

Jesus: The Man and His Work

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INFORMATION AND EDUCATION SERVICES

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Foreword

In these days of idol smashing and rapid readjustment of ideals this lecture is most timely. Delivered at the Auditorium, Cincinnati, November 11, 1905, under the auspices of the local branch of the Socialist Party, it made so favorable an impression on certain listeners that they determined to have it printed if Professor Wattles would furnish the manuscript. This he has done.

The identity between the ethics of real Christianity and Socialism is perfect. The cornerstone of each is laid in Justice, Equality, Brotherhood. Under the vile and senseless economic system in vogue these principles cannot be practiced except through the absolute sacrifice of every material interest. Who can doubt what the economic attitude of Jesus the carpenter agitator of Nazareth would be were he alive today!

The Spirit of Christ is not dead, but it no more resides in the modern church than it did in the church of His day. Where, then, do we find it? Those whose eyes are open to the truth see in the world-wide revolt of the working class the manifestation of the *real* Christianity. In it, they see the dawn of that "Peace on earth, good will to men" that Jesus proclaimed.

The reader is earnestly enjoined to read this beautiful lecture with open mind. Prejudice and intolerance are millstones about the neck of aspiring intelligence. They are a fatal handicap and cannot be discarded too quickly. Do not shy at a word, like a horse shying at a feather, for one is as ridiculous as the other. A better day is dawning and no nobler work is presented than to lend a helping hand to the establishment of an economic system where Christianity can be practiced.

Jesus: The Man and His Work

It is doubtful if any man was ever more misunderstood by the people of His own time than Jesus of Nazareth. Certainly no man was ever more grossly misrepresented by succeeding generations, and especially by those who professed to be His friends and followers.

The Christian religion was first recognized by the powers of the state at an era when the interests of the ruling class demanded the utmost submission and conformity on the part of the people; and out of the needs of the kingly and priestly classes for a religious ideal which should induce men to be contented with slavery, to bow their necks to the yoke of taxation, and to submit to every form of economic evil without protest, was born the concept of the message, and of the personal character of Jesus which is accepted as orthodox today.

The picture of the man Jesus which you hold in your minds has been drawn far more from the poetry of Isaiah, written 700 years before He was born, than from the four gospels, which purport to be narratives of eye witnesses of His life and works. Such passages in Isaiah as: "He is despised and rejected of men; a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief: and we hid as it were our faces from him; he was oppressed, and he was afflicted and he opened not his mouth; he is brought as a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before her shearers is dumb, so he opened not his mouth," have been quoted to show the meekness and the humility, the submissive spirit with which Christ endured wrong and injustice; and we have had held up as the Saviour of the world a despised, friendless, poverty-stricken laborer whom the upper classes regarded with scorn because of his lowly origin and station; who had no friends save fisherman, laborers, outcasts and sinners; who was often shelterless and hungry, and who bore insults and persecutions with meek submission and walked about a scornful world with his hands always uplifted in loving benediction.

And this character is held up to us as the Christian ideal. Be meek. Be submissive. Be lamb-like or sheep-like. Bow your head before the persecutor and "hump" your back to the shearer. Rejoice that it is given you to be fleeced for the glory of God. It is a good religion for the man with the shears.

The Christ who is held up in the orthodox pulpit is rather a weak character. He is not the kind of man we would nominate for president. His followers have very little confidence in him as a practical teacher of business ethics. They have great faith in him as a revealer of spiritual things, but none at all as an organizer of the affairs of this world. If it were telegraphed over the country this afternoon that the president has resigned and that Jesus would take his place tomorrow, 95 percent of Christian

business men would draw their money out of the banks for fear that Jesus would inaugurate a panic.

Jesus said of Himself, "If I be lifted up I will draw all men unto me." Well, He has not drawn all men, not even a majority of men, and I am inclined to think that He has never been lifted up. An unreal, imaginary character is being lifted up instead, and men are not being drawn by it.

Near a certain Indiana town there is a neighborhood peopled by an Amish sect. They all wear flat black hats and plain black clothes which they fasten with hooks and eyes, because buttons are not Christ-like; they shave their upper lip, cut the beard square across the chin, and the hair square also. It is said that when one of the brethren needs a hair-cut his wife turns a bowl or basin bottom upward over his head and cuts away all the hair that comes below it. Attired in this fashion, and in a very strong odor of sanctity, two of these brethren were walking in the street one day, and were met by an old farmer, a typical Hoosier character. After looking them over critically, he accosted them thus: "Say, why don't you fellows get your hair cut an' shave?" "We attire ourselves thus," said one, "because we want to look like our Savior." "Did the Savior look like you?" asked the farmer. "We believe he did." "Well," said the old man, positively, "darned if I blame the Jews for killin' him, then."

