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# The PATH *of* LABOR

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**FAMILY OF COTTON PICKERS, OKLAHOMA**

# The Path of Labor

THEME

Christianity and The World's Workers

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*"I am among you as he that serveth"*

---

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• NEW YORK, N. Y.

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New York

TO YOUNG MEN  
AT HOME  
YEARLY

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## FOREWORD

Those who labored with such desire and earnestness for the selection of a theme for the textbooks for 1918-1919, that should present not only a vital but a paramount issue to the church at this time when only great realities and issues claim serious thought, chose better than they knew when they elected **CHRISTIANITY AND THE WORLD'S WORKERS.**

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It is generally conceded that the most decisive single factor in the world contest today is that of Labor. That there is always danger of over emphasis by any group having the power in the body politic is axiomatic.

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It becomes therefore even more important now than when the theme was suggested (nearly two years ago) for our church constituency to address itself to such a study of economic relationships as shall open the way for a more complete understanding of the fundamental rights and facts involved, that a basis of thinking may be attained whereby the mutual welfare of all society may be advanced along the line of a Christian democracy.

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"Christian" because the body of influence set in motion by Christ is the greatest spiritual force in the life of humanity, and upon it depends the world's hope for redemption from oppression, injustice and war.

At the outset of our thinking on this theme we might profitably seek a definition of the term "Christianity," for this word which calls so inspiringly to millions of people carries a sinister reminder of pogroms and persecutions to millions of others. The Rev. Dr. Charles Jefferson of New York City, says:

"Christianity is a large word, and it cannot be defined in a sentence for the reason that it is used in different meanings by different persons, and also by the same person on different occasions, and for different purposes. In one sense Christianity is

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the example and teaching of Jesus Christ. What he is and what he taught constitutes pure and undefiled Christianity. To know what Christianity is we must look at Jesus Christ and study his fundamental principles.

"But the religion of Jesus Christ has been in the world 1900 years and has worked itself out into a mass of institutions and ceremonies and creeds. All of these taken together are often called Christianity. For instance, the Christianity of the United States would include the whole universal church in the United States, with its worship and its achievements.

"While Christianity in the narrower sense must commend itself to everybody's heart, Christianity in the larger sense has many imperfections, and is capable of many reformatations and improvements."

The rapidly increasing participation of women in all forms of industry is apparent to everyone. Mrs. Hilda Richards, Chief of the Woman's Division of the Federal Department of Labor, says: "Assuming that the duration of the war is three years, it is safe to say that the increase of women in industry will be doubled and amount to three millions in this country."

The Council of Women for Home Missions in sending forth this latest volume of its Mission Study Books does so with the eager hope that it may serve to interpret women in their various forms of service to each other, and be another influence in making Christianity the keystone of the changing social order.

PUBLICATION COMMITTEE.

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**I**

**THE CALL TO SERVICE**

**M. KATHARINE BENNETT**

**"In the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread, till thou return unto the ground."—Genesis 3:19.**

**"For even when we were with you, this we commanded you, that if any would not work, neither should he eat."—II Thessalonians 3:10.**

**"What profit hath a man of all his labour which he taketh under the sun?"—Ecclesiastes 1:3.**

**"Wherefore I perceive that there is nothing better, than that a man should rejoice in his own works; for that is his portion: for who shall bring him to see what shall be after him?"—Ecclesiastes 3:22.**

**"The labour of the righteous tendeth to life."—Proverbs 10:16.**

**"For we are laborers together with God."—1 Corinthians 3:9.**

**"Come unto Me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest."—Matthew 11:28.**

**"While we are fighting for freedom we must see, among other things, that labor is free; and that means a number of interesting things. It means, not only that we must do what we have declared our purpose to do—see that the conditions of labor are not rendered more onerous by the war—but also that we shall see to it that the instrumentalities by which the conditions of labor are improved are not blocked or checked."—President Woodrow Wilson in his speech before American Federation of Labor, November, 1917.**

