

THE WAGWORKER



A Newspaper with a Mission and without a Muzzle that is published in the interest of Wageworkers Everywhere.

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THIS SERMON SOUNDS GOOD

A Methodist Minister of Lincoln Talks Straight From the Shoulder About Unionism, Giving Praise Where Due and Not Sparing the Censure When It Is Deserved—Rev. W. M. Balch a Friend of Organized Labor.

One of the best and strongest, and at the same time one of the most remarkable sermons ever delivered from a Lincoln pulpit was the one, delivered by Rev. W. M. Balch from the pulpit of Trinity Methodist Episcopal church last Sunday evening. One of the best and strongest, because it took up a subject of surpassing interest and dissected it thoughtfully, argumentatively and with exact justice. One of the most remarkable, because it handled without gloves a great and growing question that is so often dealt with in the abstract and too seldom dealt with wholly without fear or favor. It left the hearer without a doubt as to where the speaker stood on the question of labor organization, and while he freely pointed out the mistakes of labor unions he dealt giant blows at evils too often condoned by silence.

"The Labor Union and the Brotherhood of Man" was the subject of Rev. Mr. Balch's sermon, it being the first in a series of four sermons on kindred topics. The Wageworker earnestly asks every union man who sees this paper to read the following incomplete synopsis of this splendid sermon. Then be present at Trinity Methodist church next Sunday evening and hear the second sermon in the series. Last Sunday's sermon was the talk of a "square man" who has studied the union labor problem and is therefore speaking with knowledge. Rev. Mr. Balch said in part:

"The gospel means good news, a main item in the good news is the brotherhood of man. For that was news when the gospel was first proclaimed. As Max Muller has pointed out the idea of our common humanity was then so entirely new that Christianity had to invent new words to make it known. Up and down the world they went, those earliest heralds of the cross telling men that humanity is God's family and calling them to live together like brothers.

"The text marks one of these lines of disharmony, the relation of master and man. Vexatious in the beginning, vexatious still. Philemon, a Christian gentleman, a friend of St. Paul, is the master, Onesimus, the workingman. They quarrel and something like a strike occurs. Onesimus forsakes his master and his work. Wisely he resorts to St. Paul and something like arbitration ensues. Paul sends the workingman back to the master requiring that he no longer be received as a servant, but more than a servant, a brother beloved.

"There you have the labor problem and its solution—the problem, the falling out of the master and servant, the solution, their reconciliation in the brotherhood of man. The chief difference today is that Onesimus instead of resorting to the apostle has joined a labor union.

"That may move us directly to inquire wherein the labor union approaches and wherein it contravenes the brotherhood of man. Let me first of all say that I am not going to scold the union for the unbrotherly and unlawful things which it often charges.

"It might be easy to draw up a quite formidable indictment of this sort, but I don't know who can come into court with clean hands. Surely employers cannot, their blacklists are as atrocious as the unionist's boycott. Surely corporations cannot, the mob violence and the aggravated violations of law too often chargeable to labor unions are only a drop in the blood red bucket of lawlessness compared with the enormous crimes and inhumanities of our great corporations.

"Nor can the church itself resent the indictment. It was only a few generations ago that Cranmer, Ridley, Latimer, as Dean Hodges says, were burned at the stake as non-union bishops and the amalgamated association of Congregationalists and Presbyterians whipped the non-union Baptists and the non-union Quakers, beating them with scourges through the streets of our chief cities.

"And so without denying that labor unions might afford an obvious mark for moral brickbats now and then, it is still apparent that nobody is competent to cast the first stone.

"Put Yourself in His Place" is the appropriate title chosen for a great work of fiction dealing with the labor problem. But, unfortunately, while compelling us to put ourselves in the non-unionist's place, Charles Reade fails to put himself in the place of the unionist. 'Put yourself in his place' is useless unless applied all around, but if applied all around it solves the problem. It is not possible for us all to feel just alike about these matters, but it is necessary for each to understand how others feel. Remember we must really be one family, and in every good family it is a common thing to say, 'We all know just how brother feels about those things, and we govern ourselves accordingly.'