The brethren were holding up a false Christ, and so the old man was not attracted; and I want to prove to you today that the church, everywhere, is holding up a false Christ; I want to show Him to you as He was and is, the Supreme Man the Highest Type, the incarnation and revelation of that One Great Life which is above all and through all and in us all, lifting us all toward unity with one another and with Him.

It is my task to rescue Christ from Christianity.

In the first place, then, Jesus was not despised because He was a workingman. Custom required every Jewish Rabbi, or learned man to have a trade. We read in the Talmud of Rabbi Johanan, the blacksmith, and of Rabbi Isaac, the shoemaker, learned and highly honored men. Rabbi Jesus, the carpenter would be spoken of in the same way. St. Paul, a very learned man, was a tent-maker by trade. Jesus could not, in that tune and place have been despised for His station or His birth. Indeed, He was popularly supposed to be an aristocrat by birth, a son of the royal house and was frequently saluted as the son of David.

Second. He was not despised for ignorance. He was a very learned man. Whenever He went into a synagogue He was selected to read the law and teach the congregation, as the one best qualified for that work. Luke says: "There went fame of him through all the region round about and he taught in their synagogues being

glorified of all.” In those times of fierce religious controversy no unlearned man could have held his own in such a fashion. He was thoroughly versed in the Jewish law; the way that He silenced his adversaries with apt quotations shows Him to have been letter-perfect. Even His enemies always addressed him as Master or Teacher, acknowledging His profound learning.

Third. He was not despised for His poverty. He had many wealthy and influential friends. Lazarus and his sisters were people of consequence. Luke says that Joanna, the wife of Chuza, the king’s steward, and other women ministered unto him of their substance that is, were supporters of His work. The king’s steward was a high official, and his wife was a prominent lady. Joseph of Arimathea, who came after His body, was a well-to-do man. So probably, was Nicodemus. Jesus healed the sick in the families of rulers and of high officials, and they appear to have responded liberally in supplying His financial needs. True, He owned no real estate; but He dressed expensively, and never lacked for money.

When He was crucified His clothing was too fine to cut up, and so the soldiers cast lots for it; on the night of His betrayal, when Judas went out, it was supposed that he had gone to give something to the poor. It must have been their custom to give away money. In that country and climate their wants were few and simple, and were fully supplied. Jesus wore fine clothes and had plenty to eat and drink and had money to give away.

Read the four gospels, and you can come to no other conclusion. Jesus was not humble, in the accepted sense. He did not go about with downcast look, and a general attitude of asking permission to stay on earth. He was a man of the most impressive, commanding and powerful personal appearance. He “spoke as one having authority” and frequently we are told that great awe and fear came upon the people at His mighty words and works. In one place they were so frightened that they besought Him to leave; and John tells how certain officers sent to arrest Him in the market place lost their nerve in His commanding presence, and went back saying, “Surely never man spake like this man.”

On the night of His arrest a bank of soldiers approached Him in the grove, and asked for Jesus of Nazareth; and when He answered, “I am he,” such was His majesty and psychic power that they prostrated themselves; “they went backward” the account says, “and fell to the ground.” Does this man I am describing seem to you like one of our Amish, or even like one of our Methodists? Yet this is the Christ of the four gospels. I would like to see one of His present-day followers knock down a platoon of policeman by saying “I am he.”

Now, to be Christ-like in personality a man must be learned, well dressed, well supplied with money and be of noble and commanding appearance, speaking with

authority, and possessing tremendous magnetic power.

What now, of the Christ-like attitude toward the world? One of the very best ways to understand that is by studying His reasons for taking the title He assumed . the Son of Man. He rarely spoke of Himself in any other way. This term, son of man, was common in the Jewish prophecies. It was simply an emphatic way of saying *Man*. If you wanted to emphasize your Methodism, you might say, "I am a son of Wesley," and if you wanted to emphasize your humanity, as Jesus did, "I am a son of man."

Why did He lay stress upon the fact that He was a man? You will note the position. The son of Wesley will stand for Methodism, and the son of Calvin will stand for Calvinism, but the Son of Man must stand for humanity.

