

received from mass-produced manufactured goods in comparison to farm products. Profits received in industrial enterprise are high and so accordingly is the industrial wage in comparison to farm income. Another factor in the higher industrial income is the part the labor union movement is playing in winning higher wages for labor.

#### *The Labor Movement*

The labor movement is the outcome of industrialization. It is as industry has grown that organized labor has moved to the forefront. In the history of business enterprise the capitalist keeps his labor costs down, not only to increase profits, but also to assure a competitive price for his product in the market. Since there are few employers who willingly raise the wages of their laborers, the worker has to be satisfied with wages decided by management. Where there has been a minimum wage guaranteed by law, this minimum has often been the maximum which employers are willing to pay. In seeking just pay, workers have joined together in labor unions for their common welfare.

In the Philippines the trade union movement has grown in influence within the last decade. In 1953 with the passage of the "Magna Carta" of Labor, 836 unions gained recognition. By 1960 the number increased to 2,300. The number of workers affiliated with trade unions has grown from 150,000 to over 500,000 in 1960. The trade union

movement is, however, still in its early stages in the Philippines. In this beginning stage there are many growing pains. There are trade union leaders who use the union for their own personal aggrandizement, both politically and financially. The trade union leadership does not always represent the rank and file membership. Many of the leaders are lawyers, who have not come up through the ranks of labor. Because of a limited training and experience in labor-management relations, the trade union often makes unreasonable demands. On the other hand, industrial management, because of its newness to the Philippine scene, is often feudalistic in its understanding and treatment of the labor movement.

#### *Social Change Through Industrialization*

The trade union movement is just one outcome of industrial growth. Industry brings many social changes to the worker's life. Within an industrial society there is a move away from the work patterns established in the rural areas. In farm work the tempo of life is set to planting and harvesting. The farmer moves with the seasons. Within this tempo the farmer has a degree of freedom in setting his work schedule. The farmer's goals are long range, since it is only after the harvest that he knows what rewards his labor has brought him.

In factory work the worker's life is geared to the motion of the machine. Factory work is a new

experience and a machine job gives a new kind of prestige in an agricultural society. Machine work is often a welcome relief to the back wearying work of rice planting. But the drudgery of rice planting is replaced by a new kind of routine. The worker now adjusts his life to the day in, day out discipline of factory life. The attractiveness of factory work wanes as the worker lives by an eight-hour day, six-day week, 50 weeks a year schedule.

The compensation, of course, is the regular wage. Where the farmer has to wait until harvest time, the factory worker receives his pay at the end of every week or twice a month. His remuneration is immediate. He can use his pay for immediate satisfaction, or if he is frugal, he can save it for some future goal.

#### *Depersonalization*

One of the dangers of industrialization is the depersonalization of the worker. Within industry the goal is the production of goods for immediate sale and profit. In the process of producing goods and making profit the worker often becomes only part of the process. He is lost sight of as a person. In a large factory he is just one among many workers. His personal relationships with his employer are fragmentary — especially when those who own the factory live 10,000 miles away.

Within this depersonalization the worker strives to maintain his identity. At this point the trade union movement acts as a protest against the loss

of the worker's identity. By uniting workers in defense of their rights it gives them a new group identity. In a society in which older patterns of social relationships are breaking down, the trade union provides a new social alignment which cuts across language, regional and religious lines.

The trade union also provides the method by which the worker preserves his personal identity. In a large factory where there are many workers the individual worker's job problems can easily be overlooked. The trade union acts as a channel for presenting the worker's gripes to management. Through a "grievance" procedure the worker calls the attention of his union to job situations which need adjustment. If the union officials consider the "grievance" a legitimate one, it is brought before management for settlement. This is one way a worker's individual rights are recognized within an impersonal industrial situation.

In an agricultural society, the farmer is ever aware of the part that the supernatural plays in his work. The work of the Creator is in the farmer's consciousness whether his crop is large or small. In an industrial society emphasis is placed upon the machine. It is the machine which produces goods. Man is only the operator. In the industrial system the worker becomes aware of the part that the organization of work and the mechanical process play in producing goods. In this new society the worker asks "What is the

meaning of work?" It is to this question we now turn.

## II. THE BIBLICAL UNDERSTANDING OF LABOR

While we cannot say that the Bible has a specific doctrine of labor, we can draw certain conclusions from its general attitude toward labor. Within both the Old and the New Testaments, labor is looked upon as a necessity. A man works to earn his daily bread. The Bible neither disparages labor nor does it make labor an idol. In the Genesis story man is commanded: "Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth and subdue it." Man has a practical task before him. If he is to live he must eat. If he is to eat, then by his labor he must turn the resources of the earth to his benefit. In order to live he must make the earth yield its rice for his food, its iron ore for his machines, its cotton for his clothes.

