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VOL. XIII

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DEPARTMENT OF CHURCH & LABOR **General Object**

To interpret the Church to workingmen, to interpret workingmen to the Church, and to interpret employer and employee to each other, through education, inspiration, mediation, evangelism and twentieth-century methods of Christian work.

“Labor Sunday”

By the Rev. Charles Stelzle, New York, N. Y.

Just as Memorial Day and the several “Birthdays” show our appreciation of those who rendered patriotic service, and just as the Church’s holy days do honor to those who have served mankind spiritually, so Labor Sunday should be observed by the churches in honor of the millions of toilers who daily serve mankind in the humbler places of life.

As the result of an appeal made by the Department of Church and Labor through our local Presbyterian ministers, more “Labor” sermons were preached on the Sunday before last Labor Day than on any other single day in the history of the Christian Church. More workingmen attended church on that Sunday than on any other day since the advent of the modern trades union movement. On the following morning, which was Labor Day, the daily press in practically every city gave columns of space to the sermons, which were eagerly read by workingmen who would natu-

rally be interested in knowing what ministers had to say with regard to their problems. The favorable comments of the labor press of the country indicated that the impression made was good. In several cities the labor editors secured entire sermons from the pastors, printing them in full. Literally millions of leaflets were sent out among workingmen on that day.

Central Labor Unions passed resolutions to attend church in a body. In many cases they met in their halls and marched in procession to the churches. Preachers were invited to repeat the address to local unions. Invitations were received to come to the shops for noon-hour meetings. Special workingmen ushers and special workingmen choirs assisted in the service. For the first time some Christian workingmen came out in their shops as church members as they invited their fellows to the “labor meeting” in their churches. Some ministers discovered the great opportunity they had been missing, in mingling with the men in the shops, the mines and the mills. Many were

* The Home Mission topic for the month is Our Workingmen.

invited to address Labor Day assemblies, when they spoke to thousands of workingmen and their families.

Both sides discovered that each had been misunderstanding the other. Many a preacher, in his study, preparatory to the service, got a new vision of what the labor movement stands for; and many a workingman, listening to his Labor Day address, caught a glimpse of the purpose of the Church, which he had never dreamed of. Many an employer who had not studied very deeply into the history of the object of the labor movement, got a broader conception of what it all means, because of what was told him on Labor Sunday by the preacher. Many an employee, whose

whole thought had been that the labor question was purely a question of wages and hours, saw that there were moral issues involved which affected him as well as they affected his employer. These things will help bring about a better understanding between men. Surely that is the first essential to the full doing of one's duty toward his fellows. And that will help settle the labor question.

The department would urge upon the churches the importance of availing themselves of the same kind of an opportunity on the coming Labor Sunday—September first. We will send, free of charge, leaflets for distribution, both for the church and for workingmen.

"A Silver Platter"

By Charles Frederic Goss, D.D., Cincinnati, Ohio.

It is pretty generally known that the Presbyterian Church is making an organized effort to secure more sympathetic relationships between itself and the various organizations of labor by the very simple method of the exchange of "fraternal delegates."

About a year and a half ago two clergymen were accepted by the Cincinnati Central Labor Union in this capacity and given the "privileges of the floor," though, not the right to vote. During this long period they attended the weekly meetings with considerable regularity; but without having been called upon to speak and being, to all intents and purposes, quietly ignored.

Having at last learned all they could from observation, and finding no way to accomplish their object, they signified to the president their intention of giving up their task. Upon listening attentively to the story of their disappointed hopes that official set aside an evening for a formal statement of their mission and a free discussion of the relation between the Union and the Church.

Accompanied by another clergyman who had been a steam-fitter before he entered upon his professional career, the fraternal delegates entered the meeting room, the atmosphere of which was tremulous with suppressed excitement. They expected antagonism and perhaps abuse, for there were many members hos-

tile to the plan, enemies of the Church and of religion itself, and among them debaters of consummate skill and orators of commanding power.

To meet the situation triumphantly and to accomplish all the good they could, a plan of campaign had been arranged. The first speaker was to point out the essential differences between the two organizations and show the impossibility of the Church accepting the platform of the Union; the second, to continue the criticism in a milder form; and the third, to be pacific and conciliatory.

Determined not to minimize the antagonism of the two organizations (as he had come to feel them by this extended study) the leader of the debate began by setting forth his admiration for the talents of the men, his sympathy with their aims, and his appreciation of the great sacrifice which they had made in their behalf, but boldly and uncompromisingly defended the following propositions:—

I. That the "labor movement" is a "class" movement and the Union a "class" organization, while the Church stands for the abolition of all class distinction and would cease to be a Church the instant it sided with the Union.

II. That the Union stood for such things as the right to limit apprentices and to forbid