The Roman Empire was a great taxing machine. In the conquered provinces, the people were left, as far as possible, with their own local government and institutions of justice, the function of the Roman officials being to extort tribute, or collect taxes. Every form of extortion was practiced by governors, procurators and tax-collectors upon those who were able to pay. Open robbery, torture, kidnapping, false accusation, outrage of every kind might be practiced upon the man who had money to tempt the cupidity of the higher powers. And as the oppressed property holders had no way to meet the extractions of government but by oppressing the poor, the condition of the masses was pitiful indeed. You will readily see that the business and property-owning classes had to get the money to pay their taxes by exploiting the poor in some way.

It is an economic axiom which is indisputable that all taxation of whatever kind, upon whomsoever levied, is wrung at last from the hard hands of the toiling poor; that is the reason they are poor. To give you an idea as to how oppressive this taxation was, we may estimate from certain passages in Josephus that the private income of Herod the Great was three and one-half millions of dollars a year. That is not as much, of course, as the income of our president today, but he has a very much larger country, and more people to tax, and while he is not allowed to use some of Herod's most effective methods, he has others of his own which lay the crude ways of the monarchs of antiquity very far in the shade.

The enormous sums which were collected from that little province brought the unhappy toilers down to the last extremity of destruction; they could go no lower and live. In Judea, at this time there were several religious sects, which were also in a way political parties, scheming for place and power, and for influence with Rome. The Pharisees, Saducees, Essenes, Samaritans, etc., disagreed on various questions, as the interpretation of prophecy, the existence of angels, the resurrection of the dead, baptism, and so on. The strife between these parties was desperately

acrimonious and bitter, often to the point of personal violence. Their arguments frequently ended in riots. You will notice, as you read, that they were always ready to “take up stones” to end a dispute; often only the commanding personality of Jesus saved him from being stoned by these religious mobs. These sects were intensely eager to make converts, or proselytes. Jesus says of them that they would compass sea and land to add one to their number.

Below all these middle-class disputants were the common people, sunk in the most abject poverty . taxed, beaten, outraged, robbed, slaughtered, and no voice lifted anywhere in their behalf. No one, Jew or Gentile, thought of demanding justice for the mongrel multitude. It is said of Jesus that He had “compassion on the multitude because they fainted and were amazed, and were like sheep without a shepherd.” They had plenty of shepherds to baptize them, to interpret prophecy for them, to instruct them in “spiritual” things, and even to shear them; but none to demand a lightening of their burdens .none to cry out in their behalf for justice.

There are still shepherds who are far more concerned about correctness of doctrine than about justice. Into this maze of oppression, taxation, murder, outrage and theological discussion comes the grand figure of the Christ, saying: “The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he has anointed me to preach good news to the poor. I am no Pharisee; I am no Saducee; I am no Essene or Samaritan: I am a man! I come, not on behalf of Phariseism or Samaritanism, but on behalf of humanity.” A new note in religion; a new attitude. No wonder they were “amazed at his doctrine.” No wonder His word was with power. No wonder they said “he speaketh as one having authority.”

In John’s gospel, Jesus says of Himself that the Father hath given Him authority to execute judgement because He is a man. I say that this is the only reason God ever had for giving authority to any man, and I say that if there is a man anywhere today upon whom the divine sanction rests it is not because he is a Pharisee or a Saducee, a Methodist, Presbyterian, Republican or Democrat, but because he is a man. And I also say that among all those who claim leadership today, by virtue of divine-anointment, we may apply this test with certainty . that the man who stands for humanity, first, last and all the time, against all vested interests, religious and political, is the man who stands with God. He and he only, is in the true Christian attitude .the attitude that Jesus took.

And because He took this position; because He stood for humanity against the vested religious interests of His time, He was called an infidel; because He stood for humanity against the vested economic and political interests of His time He was called a traitor. Jesus was crucified on the charges of infidelity and treason; and He was guilty - legally - on both counts. I know no prouder titles, when justly acquired, than these: Infidel and Traitor! I pray that Great Intelligence, before whose eye all

the affairs of men are spread, to write opposite my name in the book of His remembrance, Infidel -Traitor: Infidel to every church that apologizes for economic injustice; Traitor to every government that assists in the exploitation of the poor. The only sinful infidelity is infidelity to the truth; the only vile treason is treason to the weak. This was the attitude that Jesus took; He expressed all this when He assumed the title which made Him the champion of humanity - when He said, "I am the son of man." And He gave all this full expression in His teachings.