"Brothers who compel themselves to take each other's point of view may disagree, but

they never quarrel. Presently we are going to ask the union man to take our point of view and therefore we must first try to take his. To begin with as hard a proposition as any, let us understand his implacable hostility toward the non-union workingman.

"Many of us, on the other hand, have gone to the length of making a sort of a moral hero out of the 'scab.' As a rule he is anything but that. We must remember that unionists believe that their battle for shorter hours, and a higher standard of living is a battle for humanity and civilization and on the whole that belief is true. To the nobler natures among them their cause is a sublime idealism and it is humanly impossible for them to look at the non-unionist in any other light than that which our patriot fathers looked on the Tories or later patriots on Copperheads. Indeed, they are compelled to see him in even a worse light. However wrong-headed it must have been to be a Copperhead, the Copperhead and the Tory were often brave men who were willing to lose everything for the stand they took. But I suppose that the 'scab' most often appears to the unionist as a mean fellow who participates in all the victories of the labor unionist without sharing in the battles and the losses.

"Quoting Professor T. S. Adams: 'Nine out of ten non-unionists who receive as much as the union rate may be justly regarded as parasites upon the world of organized labor, reaping where they have not sown, sharing the rewards, but not the burdens of combination.'

"Indeed, we of the church ought to be able of all men to fully understand how the unionist feels toward the 'scab,' because of the man who shares all the amenities of Christian civilization and yet refuses to join or support the Christian church.

"That man is a 'scab,' a religious 'scab.' If I were a laboring man I would like neither sort of a 'scab.' Yet either sort of a 'scab' is my brother and your brother and even if when we cannot admire his attitude toward the church or toward the union we must still render him a brother's sympathy, a brother's protection, a brother's aid, not for the church's sake, not for the union's sake, but for our Father's sake.

"The church has learned some lessons in this line of bitter experience and we hope that the unions will be wise enough to profit by our experience without having to repeat it for themselves.

"We used to persecute 'scabs.' Dynamite not having been invented we burned them at the stake and by various coercions sought to enforce a sort of 'closed shop' and to extend our organization, our idea of brotherhood was to force the unbrotherly brother to be brotherly. Now we know the better way is to persuade him, and if he will not be persuaded then to treat him as a brother anyhow.

"You will not misunderstand me. I believe that every workingman ought to join the union, just as I believe that every man ought to join the church. But I believe that both church and labor union ought to be purely voluntary organizations with membership enforced neither by penalties, nor discriminations nor discourtesies, but solely by an appeal to conscience."

The speaker declared that the employer while fighting the closed shop idea on the part of the trade unions in reality often practiced it himself, and it is to beat the employer at his own game that accounts for the closed shop sentiment in the labor unions.

He said that many well dressed folks think of the unionist not only as a hog but a tiger. They imagine him as a shockingly rough fellow with a stick of dynamite up his sleeve and a quart of whiskey down in his stomach. He declared that it could not be denied that the unions have often failed to expiate themselves from complicity in crimes of such a member, but lawlessness and irreligion are not characteristic of unions.

Mr. Balch thought that a great injustice might be done to the unions by declaring that unionism is purely a class movement and therefore objectionable. He characterized unionism as a movement in the interest of the brotherhood of man.

He declared that non-partisan statements declared that the unions were more often willing to arbitrate differences of hours and wages than employers. He pointed out that by victorious strikes and by a show of strength the unions often protected the fair employer who desired to pay good wages from the uttermost competition of rivals who, if able to secure workmen at lower wages, would result in forcing the fair employer down to the same wage level when the latter wanted to pay living prices for help.

He declared that there was more than a cash relation between workingmen and employers, and that was cooperation with the highest interest in common. He said that there must always be leaders in the industrial field, but to fulfill the brotherhood of man idea, the leaders must cease to be masters, but high servants carrying out a sacred trust.

"Whence came the labor movement," said he, "I mean not a factional conflict, not blind selfishness, nor mad fury, but that true labor movement which is nothing less than the brotherhood of man. Whence came it? Not from John Mitchell, John Burns nor Carl Marx, for when I look upon their work I see that they have merely given direction to mighty energies that were already surging past from far beyond them. Not from Wat Tyler nor Jack Cade nor the peasant revolutionists of France, Germany or Russia. All the historic streams of the labor movement are seen converging toward their common source, the heart, love, the soul power of one lowly Man, a plain artisan in rustic garb, but from His eyes beams forth majesty, from His lips proceeds wisdom, from His hands move the energies of God. And with wondering awe I cry, 'Is not this the Carpenter?' Yes, and the Carpenters' union is the church of our Lord and the true labor movement is Christianity."

