

**WORKINGMEN AND THE CHURCHES.**

One can have but little acquaintance with clergymen, if he shows an interest in labor questions yet is unfamiliar with the inquiry, Why do workingmen stay away from church? Though this inquiry may never trouble the minds of your luxurious Charles Honeyman's of the pulpit, hosts of clergymen with religious impulses propound it repeatedly and anxiously. It discloses what is to them a genuine and perplexing problem. But are they not mistaken in regarding this church problem as a labor problem? Isn't it rather a problem in human nature, which only seems to be a labor problem because, notwithstanding all our fine phrases about the dignity of work, we have in fact degraded manual labor? Let us see.

Habitual church-goers may be divided into three general classes—those who go because they profoundly believe in the divine mission of the churches, those who go from force of habit, and those who go because church going is respectable.

Now, workingmen who profoundly believe in churches are doubtless just as regular attendants as any other profound believers. Such, as stay away, therefore, must be of the class that goes either from force of habit or for respectability's sake.

But as church-going habits, unsupported by profound belief, are easily abandoned by men of every class, when less irksome recreation becomes reputable, there is nothing peculiar to the working class in relinquishing those habits. If all church-going were from force of habit only, there would soon be no attendance at all, in these galloping times when there is so little within the churches and so much without to interest the carnal mind.

But of the third church-going class, that which goes for respectability's sake, the falling off among workingmen is doubtless vastly disproportionate. Nevertheless, this also is attributable not to any peculiarity of workingmen, but to human nature. The only odor of respectability that workingmen can get from church attendance is that which may be described as "quite re-

spectable, for a common workingman." This puts workingmen in a similar category of respectability to that of "the good nigger" of old slavery days, and they resent it; not because they are workingmen, but because they are men.

To sum it all up, then, insofar as workingmen stay away from church for reasons peculiar to workingmen, they do so because they feel that the churches regard them as an inferior social class. One needn't be a workingman himself to appreciate this. It is enough to know something of human nature.

Nor is it alone to a hostile attitude that we may look to realize the tendency of churches to regard workingmen as of an inferior class. Patronage may be worse than open hostility. And from one or the other, what church organization is free?

Let any city clergyman,—excepting not even those who are conscious of a genuine spirit of brotherhood, unless, indeed, they be devoted missionaries—interrogate himself sharply and see if he does not harbor a spirit either of hostility or patronage to the workingman class. Would he dine with workingmen members of his congregation if there were any? Would they be invited to dine with him? Would their families visit his and his theirs, upon the same terms of respect and equality that characterize the social intercourse of his family with "the better element" among his parishioners? Would he go to their trade union halls in quite the same spirit in which he visits a club? A few questions like these, frankly answered, would not unlikely disclose ample cause for the feeling among workingmen, that instead of their having left the churches the churches have left them.

Let the churches go to the workingmen, not in the spirit of a haughty landlord's haughty or patronizing steward-going to the relief of menial dependents, but even as the old church went to him in the days of primitive Christianity, as to brethren and not to "inferiors," and the complaint that workingmen stay away from church would soon be heard no more. But the "superior" classes would drop away then, and that would make another problem.

**THE PHILOSOPHY OF STRIKES.**

A trades union is a labor trust. To "corner" the labor of an industry would be fully as disastrous to the people needing that industry as to corner the raw material or the finished product. A strike means a temporary curtailment or stoppage of the supply of labor, organized with the object of getting a high price or better conditions for labor than the existing market allows.

Now the price of labor, like the price of anything else that is exchanged, is governed in the long run by the ratio of supply and demand. Hence, if we want to raise the price of anything we must either increase the demand relative to the supply or decrease the supply relative to the demand. A strike is, while it lasts, a decrease in the supply of labor, and may amount to total stoppage; but as such decrease or stoppage is never permanent, the ratio between the supply and the demand will, in the end, assert itself, over and above any artificial settlements that may be reached.

The question: What is a fair wage? is only part of the general question, What is a fair price for anything. The fair price of anything we exchange is the largest measure of the product of other people's sacrifice which, under free conditions of production, transportation and exchange, we can obtain as an equivalent for a given measure of what we have to sell. So long as free conditions of production, transportation and exchange do not exist, so long will the fixing of a fair price, either of labor or commodities, be an impossibility. Denial of such free conditions means robbery to the workers in all industries; but in what proportion they are severally robbed, we are without any reliable criterion for forming a judgment.

When a strike takes place it is often ignorantly assumed by the parties of either side of the dispute that the public have little or no concern in the issues involved; that both employers and workmen have an absolute right, if either side think fit, to cease production until such time as they choose to come to an agreement. Undoubtedly if they produced for

their own use—if, for instance, in the strike now going on, the coal owners and colliers mined coal, not to sell, but to use for themselves, it would then be a matter for both sides exclusively. But we know that no industry, in our interdependent economic system, produces for itself; production takes place with a view to exchange, and the buyers, i. e., the general public, are deeply interested in the ratio at which the exchange must take place, having, as production lessens, to give more and more of the products of their labor in exchange for a given quantity of the article whose production is lessened.