Let me quote from the sermon on the mount: "Ye have heard that it was said by them of old time, thou shalt not kill; and whosoever shall kill shall be in danger of the judgement; but I say unto you that whosoever is angry with his brother shall be in danger of the judgement, and whosoever shall say unto his brother 'Raca,' shall be in danger of the council, but whosoever shall say 'thou fool,' shall be in danger of hell fife." The expression "thou fool," does not clearly interpret the original; it would be better rendered by the phrase "you are no good," or "you are worthless.

Let me illustrate the meaning of this passage to you. I was sitting in a hotel lobby when the news came in of an Indiana coalmine horror, in which a number of poor fellows lost their lives. Two well-dressed men were discussing the affair, and one said: "Oh, well, it's only a couple of Hungarians less! A million more are ready to step into their shoes tomorrow. The world hasn't lost anything." Jesus says, whosoever shall speak of a man like *that* is in danger of hell fife. That is the exact meaning of this passage. The responsibility of all murder rests on those who degrade the public estimate of the value of human life. The killing of Filipinos on behalf of our commercial interests is paving the way for the killing of Americans in the streets of our own cities, on behalf of those same "interests." The talk of "inferior races" is but a prelude to the talk of "lower classes." Whoever talks so is in danger of hell fire.

The doctrine of hell itself, is born of the infamous idea that there are some classes of men who are specially valuable to God; and those who teach such blasphemies walk ever on the crumbling verge of that black pit, wherein gleam the fires of eternal wrath. If anybody goes to hell, it will be those who degrade humanity.

This is what Jesus said. Now, if you turn to the 12th chapter of Matthew, you will read that the disciples were crossing the fields on the Sabbath day, and that they plucked the ears of corn and ate as they went. This gave great offense to the Pharisees. They were not offended because they took the grain, for under law the right of a hungry man to life transcended the property rights of the owner of the field; none might say the famished wayfarer nay if he chose to pluck and eat. It was not, I say, because they ate, that the Pharisees were angry, but because the thing was done upon the Sabbath day. The Pharisees thought that the thing most valuable to God was their church, with its institutions and observances. They would not break

the Sabbath to feed the hungry; they would not break it to heal the sick. God cared more for the institution than He did for the man.

And so they complained to Jesus; and He answered them: "Have ye not heard what David did when he was hungry, he and they that were with him?" and He went on to tell them how David and his companions . and David's companions at that time were a mighty tough gang . went into the temple itself, and took the shew-bread, which was sacred, and ate it . and God approved. "One standeth here," said Jesus, "greater than the temple." God cares more for a hungry man than he does for a holy house.

In Mark 2, where the same story is told, he adds: "The Sabbath was made for man, and not man for the Sabbath." Here is defined sharply the issue between Jesus and His opponents. They were exalting the worship, the temple, the Sabbath, the ceremonial. He exalted the man. And I for one, agree with Jesus. I feel no reverence for buildings, even though they may be magnificent structures, where a dim light falls through stained glass windows upon the structured forms of saints, and where robed priests chant in solemn ceremony; these things move me not at all. But when I stand in a school room and look into the bright faces of a hundred boys and girls . when I stand in the crowded market-place or in a factory, where my brothers and sisters toil to supply the needs of the world, and I realize that every life before me contains possibilities as boundless as the universe itself; when I stand in the presence of this toiling, suffering, loving, seeking, glorious, common humanity, I bare my head and bow in reverence, for here indeed I am in the very presence of Almighty God. One is here greater than the temple, greater than the church, greater than the Sabbath.

God has a higher call for men than the observation of certain days, or the keeping of certain places holy. This whole earth is a most holy place because it is consecrated by the love of God to fulfill His purpose in the high destiny of man.

Is not this the only rational interpretation of these sayings of Christ? Have you ever heard it so in church? Theirs is a metaphysical Christ, a false Christ. This Christ I hold up today is the real Saviour.

The trouble with the churches is that they are all too much like one in Washington. It was a Calvinistic church - a very solemn place. Washington is a solemn place anyway, for people who believe in hell . they are so near their finish. A good old Methodist woman strayed into this church one Sunday and sat down. The preacher was eloquent, and presently the old lady, greatly moved, shouted heartily, "Amen!" An usher touched her gently on the shoulder and whispered: "Madam, you will please keep still." She subsided, but under the influence of the eloquent sermon, she lost herself again directly, and shouted: "Glory to God!" Again came the usher with

his whispered reproof. "But sir," she said, "I've got religion." "Oh, well, madam," he answered, "this is no place to have religion." You laugh. Perhaps you know of churches where anything is more welcome than religion.