# THE PATH OF LABOR

## I

### THE CALL TO SERVICE

“In the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread” is a condition common to mankind: the few who in comfortable dependence may stand aside careless of the work-a-day world do not alter the truth that for most of the human race life is made up of days of toil and hours of weariness; for the many the struggle for food, clothing and shelter is the issue of paramount and pressing importance; it drags at life’s larger impulses, hampers and stifles the yearning for higher things. Those who work for wages that allow no margin of ease so outnumber the well-to-do that their problems are significant of the constant modifications in the life of the nation; they are the basis of its economic and political structure and on their welfare rests its permanency. Their misfortunes may strike at the root of social institutions; their prosperity will be reflected in the whole political organism; their standards will permeate

the ethical life of the nation. Fifty million of the people in the United States, one-half of its population, live in communities of less than 2,500 inhabitants. Labor's problem is, therefore, not a sectional one, confined to any part of the country, but is the problem of the city, of the small town, of the rural region.

During 1916 and 1917 questions relating to labor have been scarcely second in public interest to those connected with the war, for the problems that beset those who strive in the economic warfare are more widespread than ever, while at the same time labor's unrest becomes of ever keener importance to the country as a whole. The overwhelming need of production, the necessity for adaptation of service to new accomplishment would of themselves emphasize labor's importance, but when to these is added a general dislocation of labor, the result is of bewildering effect. Then, too, the path of labor is being trodden by feet unaccustomed to its roughness and its steeps are being climbed by a great new and untried army of workers. Economic and patriotic pressure alike are drawing into the industrial group many whose activities have been bounded by the home, or who have rendered unremunerated service. As the Army and Navy have been recruited from among all the people of the country, so labor is recruiting itself from all ranks and from all parts of the land, and the readjustments necessary to the new economic conditions will be felt in isolated communities and among secluded peoples who may fail to connect their vexing uncertainties with the great events of the national life.

But the working through of time-long plans goes on,

and more and more comes the realization that "the frustrations of circumstances are but episodes" that must be met by the peoples of a period as they contribute their share to world making.

### **Organized Labor**

Unfortunately the word "labor" is today being so generally translated in terms of organization that many fail to associate problems of sweeping scope, presented by great bodies of workers, with the daily difficulties of small communities or isolated individuals. The swift current of the world's great movements, however, drives back eddies which reach into remote coves and bays and which engulf many who are ignorant of the source or sweep of the irresistible forces at work.

Highly organized labor has a strength and power that scattered and unorganized units cannot have, but in this very strength lies a menace to labor itself. The American Federation of Labor alone reported in 1917 a membership of 2,371,434. The official co-operation of so large a group is decidedly well worth the winning, and agencies of all kinds exert pressure to assure themselves of the sympathy and the votes of a body that is representative of labor throughout the United States. The endorsement of the Federation carries with it a country-wide, although unofficial, propaganda and it therefore attracts the most active effort on the part of those desiring endorsement. For example: "The liquor problem is being considered by organized labor as never before, largely because of the industrial situation produced by the war, and also because the question of food



supply makes the liquor problem of supreme importance. For some time the liquor men have been trying to capture the labor movement. Already quite a number of State central labor unions have voted in favor of the liquor traffic because of the urgent request of bartenders and brewery workers.”<sup>1</sup> Great numbers of the members of the Federation are opposed to the liquor traffic, and the American workingman is on the whole sober, yet a sectional question involving one type of workers can be made to misrepresent American labor and to seem to secure a backing for a great agency of evil.

Since the outbreak of the Great War the attitude of organized labor has been the subject of much discussion, for it has found in its hands the power to so clog the wheels of industry as to greatly impede, if not to stop, the war. “They form the army behind the battle line,” and when a testing time comes, no one need doubt that labor will meet its opportunity finely and splendidly with that devotion that is characteristic of American manhood. Among the disturbing rumors and discussions of the day it may be well to remember the fair summing up of the case made by John A. Fitch, who forbids that organized labor in its motives be differentiated from other groups. He says: “Labor is patriotic, but its patriotism is like that of nearly everyone else. Most of us are patriotic at heart, but we seldom are willing to make anything less than a supreme sacrifice for our country. It doesn’t seem worth while. Short of that we go about our business in the usual way.”<sup>2</sup> Organized labor alone can express itself concretely; it vocalizes the ambitions not only of its own group but of labor in general, and those out-

<sup>1</sup> *The Christian Work*, November, 1917.

