

MYSTIC LIGHT

The Value of Work

WORK IS A PANACEA for most ills of mankind. Work is the endeavor of living. To live we must work. Not for a living, or to earn a living alone, but because to work is good. Endeavor is growth, and we must grow.

No man can work and not receive inspiration. Sometimes it would seem to the individual that his labor is anything but inspiring, that it is mere deadening drudgery, disagreeable and tiresome. When this is true, be assured that it is not the work causing such a result, but the worker.

There is no denying that many workers are laboring at jobs not to their liking, and for which they have no special ability. They are merely earning their daily bread. It is also true that earning one's daily bread is the least of the many values contained in work. Yet the earning of daily bread is essential to the well-being, mental and physical, of any man. In spite of this we repeat: It is the least of the many values contained in work.

Proper food is purely a physical benefit, without which the body housing the imperishable spirit cannot continue to manifest perfectly. Improper food contributes to the body's imperfection, detracts from its healthy functioning, preys upon the mind, and generally disturbs the equilibrium of the person. So, we must not underestimate the importance of working to earn sustenance.

So far as we are able we must, in all justice to ourselves, maintain, or, in many cases, *attain* a perfect vehicle for the indwelling individual spirit, which is



Oil on canvas, 1884, Vincent Van Gogh

Weaver

That treasure which we may "lay up in heaven," the "gathered pabulum of the soul and the extract therefrom [which were], symbolized by the Shew Bread and the fragrant essences" in the Tabernacle of the Wilderness, was "the product of actual toil, of orderly systematic work."—from the Rosicrucian Fellowship Full Moon Service

the true self or ego.

We live in cycles: we respond to our endeavors and grow from out them. As we mature and gain in mental and moral stature, we then proceed to endeavor differently, and as a result we gradually transform our personalities. They become more objective, more impersonal, though no less human. Then it seems that wise Providence gives us another opportunity to apply the fruits of our growth to a situation similar to one previously encountered, but, perhaps, not fully mastered. This small cycle furnishes us with the opportunity to observe and gauge our progress. This retrospective comparison enables us to see how far we have traveled and how much we have grown; thus we take new courage for the ever onward and upward journey.

If you dislike your work and go to it reluctantly each day, buoyed only by the thought of the wages or salary you will receive—

If you are critical of your fellow workers and asso-

Planet Art

ciates—

If you feel resentment against fate for forcing you into your present situation—

If you have any grudges whatever, any jealousies, envies, or just plain dislikes—

It is these that are holding you back. It is these that form the millstone around your neck and make quicksand where you would move freely.

Do these observations seem harsh? Is the writer sitting in judgment? I think not. We know that every thought we think has substance and form; it has vibration whose formative signature is an identifiable wave-length. Thoughts are things; they have color, pattern, and power.

Granting this to be true, it is then easily understood how and why silent thoughts can and do affect our daily living, our advancement, our prosperity, our happiness.

We are oppressed more by the weight of our own thoughts and attitudes than by the exertions or circumstances of our labors. As we continue to entertain our resentments (some entertainment!) and dissatisfactions, we increase the height of our self-confining barriers and landmine our path with pitfalls and stumbling-blocks. We lose promotions we felt we were entitled to. We have accidents that pass up the fellow next to us. We suffer undeserved reprimands while obvious malefactors go free. We seethe with the injustice of it all. Yet we ourselves, alone, are responsible for all our discomfiture.

This being inescapably true, should we go on fighting everything? Or should we confront the real adversary and begin a new battle within ourselves?

It is no small job to master one's self, to correct habits of negative thought, to think always up and not down, to think constructively and not destructively.

We pose ourself the following foolish question because our actions suggest we do not know the answer: Which is better, an employer who comes raving at us for our blunders, or one who kindly and sympathetically points out a better, easier way to achieve a certain result, with perhaps a hand of encouragement on our shoulder, a smile in his eyes?

The law of doing unto others, of placing oneself in the other fellow's shoes, is very simple and effective, and easy to put into operation—at least so it would

seem.

Just as the employer working in generous and kindly sympathy with his employees gets better results than one who needs to “call the shots” and “lord it over” others—so does the willing, cooperative worker pleasantly attract better results for himself than the reluctant, resentful, morose, or obstreperous worker.