AN OPEN LETTER

So That the People Interested May Know All the Facts in the Case

The Wageworker has heard a great deal of complaint and criticism from business men who have been approached by its solicitors and asked to assist in the publication of the "Friendly List" edition of this paper. Some of this complaint and criticism comes from business men who do not fully understand the proposition. Some comes from those who believe that the price is too high, and some comes from those who do not like the editor personally.

To the latter class the editor has only this to say—he cares neither for their friendship nor their business. He asks no man for patronage on the ground that the paper needs "support." He asks no man for patronage on the ground of personal friendship. He does, however, ask for patronage on the ground that The Wageworker is a good advertising medium, and that money invested in its advertising columns will pay satisfactory dividends on the investment. The editor will not knowingly accept advertising on any other basis.

Some have complained because the solicitors employed to work up the business for this "Friendly List" edition do not live in Lincoln. That is quite true. But the editor made careful inquiry as to their integrity and is satisfied that they make no misrepresentations. If such can be shown The Wageworker will insist upon reparation. Some have complained, believing that the plan was on a par with the recent "grafting" scheme of certain professional charity workers who started a benefit performance for the Children's Home Finding Society. Such is not the case. These gentlemen are working for a fair commission on the net profits of the edition. The editor is perfectly satisfied with the contract.

Some have charged that they have been asked to buy editorial commendation in The Wageworker's columns. They are mistaken. They could not buy it at any price. If they deserve commendation because of their fairness towards the interests that this humble little labor paper tries to represent, they will get it without money and without price. There are people right here in Lincoln who know this from personal experience. They tried to buy editorial commendation—and they failed most miserably.

The business men are merely asked to assist in getting out a largely increased edition of The Wageworker. In this enlarged edition their business will be mentioned—not because they subscribed for a number of extra copies, but because they have shown a friendly spirit towards organized labor. Some business men of Lincoln couldn't get a friendly notice in this paper if they bought a million extra copies.

The proposition made is honest, open and above board. The business man who does not care to invest is under no compulsion to do so. If any one of this paper's solicitors makes the mistake of uttering even one word that could be construed into coercion or threat, from the moment the editor finds it out that solicitor is out of a job.

Personally, the editor of The Wageworker would rather have the friendship and good will of the fair business men than to have their money in the way of advertising patronage. He is not dependent upon The Wageworker for a living. He is not begging for "support." When he can not support himself, he will retire to the retreat so generously provided by the taxpayers of Lancaster county. But he does ask for patronage on the ground that The Wageworker is a good advertising medium, and that money invested in its advertising columns produce satisfactory results.

We want to make this "Friendly List" edition a splendid one—and its success is already assured, despite the active efforts of a few against it. It will be a credit to the editor, a credit to organized labor and a credit to Lincoln. Incidentally it will be profitable to more than the editor—it will give extra employment to a number of union printers and pressmen.

WILL NOT FILL THE BILL.

Service Stripes Will Not Put Flour in the Bin Nor Buy Coal.

We rejoice that Mr. Humpe has again taken charge of Lincoln Traction company matters in Lincoln, for Mr. Humpe is a gentleman who will do the very best he can under the circumstances. But he will be handicapped as long as the street railway is "Scudderized."

One of Mr. Humpe's first acts was to introduce the "service stripe" system. For each five years of service a gold band is to be put upon the employe's sleeve. Then, beginning with March 1, 1906, a fund of one-half cent per hour will be created for payment to those with one service stripe, payable yearly, and one cent for those with two or more service stripes. Notice is given that this is not an obligation on the part of the company.

It will not do, Mr. Humpe. It does not suffice. The employes of the Traction company are not looking for charity. They are not looking for presents from the company. What they want, and what they should have, is a decent wage. The Wageworker charges that the Lincoln Traction company pays inadequate wages and works its employes in the train service too long hours. Service stripes and an infinitesimal

bonus will not make good the miserable wages the Traction company pays.