<sup>2</sup> *The Survey*, December, 1917.

side of its ranks share in the results of its efforts. During 1915-1917 the demands of labor increased wages greatly; this increase raised the cost of production; the increased cost of food, clothing, etc., led to new requests on the part of labor. In the summer of 1917, "The Department of Labor at Washington estimated that, as compared with January, 1915, the average daily wages per man had increased 38 per cent. in the cotton-manufacturing industry and 53 per cent. at the iron and steel mills. These industries were typical in this respect of many others."<sup>3</sup>

We are yet too near the economic uncertainties of 1917 to have the perspective for a final word, but it is possible to suggest a few of the forces that, combining with the immense demand for war production, are magnifying in the national life the place and attitude of labor.

### Immigration

One of the first effects of the war felt in the United States was the cutting down of the number of immigrants arriving at her ports. The warring nations of Europe in 1914 and 1915 called home the reservists of their armies, and, by the tens of thousands, able-bodied workmen laid down the pick and shovel, stopped the looms, drew the fires and answered the call of their mother country. In 1913 there were 843,000 more aliens admitted to this country than departed; in 1915 "the arrivals of European aliens in this country, immigrant and non-immigrant, were exactly 16,900 short of departures";<sup>4</sup> in the year ending June 30, 1917, the official

<sup>3</sup> *Scribner's Magazine*, October, 1917.

<sup>4</sup> *Scribner's Magazine*, October, 1917.

figures show a total of aliens admitted of 362,877; the net gain for that year was, however, only about 200,000.

The peoples furnishing the largest number of immigrants for 1917, in numerical precedence, were:

Italian .....	38,950
English .....	32,246
Greek .....	25,919
French .....	24,405
Scandinavian .....	19,596
Irish .....	17,462
Hebrew .....	17,342
Mexican .....	16,438
Spanish .....	15,019
Scotch .....	13,350
Portuguese .....	10,194
Japanese .....	8,925
African .....	7,971

It is interesting to make a few comparisons with 1914 as follows:

	1914	1917
Italian .....	296,414	38,950
Hebrew .....	138,051	17,342
Polish .....	122,657	3,109
Russian .....	44,957	3,711
Ruthenian .....	36,727	1,211
Slovak .....	25,819	244
Syrian .....	9,023	976
Roumanian .....	24,070	522
Magyar .....	44,538	434

The economic life of this country has, for years, been built on the basis of a large and ever-increasing supply of unskilled labor; the newer immigrants have mined the coal, laid the railroads, felled the forests, built the subways, tunneled the mountains; as each group has pushed its way to a larger economic independence, its work has been taken over, not by its own Americanized sons, but

by a group of more lately arrived strangers from over the sea. Man labor has seemed inexhaustible in supply and of small value. Suddenly all this has changed; the source of supply has been closed. Southeastern Europe needs her own men, and industry in the United States finds itself facing a shortage of that type of labor which has been doing the fundamental work that made other labor possible.

### **Off to the Front**

While industry was trying to readjust itself to the difficulties caused by a curtailed immigration, the United States entered the war, and approximately a million young men were called to the camps; these came from every form of labor; the farm, the shop, the mine, transportation, offices, colleges shared alike in the embarrassment of necessary readjustments. A walk about the business sections of any city or large town where service flags are displayed, suggests the widespread shiftings occasioned by the calling of the men to the colors. In some cases 50% of the employees of a business have been taken. In readjusting the work to such conditions those remaining who have had some experience and who show adaptability are necessarily pushed upward to man the more important positions, thus again tending to emphasize the shortage of unskilled labor.