"And Jesus took a little child, and set him in the midst and said: 'Whosoever shall humble himself as this little child shall be great in the kingdom of heaven.'" You have, no doubt, seen a great many pictures of Jesus as he blessed the little children, and you have always seen Him surrounded by prettily dressed ladies, who were bringing nice, clean babies - the kind of children it is easy to love; the kind you cannot help blessing. The gentlemen who draw these pictures cater more to the artistic sense than to a desire to represent accurately the facts in the case.

That was undoubtedly a slave child; a child of the abyss; unwashed, uncombed, covered with vermin; human in His suffering, in His capacity for pain, but with the better portion of His humanity lying dormant in His soul visible to God but not to men. And He said, "Whoso receiveth one such little child, receiveth me."

There are a good many children in whom you find it hard to see the Christ, are there not? Let me do for you, my friends, what Jesus did for His hearers; let me bring a little child, and set Him here before you.

I went into a tenement building in the city of Chicago, one hot afternoon in the season when those buildings become great superheated ovens, with a doctor, to see some children who were sick. In one room we found a little boy - a very little boy indeed - who was dying with a fever. The room was squalid and intensely hot; there were three other children, dirty and uncared for. The mother was giving all her time to her sick baby, wetting his parched and bleeding lips, and trying by every poor device at her command to lessen his suffering. The doctor said to me that day: "I can go where grown people are dying, or dead, without being overmuch moved; I can go where children are dead, and thank God; but when I go in where these children are sick, and see what they have to bear, and how they bear it, it breaks me down and unmans me quite. I cannot bear to see it."

Poor little boy, with his bright eyes and flushed cheeks, he lay quite patiently, and only the restless movement of the wasted little hands upon the quilt betrayed his suffering. He spoke to his mother: "Mamma," he said, "it is time for papa to come in." The father was a stationary engineer, who worked near by, and it seemed that it was his custom to leave his work, now and again to run in and see his child. "Yes, honey," the mother answered, "papa will be here pretty soon." "Mamma," the child said, "when papa comes he'll say 'how is my little man' and I'll say 'all right,' so he will be glad. Don't tell him I am dying, but I think I am."

He was thinking, you see, not of himself, even in the hour of his extremity, but of his father. Well, presently the father came into the room. He was a rough, wild looking man, with uncombed hair and beard, clad only in a shirt and overalls, his face and bare arms black with coal. I have no doubt he was an ignorant man, as books go. I have no doubt he was a bad man from the orthodox and conventional standpoint; I presume he sometimes swore, and played cards for the beer, and did other dreadful things.

As he came in, he glanced anxiously at his wife, and then at us, and read the worst of tidings in our faces. His own face quivered, and his bearded lips twisted strangely; then, for the child's sake, he forced a cheerful smile and came across the room toward the bed; and as he came, upon his coal-grimed features shone with transfiguring light a father-love as holy as the love of God Himself.

The father bent above the cot. "How is my little man?" he asked. And the feeble voice piped bravely, while the parched lips writhed in a pitiful attempt to smile: "I'm all right, papa; I'm all right." It broke the man down. He burst out sobbing, and springing to his feet rushed out upon the landing to struggle for self-control. The mother, also sobbing bitterly, bent over her child again; and down the poor child's cheek rolled just one tear - of pity - for his father. That was a "cheap" child; one of the "lower" classes. Not one of the "fittest" to survive - and so he died.

Jesus took a little child and set him in the midst of them, and said: "Whosoever shall offend one of these little ones it is better that a millstone were hanged around his neck, and he were cast into the sea." Yes, any man, or woman, or railroad system, or financial system or industrial order that stands between the child and life, is under the curse of God. I say, with Jesus, that it is more important that justice be done to one such little child than that all the corn crops of a thousand years be saved.

"Whoso shall humble himself as this little child, the same shall be great in the kingdom of heaven." How can you humble yourself as such a child? Does it mean to be childlike in spirit, teachable, credulous? No; there is only one way. Stand beside that child of the abyss and say, "Before God he is as good as I. He is entitled to everything I claim for myself and for my children, and I will never rest until all I claim for myself and mine is assured for him also." Then you will begin to be great in the Kingdom of God.

How can I love my neighbor as myself? How can I love that child as I do my own children?