The wages paid to street railway employes in Lincoln are lower than in any other city in the west. The hours are longer, the rules more irksome, the service poorer. Gold lace on the sleeves and a four-flush play at generosity will not cure these defects.

The street railway men are largely to blame for their condition. If they had the nerve to organize and make a collective demand for fair treatment they would get it, for 3,000 organized men and women would back them up in any reasonable demand. It seems about time that the rank and file get out from under the influence of "Johnny-Afraid-of-His-Job" and other servile tale bearers for the management and assert their manhood. If the Traction company will pay fair wages and grant decent hours we opine that the employes will quite willingly dispense with service stripes and a charity bonus at the end of the year.

WAS IT INTENTIONAL?

Where Does Labor Come In on That Street Railway Committee?

A committee of twelve is looking into the Traction company matter. It was appointed as the outcome of a meeting at the Commercial Club last week, called to discuss the street railway situation. The committee proposition is all right, but in its appointment a very considerable element of the interested population was utterly ignored.

The people most vitally concerned in a just solution of the street railway problem are not all merchants and lawyers and physicians and real estate dealers and money lenders—not by a long shot. There are 5,000 or 6,000 mechanics, laborers, clerks—home owners and taxpayers many of them—who have just as much at stake in this matter as the professional men and merchants. Why was this large class utterly ignored in the make-up of that committee? All the business brains in Lincoln are not confined to men who plead at the bar, sit at desks or carry pillbags. There are men on the scaffolds, in the trenches, at the type case and on the drivers' seats who are mentally capable of coping with this traction question if given an opportunity. The Wageworker insists that the big army of working people be allowed to have some voice in the solution of this vexed traction problem.

TYPOGRAPHICAL UNION ELECTS.

After Much Contention the Printers Finally Make New Officers.

Lincoln Typographical Union tried to elect new officers three months ago, but it failed. It missed out. So a new election was ordered, and at the meeting last Sunday it tried again, and this time it succeeded. The election passed off without much excitement, although it took three ballots to elect the executive committee. The election resulted as follows:

President, Frank M. Coffey.
Vice-President, John Moore.
Financial Secretary, F. H. Hebbard.
Recording Secretary, Albert Strain.
Sergeant-at-Arms, J. G. Sayer.
Executive Committee, A. T. Pentzer, J. E. Marshall, J. M. Leaden.
Allied Trades Council, W. H. Creal, G. E. Locker, B. C. Gilbert.
Central Labor Union, H. W. Smith, G. E. Locker, J. M. Leaden.
Cemetery Trustees, L. W. Eldredge, Erstine King, J. R. Bain.

Two apprentices were admitted to two-thirds membership and were duly obligated. The report of the financial secretary was interesting. During February the Lincoln printers sent \$684.90 to international headquarters to help finance the eight-hour strike, have \$438.22 in the local defense fund and \$395.18 in the local eight-hour fund.

The case of J. C. Wisely was reported by the relief committee and proper action taken. It was reported that "Billy" Wright had met with a severe accident. He fell through a trapdoor and fractured a rib or two. Erstine King was also reported ill.

The ball committee was unable to make a final report, owing to the fact that all tickets out had not been accounted for, but a partial report showed that the ball had not proved a financial failure. On the contrary something will be added to the general fund from that source.

The committee appointed to codify the constitution asked for a special meeting, and one was ordered.

GIVE THEM THEIR DUE.

Faithful Patrol Horses Must Not Be Sold Into Slavery.

Frank and Sam, the faithful horses that have pulled the patrol wagon for seventeen years have been retired from service. They are upwards of twenty years old, and if ever two horses have earned a long rest Frank and Sam are the two. If there is no method by which they can be cared for at the expense of the city during the remainder of their natural lives, then it is up to a grateful people to provide the means. The idea of selling these two faithful servants to anybody who might make them continue at work is repugnant. They ought to be allowed to round out the rest of their lives in elegant leisure.

Frank and Sam have worked for their board for seventeen years, and during that time they earned their board for the few years remaining to them. The city owes them kindly care while they live. The Wageworker can dig up a dollar to add to a pension fund for them, and we suggest that Mayor Brown take the matter up.