### **New Industries**

Simultaneously with the lessening of immigration and the formation of the new United States Army, industry became greatly stimulated and especially along certain

lines. These later became of paramount importance and it became of immediate necessity that labor should be recruited for their equipment. Huge munition and gun plants sprang into existence as though by magic and demanded thousands and tens of thousands of workers, skilled and unskilled; the need of clothing and equipment for a million men stimulated factories to the *nth* degree of production; food supplies, not only for this country but for its allies in Europe, called for increased agricultural forces; lumber for great cantonments and for a fleet of wooden vessels sent new forces to the forests—everywhere an inordinate activity has resulted. But labor is needed not only for these new, or freshly stimulated lines of work; they in turn must be supplied with raw material, and there has resulted a great chain of awakened industries; food must not only be produced, it must be conserved; factories call for metals and for coal, and mining becomes a vital part of the whole process; cotton and wool pass into the insatiable maw of looms and the work of the farm increases; yet the demand is ever for “more, more.” The raw material must reach the factory or workshop; the finished product must go to the consumer; transportation, by land and sea, requires large groups of workers. Directly and indirectly an uncounted multitude must serve if the needed supplies shall reach those who have taken on themselves the grim responsibility of soldierhood.

No large group of unemployed existed in the country in 1914; the withdrawal of those who returned to Europe and of those who have gone to form the National Army brought about an acute labor situation. The usual activ-

ities could not continue and the new ones be supplied with workers; there became necessary the transference of labor from the less necessary forms of production and its replacement in new groups. Such a change must come—in many instances plants will be altered to meet the new needs arising daily because of the war, and labor thus remain fixed in location while producing essential rather than non-essential articles; in other cases there will be necessary the diversion of labor geographically as well as industrially. “There is no reason for a decrease in the total value of goods manufactured, but they must be products having a direct or indirect relation to the present necessities of the nation.”<sup>6</sup> The result has been a serious dislocation of labor; the shiftings and realignments have caused general confusion, bringing new social as well as economic problems.

But shifting of labor has not been enough to meet the new situation—an added supply of labor has become necessary if the wheels of industry are to turn.

### Substitutes

We are apt to feel that the entrance of women into gainful employment is a new factor brought about by Nineteenth and Twentieth Century conditions. Women have, however, always been a part, and an important part, of the industrial system of this country. They not only have not been “doing men’s work” or “driving men out,” but have been urged and pressed into this service. As colonial records show, the colonist fathers, economists and political leaders, believed it better for women to be employed in factories than to live in even comparative

<sup>6</sup> *New York Times*, December, 1917.

idleness, and their pressure, as well as that of necessity, began a system that has grown and developed with the years.

“In 1794 when Trench Coxe found it necessary to reply to the argument that labor was so dear as to make it impossible for us to succeed as a manufacturing nation and that the pursuit of agriculture should occupy all our citizens, he at once called attention to the fact that the importance of women’s labor must not be overlooked, since manufactures furnished the most profitable field for its employment. And in the early part of the last century, a new factory was called a blessing to the community among other reasons, because it would furnish employment for the women of the neighborhood. Later it was said that women were kept out of vice simply by being employed, and, instead of being destitute, provided with an abundance for a comfortable subsistence.”<sup>6</sup>

From colonial days to the present there has been a steady growth both in the numbers of women employed and in the list of occupations open to them. This increase, before the present war “has been only normal, considering the rate of increase in population, in the group of industrial occupations designated in the census as manufacturing and mechanical pursuits, while there has been a disproportionately large increase only in the occupational group trade and transportation.”

The statistics of women who in 1910 were employed in gainful occupations is of interest, especially as showing a generally unguessed distribution in the various forms of labor. The census of that year showed 8,075,772 women employed, as follows:

<sup>6</sup> *Women in Industry*, Abbott.

Domestic service.....	2,530,846
Manufacturing, etc.....	1,820,980
Agriculture, animals, etc.....	1,807,501
Professional .....	733,885
Clerical .....	593,224
Trade .....	468,088
Unclassified .....	121,248

The group that has principally attracted legislative attention is the second—manufacturing. This is because those thus employed work in groups, and thus become officially articulate, and also because they compete to some extent at least with men, both organized and unorganized. The first and third groups, while numerically rivaling the second, are made up of those whose work is more individualistic. The workers in these groups do not, in their capacity as workers, mingle with large groups similarly employed, and their relations to their employers have remained of a much more personal character than is the case in the factory.