One day Jesus was talking to the folks and He said: "Why are you worried about things to eat and wear? Seek a just and righteous order of things and you will have plenty." I am here to testify that Jesus told the truth. This world would produce food for ten times its population. It would clothe ten times its population more richly than Solomon was arrayed in all his glory. It would furnish building material to erect a palace larger than Rockefeller's mansions for every family that lives on it. Our Father has provided the raw material for the things essential to life a thousandfold more than we can use. The race is rich, abundantly rich, as a whole. The satisfaction of human needs is a problem of machinery and organization. We have the machinery pretty well perfected. It is now a problem of organization.

Seek the Father's kingdom, says Jesus, and you solve the bread and butter problem. What is a father's kingdom like? A yonder comrade, let us say, is the father of a family, and he sees his children gather about a table where he has provided bountifully for them all, as our Father has for us. Well, the biggest boy gets to the table first, and he gathers all the good things around his plate, and gets his arms around them; his little sister reaches for a piece and he slaps her; he strikes back the outstretched hands of the others and says: "Get away! Our father put this here and I've got here first and it's mine! Get away," (strike, push, shove), and looking up to the father he says, "Our father (strike), thy kingdom come (biff), thy will be done" (bang). Would not that father say, "My will will not be done until your brothers and sisters have an equal chance."? And if the big boy should say "Well then, father, I will hold it as your trustee, and I will give the others what they need, if I can spare it." Would not the father say, "My kingdom does not consist in benevolence or charity, or self-denial, or sacrifice, or worship, or Sabbath observance, but in justice for all."

Jesus pointed out that the birds are not worried about getting something to eat. They live in the kingdom of God. We live in the kingdom of Caesar. If the time ever comes when some of the smart birds get a corner on bugs or organize a worm trust, there will be worry among them also.

Now, so far as nature is concerned there is nothing to prevent me from loving my neighbor as myself. There is plenty for him and me, too. And just what does it mean this loving ones neighbor as himself? Suppose my wife and I sat down **at** the table and we had nothing to eat but a crust of bread and a piece of pie. And suppose I reach out and get the pie and say, "My dear wife, how I love you! I do wish you had

some pie!” and I swallow it and leave her to gnaw the crust. Which do I love best, myself or her? If I love her as myself, will I consent to hog the pie? If I love her as myself what I try to get for myself I will try to get for her. If I love you as myself, what I try to get for myself I will try to get for you, and what I try to get for my children, I will try to get for yours and I will no more rest under an injustice done to your children than if it were done to my children.

Now can you imagine a state of society in which the good thing I do for myself shall be done for you also? I spoke one night in Chicago and at the close I got on a street car and stood beside a girl who had been one of the listeners, and she spoke to me. “Mister,” she said, “I heard your speech and I liked it very much. I’m only a poor, ignorant girl but I’ve thought of these things, and the world as it is reminds me of one of these big jack screws they lift buildings with .you turn a handle round and round and the center part is lifted up. So, it seems as though we poor folks are at the handle. We go round forever and never get any higher. We are always in the same place. We go round to lift somebody else. And I thought it might be fixed like one of those winding stair-cases so that as we all went round we all might go up together, and the work we all do would help us all, and if a few people didn’t get quite so high, some day we would all come to the top together and that would be better for us all.” And I thought that if I had the power I would make all the college professors and preachers and the teachers go and sit at that poor girl’s feet and learn a little political economy.

These things are hidden from the wise and prudent and revealed unto babes. The pure in heart shall see God. The average man is so wedded to the idea of the divine origin of the present order that he cannot conceive of the possibility of a change. He will not investigate, he will not consider; he simply says, “It can’t be done.” He is like the old Tennessean who did not believe in railroads. They built a railroad through his vicinity and the neighbors got him to go down one day to look at the track. They had laid the track down to the riverbank and had tunneled on the opposite side under a hill, but had not commenced to build the bridge. The old man took one look - that was enough. He didn’t stop to ask questions. He threw up his hands and said: “Oh, by thunder, you needn’t tell me that you can make an engine that will jump that river and hit that hole in the hill! It can’t be did.”

Have you ever thought, oh ye of little faith, that there is a way to bridge this chasm between individual effort and united effort? Consider for a moment our public school system. We are educating our children by uniting our effort. We hold the school property in common. You are a proprietor in the school property of Marion, Ind. I am a part owner of the school property in Cincinnati. So far as that work is concerned we are all one family, are we not? It is our father’s kingdom, in part, established in the midst of Caesar’s kingdom, isn’t it?

Suppose, in my love for my children, I devise a new text book or a more convenient desk or a more comfortable seat, anything that makes their work easier or better the school service. Then I get it adopted, and I have helped my own children, I have helped your children, I have helped every child from Maine to California. I have brightened every life and added to the happiness of every home, I have loved all as well as my own. This is the spiral stair-way plan. I like it better myself than the jackscrew method.

