, got a better color in my sallow cheeks and a clearness to my eyes, then she told me of the health-giving, nerve-strengthening life-saver she had given me in place of my morning coffee."

"From that time I became a disciple of Postum and no words can do justice in telling the good this cereal drink did me. I will not try to tell it, for only after having used it can one be convinced of its merits."

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Trials of Teaching.

Mrs. Hitch was having some trouble with a little fellow in her spelling class at Claysville.

"B-e-d, spells bed," she explained, over and over again; "b-e-d, bed. Do you understand?"

"Yes'm."

"Well, c-a-t spells cat, d-o-g spells dog, and b-e-d spells— What did I tell you b-e-d spells?"

"Dunno."

"Don't you know! You don't know what b-e-d spells after all I've told you?"

"No'm."

"Well, once more, b-e-d spells what you sleep in. Now, what do you sleep in?"

"My drawers!" triumphantly exclaimed the urchin.—Cynthia Democrat.

Advance Notice.

At the club the other night a member of the seventh regiment found himself the center of a group who were discussing the likelihood of an invasion of Mexico by the National Guard. Cheerful remarks about the penetrative powers of Mauser bullets peppered about him. Everybody had kindly suggestions to make—such, for instance, as that a medal neatly adjusted over each bullet hole would make him look as good as new. The victim took it very well.

"I'd like to contribute just one remark to this discussion," he said. "If I'm reported shot in the back, remember that I may have turned around to encourage my men."—New York Call.

She kept boarders for their living.

One day, at the dinner hour, she had been longer than usual in waiting upon the table. Finally, her husband said: "Well, Maria, can't you sit down?"

And Maria answered: "I could the last time I tried."—National Food Magazine.

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