Every position we obtain, in work as in life, is the effect of our own thought, attitude, and behavior.

It matters not what one's formal education has been, in what line one has been trained; nor is experience per se, or the references of others the controlling factor in the law of merit. It is a function of purely intrinsic qualities: What we make of our experience; how we use what we know; the consistency with which we permeate our moment-to-moment lives with earnestness and good will.

So, if you are unfavorably situated and feel inclined to blame (itself a dubious enterprise)—whether it be the political set-up, your employer, neighbor, family, or God—pause and reconsider. Redirect your attention selfward. Get rigorously honest. See where the real problem lies and where real progress can be made. Then with newly opened eyes, a new perspective, and a humble willingness, set to work to get the most out of the least of your work. If you are faced with an especially arduous task, one you dislike more than any other, ask yourself, *What can I learn from this? In what manner can I benefit from it?* Then perform the task with zest. If it is possible, make a better task of it. To master great things we must first perfectly master small things.

If there is someone working in your group against whom you have been holding ill will, begin to honestly search for his good qualities; or perhaps better still, be truthful with yourself to learn why you are nursing grievances. Usually you will find he has injured only your ego, deflated your sense of importance, because you will find you have been thinking only of *yourself* and *your* agendas, *your* view on matters.

If you are sure this is not the case, then, in all sympathy, consider why he is as he is—what combination of prior causes and circumstances may have contributed to his present personality and general attitude.

Silently and without condescension imagine yourself as a physician who is in sympathy with the ills of the patient. Suppose the condition is most objectionable, brought on by the patient's selfishness and folly. But the physician does not sit in judgment; he only goes to work to repair the damage, if he can.

While we do not need to try to make over our fellow associates, we could with profit seek to understand (in the sense of accounting for) their "ailments" and the imperfections that irk us. Once understanding these, we may be able to lessen their difficulties, and by so doing smooth our own rough path.

Suppose some one certain thing is a source of constant irritation to you on your job. Stop and weigh its importance. If you find it really does not matter except to you personally, then seek to shut it out; refuse to be irritated, practice peace of mind.

Our general attitude toward work makes or breaks us. We are happy or we are unhappy, according to our attitude. We progress, or we remain in a rut; we sail along blithely, enjoyably soaring over obstacles, or we plod tiresomely along in the rut, gradually digging ourselves in deeper.

The responsibility is ours; we are free agents, whether or not we care to believe it.

If our attitude is that our wages are small, therefore we are only going to do as much work as is commensurate with the pittance we are paid, we are not only laying the foundation for demotion, or unemployment, we are burying our talents, laying the foundation for our future misery, and retarding our spiritual progress.

If we refuse to help, without material compensation, in some worthy undertaking, thinking—*Why should we? We don't owe them anything*—we are but creating grief for ourselves. Or, if we overcharge for our work because our client is in immediate need



Oil on canvas, 1943, José Clemente Orozco (1883-1949); Museo de Arte Alvar y Carmen T. de Carrillo Gil, Mexico City

Christ Destroying His Cross

Not without some basis in fact, the necessity for work has been regarded as a consequence of man's first and ongoing disobedience, whose net effect required Christ's salvatory assumption of human form. The painter's intuition graphically illustrates the breaking up of crystallized forms which have become bereft of the living spirit, be they codified laws, sense-locked learning, or elitist art itself. Depicted in vigorous and violent action, the once passively crucified Christ now becomes an aggressively avenging force, with which a people exploited for their labor can especially identify: A drastic preliminary to his words, "Behold! I make all things new."

and unable to secure other help, once more we are creating bad karma that we shall eventually be called upon to liquidate.

Work because it is good to accomplish, not because you get paid for it. Work because any good endeavor increases your own working ability and power and therefore is to your advantage. Work because you feel the urge to give service where it is merited, though not necessarily appreciated. Withholding service where the need is great or the cause is good and right is like throwing away precious jewels. With each instance of such behavior we reject a particular benefit to the soul and are spiritually the poorer for it.

No job should be too lowly for well doing, nor should any job be deemed so great as to tempt us to vainglory. Rather, the greater the job, the more humbly should we approach it. We should work because it is good to work, and our daily prayer should be: "Lord, let our work be good." □

—Carol Cornish