The influences causing readjustment in man labor will of necessity bring about changes in the woman group. The demands of the war will more and more curtail the production of luxuries and cause the concentration of labor on things vital to present conditions. In the manufacturing group this fact will bring many shiftings; but as large numbers of men will be withdrawn from this group, the women remaining therein will be subjected to a disproportionate amount of readjusting. Even then, however, it is probable that there will not be found within the group enough workers to supply the demand. This will probably be equally true of group 3, "Agriculture, Animals, etc.," because of the food demands. The present tendency would indicate that group 1, "Do-



mestic Service," will lose large numbers who will go to fill the vacancies in groups 2 and 3. An interesting by-product of the war is thus suggested, as much shifting in this direction would necessitate vital changes in the customs and manners of social life. Personal comfort and desire will, however, give way before national need, and American womanhood, whether served or serving, will cheerfully readjust itself to changed conditions.

But there will come—is coming as we write—not only regroupings among those already employed in gainful occupations, but an entrance into the field of profitable employment by large groups of women who have heretofore remained outside the ranks of labor, many being of those who have served in volunteer work. European countries have had to call on their women to aid largely in work specifically allied to the war, and to share in service outside of the homes. There is, perhaps, to be no more interesting by-product of the Great War than this larger entrance of women into industry and all that it may presage of social and economic change.

In England there are today about 1,256,000 women who have taken work formerly done almost wholly by men, raising their employment total from about 3,282,000 to 4,538,000. This total employment does not include domestic servants, women in small shops or on farms, or nurses in military, naval or Red Cross hospitals. Over 200,000 are now engaged in agricultural labor. Still more are employed in the great war-time industry of munitions-making. How vast that industry has become is indicated by the fact that the Ministry of Muni-

tions is now employing 2,000,000 persons and is spending nearly \$3,500,000 a year.

The same process of substitution of female for male labor has naturally obtained in Germany, while France, also, now depends largely upon her women in the factories, as well as on the farms.

These women will go in large numbers into kinds of work that have heretofore been mainly in the hands of men. As we go to press, a few women street car conductors and taxi drivers are taking the places of men; some cities are trying women as postmen; elevator boys are being replaced by girls; railroad yards are finding women satisfactory as workers, while factories of all kinds are utilizing ever larger groups of women. There seems at this time no line of employment that *per se* is closed to women because of sex, and the possibilities of another twelve months are beyond prophecy.

This situation is not peculiar to any one part of the country; the stress of national life is drawing the people of all parts and those of all races into the maelstrom. The ever-widening circles of demand are reaching into the retired village, into the mountains and the valleys; all of life is being stirred by the new national consciousness that is springing from a common danger and a common aim. The South, that fifty years ago was forced to adjust itself after an upheaval of the foundations of its social and economic life, is again face to face with a need of readjustment. Negro labor, feeling the present unrest, is moving in great groups to the North and West; New England is feeling the cutting off of immigrant labor and is calling women to man its fac-

tories; the West finds its labor seized with a new restlessness and looks forward with uncertainty. The Government sends out over the country its call for 10,000 trained women for service in the departments—everywhere are stirrings, shiftings, readjustments.

### **Spiritual Influences**

In all of this there is a wide and an interesting field for economic discussion; we are, however, especially concerned with that phase as it relates to the moral and spiritual life of the workers. From the marvelous shiftings and realignments of the time there must evolve new spiritual values as well as new social and economic situations. The church of Christ cannot stand aside from a situation of such grave importance. Its relationship to individuals in the great groups affected insures an abiding interest in the perplexities that beset those individuals in their work-a-day lives, as well as in the final solution that may evolve from the turmoil of the day.