This assumption of absolutism in judging economic questions, is fatal to any rational conception of the simplest common problem. We are all inextricably bound up in our complex social organism, and so long as mutual exchange is our common link, so long will the business of our fellow-workers be our concern, no matter how remotely and indirectly it may appear to affect us.

If the attainment of free industrial conditions must, as above stated, precede the attainment of fair prices, and if those conditions would, when attained, not only insure fair prices for goods but fair prices for the labor, and in fact for everything that forms the subject of exchange, it follows that special or artificial plans, such as "strikes" based upon absolutist views of the rights of particular trades, must fail in their object. The rational, radical and only enduring way to increase the compensation of labor in any trade is to set to work to bring about free industrial conditions in all trades alike by wresting all natural agents and opportunities for wealth production from the hand of monopoly, thus increasing the demand for labor until the relative utilities of the different trades settle themselves in the open market. To do this it is essential that the workers should look upon themselves not as craftsmen but as men. That they are men they owe to nature; that they are colliers or butchers or bakers they owe to accident. They should not lose sight of their natural rights for the sake of their assumed accidental ones.

T. SCANLON.

## NEWS

The crowning of King Edward VII. of England (p. 251) is at last accomplished, the ceremony having taken place at London on the 9th.

On the previous day the king issued the following public address:

To My People: On the eve of my coronation—an event which I look upon as one of the most solemn and important of my life—I am anxious to express to my people at home and in the colonies and in India my heartfelt appreciation of the deep sympathy they have manifested toward me during a time in my life of such imminent danger. The postponement of the coronation ceremony, owing to my illness, has caused, I fear, much inconvenience and trouble to all who intended to celebrate it. But their disappointment has been borne by them with admirable patience and temper. The prayers of my people for my recovery were heard, and I now offer up my deepest gratitude to Divine Providence for having preserved my life and given me strength to fulfill the important duties which devolve upon me as sovereign of this great empire.

EDWARD R. and I.

Buckingham Palace, Aug. 8.

The day following his coronation, King Edward presented to the British nation, as a memorial of the event, Queen Victoria's favorite palace, Osborne House, on the Isle of Wight. He expressed his desire that, with the exception of the late queen's personal apartments, the building may be converted into a convalescent home for officers of the army and navy whose health has been impaired by military service, and that the people shall always have access to it.

While the coronation ceremony proceeded in London there was a meeting of the Irish parliamentary party in Dublin, presided over by John Redmond, which adopted a resolution declaring that—

Ireland separates herself from the coronation rejoicing of her merciless oppressors and stands apart in her rightful discontent and disaffection.

Further changes in the British ministry (p. 232) have taken place within the week. Austen Chamberlain, son of Joseph Chamberlain, has become postmaster general in the place of the Marquis of Londonderry, who becomes president of the Board of Education. Sir William Hood Walrond takes the place of Lord

James of Hereford as chancellor of the duchy of Lancaster. The Earl of Dudley succeeds Lord Cadogan as lord lieutenant of Ireland. The vacant place of Sir Micheal Hicks-Beach as chancellor of the exchequer is taken by Charles Thompson Ritchie, who was home secretary; while Aretas Akere-Douglas is shifted from first commissioner of works to the home secretary office. Mr. Balfour, the new premier in place of Lord Salisbury, retains his old place as first lord of the treasury.

Upon the announcement of these cabinet changes on the 8th, parliament took a recess until October 16.

Within the past few weeks, a British colonial conference has been in session, under the general patronage of Mr. Chamberlain, the British colonial secretary, which came to an end on the 11th. Its meetings had begun on the 30th of June, advantage having been taken of the presence in London of the colonial premiers on the occasion of the coronation. The meetings were held behind closed doors, and no reports of the proceedings have been officially given out; but it is understood that among other things the conference has recommended preferential customs duties between different parts of the British empire, though concluding that inter-imperial free trade is as yet impossible. The proceedings are not to be published at all, but it is announced that all the resolutions of the conference will be issued soon as a parliamentary document.

Except in one department of France the process of closing the Catholic schools (p. 280) that have not complied with the new associations law has gone on without violent resistance. This is the department of Finisterre, where three communes are standing out against the expulsion of the nuns from their schools. The Catholics condemn the new ministry for enforcing the law against the primary schools of religious societies, without first obtaining a judicial interpretation of the new law, which is as they claim ambiguous on that point.

Censored dispatches from Russia tend to confirm the impression that some great tidal wave of discontent is rising in that empire (p. 72), which derives its impulse and takes its di-