YE GODS AND LITTLE FISHES!

Lincoln's Woman's Club Meets in Special Session to Discuss Matter That Must Be Settled Now or the Country Goes to the Demnition Bow-Wows Without Recourse—Whither Are We Drifting, and Why?

If ever there were any doubts about the practicability and the usefulness of the Lincoln Woman's Club, those doubts may now and forever be set at rest. After a long period of comparative quiet the Home Department of the club has awakened to a realizing sense of the duty it owes to itself and to humanity, and with an enthusiasm that is deserving of widest commendation it has plunged into the discussion of a grave question that is pressing for solution, and one which has too long been ignored in the search after knowledge concerning a whole lot of comparatively unimportant problems.

No sooner was the attention of the Home Department of the Woman's Club called to this important matter than it hurried to hold a special meeting to consider it. The meeting was held in the club rooms at the city library last Thursday afternoon, and there and then, without any fuss, frills or feathers, one of the gravest and most vexed social problems that has been puzzling the minds of sociologists was settled beyond a peradventure.

Was it the problem of the proper care of children? Perish the thought! Was it the problem of preserving the home against the onslaughts of a greedy and conscienceless commercialism? Out upon such a frivolous idea! Was it to discuss the question of the employment of women in unsanitary and vile "sweet shops"? Away with such a foolish notion! Was it to discuss the problem of rearing up home makers and home providers against the day when the American home would be the only bulwark between the rule of the god of gold and the rule of a free people? The very idea is ridiculous!

Why should the Home Department of the Woman's Club of Lincoln waste its precious time on such frivolous and nonsensical problems? Other and far more momentous problems press for solution, and one of them was the problem discussed and settled last Thursday afternoon.

At this special and momentous meeting L. M. Morse—whether "Mr." or "Mrs." we do not know—gave a stirring and eloquent address on that most important of all questions, "Oriental Rugs and Their Care."

For years we have panted for a solution of that question as the hart panted for the water brook. For years have we struggled blindly, groping in the darkness of ignorance and praying that some man or woman, or some organization, would take us gently by the hand and lead us into the bright light that would enable us to see just how we ought to take care of the priceless Oriental rugs that decorate our beautiful castle. Too long have we been fooling away time on children, and home, and industrialism, and commercialism. Too long have we been frittering away precious time on trying to keep our little ones out of the clutch of the manufacturers who want them to labor in the mills and factories. Too long have we been wasting sentimental tears on the fancied wrongs of women and children doomed to lives of blinding and unrequited toil.

A thousand—yea, two thousand—Lincoln workingmen and their wives have fidgeted and fretted while such idle questions were being discussed by the Woman's Club, and yearning for the time when they could get some badly needed information concerning the care of their beautiful and costly Oriental rugs. Helpless and hopeless they have sat supinely down in their baronial castles, earned by sweat and toil in workshop and mill, and watched while the omnivorous moth dug tunnels and made ghastly excavations in those priceless Oriental rugs that decorated their very room.

But, thank heaven, the deliverers have come! No more time will be wasted on fool questions of sociology. No more time will be frittered away on trying to do something for women and children who really ought to have sense enough to take care of themselves.

We have yearned, heart hungry and soul weary, for information concerning the care of the Oriental rugs that beautiful the homes of our mechanics and artisans, and with characteristic energy the Home Department of the Lincoln Woman's Club has rushed to the rescue. For all of which let us devoutly offer up our heartfelt thanks, and standing sing the first verse of that beautiful hymn:

"This is the day we long have sought,
And mourned because we found it not!"

A VERY HUMBLE APOLOGY.

The Wageworker was late last week—awfully late. We apologize, and will endeavor to prevent a repetition of the delay. But the editor was quite busy last week. As secretary of the Nebraska Press Association he had his hands full the first three days of the week. Then the Western Newspaper Union got sewed up with a rush of business. And there you are. But the delay demonstrated one thing of which the editor is quite proud. It demonstrated that The Wageworker is looked for. Sunday he met something less than a thousand of the subscribers and every one of them wanted to know what was the matter with the paper.