Christian women may well study deeply and think carefully of the changing lives of hundreds of thousands of workers, many of whom are women, and those mostly young women. Many of these are bewildered and distressed by the enforced absence in the army or navy of the breadwinner, by a new necessity of self-support, or because this support must be gained under new conditions; others are excited and exhilarated by the break in the routine of life. Both groups are uncertain, tentative: they are in an impressionable and therefore precarious attitude. The very natural reaction to new environments and new conditions will be that they shall

free themselves from the past, and that they shall make for themselves lives unhampered by customary restraints, and therefore they need to receive a message which will make clear to them the seeming chaos of the present-day world.

One industry alone may illustrate the new situation: munition works have been built in communities where existed only a small margin of extra labor; to supply workers for these plants operatives have been drawn from a wide circle of towns; in most cases no provision for housing or caring for these new workers was provided before they appeared—the result has been difficult for the men; for the girls there has been a situation fraught with real danger. The Y. W. C. A., by a few experimental boarding houses and recreational centers, has shown the need and possibilities of caring for these groups of unassimilated workers who may be drawn into a community, but neither the Association nor any organization can meet all the needs. Christian people who live adjacent to such problems must study them and find the solutions therefor.

A virile Home Missions may well concern itself with the problems of labor; it has ever been its responsibility to search out the lonely or the neglected, to minister to those whose way is difficult, and to those who are facing new and untried conditions. Home Missions has also an ever-widening conception of the scope of its service in a new cooperation with the economic and social life of men, with their physical as well as their spiritual well-being. It preaches a gospel that presages a broader and truer interpretation of the brotherhood of man. There

is no greater service for Home Missions than that it shall interpret the Fatherhood of God to those whose feet often stumble as they pass on the path of labor.

### **A Call to Church Women**

In January, 1917, the Council of Women of Home Missions, composed of the representatives of sixteen Woman's Boards of Home Missions, feeling keenly the alienations that were recognized, placed itself upon record in the following statement:

"The Council of Women for Home Missions wishes to bring to the attention of its Constituent and Corresponding Boards the urgent and increasing need of a more intelligent and sympathetic understanding between the women of the church and the women in industry. It is happily true that many women in industry are at the same time women of the church and that many of the women who are members of the church are already deeply interested in the social and economic problems which especially affect women; but we must admit with heartfelt sorrow that a division into classes along this line exists among the women of our country and that it is difficult to bridge the gulf that separates them, since there is good reason to fear the women in industry believe that a lack of comprehension of their problems and a failure to co-operate in solving them mark the attitude of the women of the churches.

"The Council of Women for Home Missions believes that the time has come when our Women's Home Mission Boards should take some part in meeting this situation. We remember that the Boards are organized to do a specific work and that these conditions and questions appear to lie outside the boundaries of that work. Yet in the broadest and most Christlike aspect of the work nothing that concerns the womanhood of our country can be looked upon as alien to it, nor can the Boards be indifferent to the social and economic welfare of these multitudes of women who should be, but who are not, one with the missionary women of the churches in the bonds of a common belief and in the service of a common Savior and Lord.

"The Council, therefore, desires to recommend most earnestly that each Board seek to find some way which shall be consonant with its policy by which the women of its churches may be led to acquaint themselves with the questions which are of vital importance to the women in industry, and to enter sympathetically into their effort to solve them.

"There must be women in every church or in every organized group of churches who could and would respond to this need and this opportunity without lessening in any degree their response to the specific needs of their denominational work. The need is not for a new department of work nor, indeed, for the putting of a new burden upon the shoulders of those who are already overburdened, but the need is rather for a call to the women of the churches to reach out more intelligently and more sympathetically to their sisters in the working world."

It would seem that this statement was prophetic of the vital condition that has so soon come, when all the problems of labor have been intensified and the problems of the women in industry multiplied. If these problems were a challenge to the women of the churches in 1916, surely in 1918 that challenge has become imperative in time and force.