Industry is on the other plan. If I invent a new laborsaving machine, I cause hundreds of my brothers to lose their chance to make a living, and make the problem more intense for all. Suppose the factory were like the school, an institution set apart for the supplying of a common need by united effort, would it be so? If I could, by some device, lighten my own task I would bring rest to all, and there, again, I would love my neighbor as myself.

The apostles understood it so. They started out to build a unified and harmonious world. Read the second and fourth chapters of the Acts of Apostles, and read the writings of the early Christian fathers, and you will see that the idea of Jesus and the apostles was not to build an institution for worship in a bad world, but to build the world itself into a united, harmonious, orderly and scientific society. To make society a spiral stairway, up which a redeemed humanity should march together into unity with God. They had all things common. There was no poverty among them that was not shared by all. The early churches were little commonwealths, and the purpose which they held with intense enthusiasm was the building of the world into one great commonwealth.

The Apostles were communist organizers. The purpose of Jesus, as understood by them, was the establishment of a scientific society, which he called by its true name the Kingdom of God; a world of unified effort, centering in the development of the little child. It was this glorious vision which gave virility and power to the preaching of the early church, and the church of today has no power because it has no purpose and no hope.

Dr. Quayle, of Indianapolis, has written a little pamphlet in which he argues that the Apostles were mistaken in their sociology. He holds that they were all right in their theology inspired and infallible but they were poor business men. I would suppose that the same Holy Spirit who gave them their theology must have given them their social ideas also. The communistic regime was as much a part of the life of the church as the Lord's Supper, and was far more clearly drawn from the teachings of the Master. Dr. Quayle's attitude is equivalent to saying that the Holy Ghost is an excellent old personage, very correct on doctrinal matters, but a little off when we come to the practical affairs of life.

That is exactly the attitude of the church today toward Jesus. Every modern preacher, with few exceptions, denies his Master whenever he speaks of social problems. I am not going to rail at the church; but the church charges us with infidelity, with atheism and immorality, and I am going to reply with a statement of the case and with a counter charge.

Those of you who have read Elbert Hubbard's article on the cotton mills of South Carolina, will never forget that realistic description of the awful conditions. How the thousands of baby slaves are gathered in by fraud, misrepresentation and by tempting the cupidity of their fathers; how the long hours, the close application, and the flying lint combine to break down their feeble bodies so certainly and so speedily that the average life of a child condemned to one of these hells is only four years. It is organized murder on a wholesale scale; it is cruelty beyond words; outrage so infinite as to be inexpressible. And near many of these slaughter-houses you will find a church, built by the child-killing corporation, and there is a preacher whose salary is paid from the pitiful stipend of the dying children. In some cases it is even reported that a regular percentage is deducted from the weekly wages for the support of the gospel of that Christ who said, "Forasmuch as ye have done it unto the least of these, ye have done it unto me."

I suppose we all agree that that church is supported by the organized exploitation, even unto death, of little children? I suppose that we all agree that a business which works the lives of little children into dividends is wrong, and that a church which is supported by the fruits of such a crime is wrong, and that the spiritual life of any church cannot rise very far above the source from which it draws its financial nourishment? A church which lives by child murder can not have much divine power in its ministrations, can it?

What is the difference, in principle, between a business in the South which takes all a child's life in four years, and a business in the North which takes a man's or woman's life in twenty years? What is the difference in principle between the business of Ohio and that of South Carolina? What is the difference in principle in competition anywhere? What is the difference in principle between the source of nourishment of the church here and the church there?

Let my brethren of the pulpit charge me with heresy and with infidelity if they will; I answer with this counter charge: I say that the same power which corrupts great corporations and bribes lawmakers, which suborns perjury and spots with foul stains the robe of justice, which plants the land with brothels and saloons, and makes city government a stench in the nostrils of God, is the power that feeds the church. Organized business!

And I charge that down the no-thoroughfares of commercialism today, organized

business and the church which bears the name of Jesus Christ, bound together like the Siamese twins, nourished by the same blood, fed from the same source, thinking the same thoughts, and loving the same loves, are walking side by side; and of the exploitation of men and the degradation of women, and the murder of children, equally guilty before God.

If that be infidelity, let the church make the most of it. If it be false, let the church disprove it. If it be true, let her cleanse her robes of the innocent blood, attire herself in sack cloth and with the ashes of repentance on her head, cry for mercy to Almighty God.