Christian women must help many to readjust themselves to new conditions, must help them to find in the new life that power that shall keep them true to the best ideals of American womanhood, must help to build out of change and turmoil a fine and Christian citizenry. The future of the race as well as its present emergencies will need to be guarded; an educational program that shall teach to adult as well as child a real Americanization development, that will make and keep the nation intact, must be presented; the church as the material embodiment of the spirit of love and faith must offer its help to all. All this then should be the approach of Christian women

to a study of the path of labor with its difficulties and its needs.

### **Alienation From the Church**

That an overwhelming number of those who follow the path of labor are alienated from, or at best, careless of the church as an organized body cannot be denied. In large cities the Protestant church has shown a marked tendency to withdraw from those districts where live those who work with their hands and to concentrate among the numerically limited well to do. The reasons given for this withdrawal are that a lack of attendance makes the church unnecessary and makes its financial support impossible. A few missions, of varying degrees of popularity, reach a limited number, but leave absolutely untouched the great groups of workmen and their families—American or foreign. In the smaller towns the same tendency is marked, accentuated by the absence of "missions," and by the occasional presence of successful and aggressive churches that stand out as proof of the existence of a generally neglected power. In rural communities, where thirty years ago were prosperous Protestant churches, and where the present inhabitants are, to a large extent, the children of those who attended and supported these churches, there may be found today Country Life Departments of Church Boards earnestly engaged in revivifying somnolent groups. Says one student of this question: "After an exhaustive study of a number of selected representative fields in different parts of the United States, Strong (Dr. Josiah) concludes that less than 30 per cent. of the population of

America are regular attendants, perhaps 20 per cent. are irregular attendants, while fully one-half never attend any church at all, Protestant or Catholic. This percentage of attendance seems too high. Investigations made by the writer in New England towns, and by a friend in a large part of Boston, would not warrant an estimate of even 15 per cent. of the population as regular attendants. . . . Statistics also show that church membership is steadily declining in proportion to population.”<sup>1</sup>

Such figures prove conclusively that the great work to be done by the church among the large groups of people affected by the present labor difficulties, must be done largely with those who have lived apart from the church, careless of their own needs or of the help that church could give. To these groups the church has at this time a definite ministry—in welcoming them into the communities to which economic need may take them, in attaching them to the local church body, in heartening them for their tasks, in showing to them that “No nation is safe without Jesus. The America of the future, like America of the past, must be a spiritual reality, or we are doomed.”

### **Causes**

There are doubtless many reasons, springing from innumerable sources, for the lack of church attendance—some due to indifference, some to positive antagonism, but the one great general cause, it is certain, is that for multitudes of people attention is concentrated on the problems of physical existence; the rapid increase of material things to the few raises hope in the minds of many that they, too, may be among those who will share

<sup>1</sup> *The Church and the Wage-Earners*, Thompson.



largely in the wealth of the country. This hope directs thought and energy into the channel of commercialism. Whatever tends to bring about the realization of the hope is keenly sought to the exclusion of other things which seem of less immediate importance. This position is emphasized by the great increase of secular literature in the form of newspapers and cheap magazines, which provide a reading supply that directs the attention still further toward material things and away from the contemplation of matters relating to the spirit. Travel increases and Sunday travel especially. Church attendance suffers thereby, and more and more the Church seems a thing apart from the problem of life.

While a few are actively antagonistic to the church for one reason or another—a few because of persecution suffered in other lands, the great mass of non-church goers are frankly indifferent, if that can be called indifference which is without thought, *i. e.*, the church does not appear on their horizon except as the agency of marriage and death—they ignore it because they never think of it. The writer met at a large hotel in a prominent Southern resort, a cultured woman of over thirty years of age who had lived her life in a fine Northern city, but who frankly said that she had never attended a church service in her whole life—had never been sent to Sunday-school, and never gave the matter a thought. This seems incredible, yet is perhaps not so exceptional as we would like to think.

### **A Program of Service**

To command the attention of the great throng that is

apart from the church, that body must present an aggressive program of service; it must preach a gospel of justice, of brotherliness, of love; it must translate its preaching into daily practice in large things and in small; it must concern itself with this world's relationships as well as with those of a future life; with clearness and directness it must convince all that "man cannot live by bread alone."