In the time of Jesus they were very prone to compare themselves with one another, and thank God that they were not like other men. In the 13th chapter of Luke, you will read how Jesus said to them "Think ye that those on whom the tower fell the other day were sinners above all the other people in Jerusalem, because such a thing befell them? I tell ye nay, but except ye repent ye shall likewise perish!"

Do you think, my friends, that in the day when Capitalism stands up for judgement, and the blood of its slaughtered millions cries to God for justice, it will avail a man to say, "I was a Methodist: I was sound on justification," "I was a Baptist, I was put clear under water," "I was a Catholic, I said prayers with perfect regularity every day." I tell you no but except we repent we shall all likewise perish.

Ah, how I long to give my brethren of the pulpit this vision of the Christianity of Jesus and the Apostles; this concept of the real Christ. How I long for adequate words to convey His call to them and to you!

The call of Christ! What is it and where is it? Where do we hear it? Look and listen at the pageant of your civilization; see the gorgeous shows, the display of wealth, the wonders of color, the things of art: Hear the mighty uproar of the great world of commerce, the clamor of the market, the screaming of the whistles, the ringing of the bells, the puffing of engines, the crash and rattle of machinery, the clangor of music, the cheering of excited crowds - and now listen closer, bend down and keep still and through it all you hear another note, a minor strain growing louder and stronger day by day - the groans of despairing men, the sobs of outraged women, the feeble cries of dying children. The cry of the sorrowing for relief, the pleading of the disinherited for justice.

That, oh men and women, is the call of Christ to you. What does it mean to a minister of the gospel in the present day to answer that call? It means to stand, not for charity, but for justice; not for reform but for revolution. It means to close the doors of these splendid temples, rather than live another day by taking the gold of organized oppression. It means to go again upon the highways and the byways,

saying, "The spirit of the Lord is upon us because he hath anointed us to preach good news to the poor." It means to work, not for institutions of worship, but for a commonwealth. It means to break at once and forever with the vested interests of Capitalism: to be infidel to its religion, traitor to its government: to cry with Isaiah: "Thy princes are rebellious and companions of thieves; every one loveth gifts and followeth after rewards; they judge not the widow, neither doth the cause of the fatherless come unto them; the spoil of the poor is in their houses, their hands are full of blood! Bring no more incense, sing no more songs, pray no more vain prayers; observe no more ceremonies. I will have justice, before worship, saith the Lord of Hosts!"

Yes, the call of Christ to the minister is to break once and for all and absolutely with Capitalism. Render unto Caesar the things that are Caesar's and unto God the things that are God's means that all is God's: in a redeemed world there is no room for Caesar. And my brother, sister, the call is the same to you.

Matthew tells us that when Jesus hung upon the cross the Pharisees mocked Him saying, "If thou be the son of God come down from the cross." They wanted to be led by a Son of God but they wanted to be led in easy ways, to glory, place and power. They wanted a competitive Christ, who would lead them to competitive victory. They wanted a kingdom of God, but they wanted it to be on the general plan of this world's kingdoms. They wanted to give the poor charity not justice; to give the slave kindness not liberty. They would be good to the poor but they would not abolish poverty; they wanted to ride easily on the backs of others, not to bear others as a burden on their own shoulders. "If thou be the Son of God, come down!"

And current Christianity stands before the cross in the same attitude saying the same words, "Not that way, Master! Not to be crucified on behalf of humanity! Lead us the other way! Come down off the cross!"

My friends, the call of Christ is as it was 2000 years ago, and has ever been to bear the burdens of weak, wronged, outraged, robbed, oppressed and disinherited humanity. To join your lives to those of the poor. To feel their pains, to share their sufferings, to live for their deliverance - to bow beneath their sorrows in dark Gethsemane; to walk, thorn-crowned, with staggering feet up the steep way to Calvary; sustained because beyond the cross we see the river sepulcher, and through it shines the glory of a resurrected humanity. Lift up your heads! The day of your redemption draweth nigh; the kingdom of heaven is at hand.

Compare this call, my friends, with what you hear from the orthodox pulpit, the appeal to selfishness, the exhortation to save yourself; compare it with the appeal of orthodox politics to the appetite alone, and see if it does not move you more. Is not this Christ worthy of your following, this cause entitled to your highest service? Let

us consecrate ourselves to it today. To the service of Christ in humanity, to the bringing in of the redeemed world, let us in emulation of our fathers pledge our lives, our fortunes, and our sacred honor.

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