Our labor then is a part of God's purpose. The Scripture presupposes that each man will work. The Psalmist tells us: "Man goes forth to his work and to his labor until evening." St. Paul was not ashamed that he worked with his hands as a tent maker. In fact on several occasions he called it to the attention of his churches that he did not depend upon them, but earned his own livelihood. (I Thess. 2:9; II Thess. 3:7-9).

Within the Biblical understanding of daily work there is no hierarchy of occupations. God chose men from all walks of life for His prophets and His kings. His own Son worked with his hands as a carpenter. The Bible has a healthy respect for labor. But it does not make labor an idol. Labor is not an end in itself. Labor, like all of God's gifts to men, is to be used for His purpose. We are to use our labor as a channel to witness to God's redemptive purpose. We witness to God's purpose, not only through words, but also through the way we perform our work and in our attitude toward our fellow-laborers.

### *Individual Responsibility in our Labor*

In commanding us to work, God desires us to be responsible workmen. We are not just to do our job, but we are to do our job responsibly. We work not only to earn a living, but we work also to bring benefits to the common life of men. We do our job well so that the community may benefit from our work. In our modern machine age this may be difficult for a factory worker to understand. Factory workers who do only one small part of a big process cannot understand how they are serving the common life. The worker who puts a nut on a bolt in assembling a sewing machine cannot see how his job helps the community. Yet his job is essential to the whole

process of making sewing machines. Without doing his job well the sewing machine would be defective and the community would suffer from his poor workmanship.

This responsibility also extends to how we use our pay. If our earnings are to be beneficial to the life of our family and the community, then we have a responsible stewardship to perform. "Why do you spend your money for that which is not bread and your labor for that does not satisfy?" writes Isaiah. Men do spend their hard-earned money on wasteful things. They spend their money on goods which do not satisfy their family's needs. They buy tuba instead of food for the table. They bet on a cock fight instead of buying clothes for their children. How we spend our money cannot be separated from our total responsibility to God. Our care for our family and our care for ourselves in our use of money in turn affects how we do our work.

### *Our Social Responsibility*

We also witness in our work through the attitude we have toward our fellow-workers. We are bound together with our fellow-workers by the work of our hands. We spend many hours of our lives with them in our work. We share together our common problems and our common hopes. We cannot live our Christian faith by ourselves, but

we always live it in relation to some other person.

In our common work experience, as Christians we see our fellow-worker as our neighbor. We know that Jesus' words, "You shall love your neighbor as yourself," applies to the men we work beside. As a neighbor we have a responsibility to be concerned for our neighbor's welfare. The Christian is to be continually aware of those areas where there is need for a recognition of individual and group rights. In the Old Testament prophets there is a recognition of the rights of the poor. The injustice which Isaiah saw among his own people evoked words of judgment upon unscrupulous landlords:

Woe to those who join house to house, who add field to field until there is no more room, and you are made to dwell alone in the midst of the land. (Isaiah 5:8)

The prophet Amos was sent to bring judgment upon insensitive rich men and deceitful merchants:

Thus says the Lord!

For three transgressions of Israel, and for four, I will not revoke the punishment because they sell the righteous for silver, and the needy for a pair of shoes. (Amo 2:6)

Hear this, you who trample upon the needy and bring the poor of the land to an end, saying, "When will the new moon be over, that we may sell grain?"

And the Sabbath,

that we may offer wheat for sale,  
that we may make the ephah small and shekel great,  
and deal deceitfully with false balances (Amos  
8.4)."

For the Christian the love of the neighbor has far-reaching consequences. Our responsibility is to be seen not only in terms of performing our own job, but also in terms of a larger social responsibility. Wherever men are treated unjustly, the Christian has a responsibility. What affects his neighbor, affects him. The Christian does not accept injustice with resignation. The existence of injustice is a call to action. It may involve him in the organization of a labor union. Or it may mean working to get community action against an unjust situation. It may mean seeking legislation in Congress through personal correspondence or through a campaign to organize public opinion. In the face of social injustice, the Christian takes social action to express his love of his neighbor.

In his struggle for a just solution the Christian keeps God's reconciliation through Christ first in his mind (I Cor. 5). As the Christian seeks justice for his fellow-workers and himself, he is also responsible for understanding the employer's problems. Even as he seeks justice, the Christian lives with reconciliation at the center of his life. In the conflicts within the world of work the Christian

witnesses to Christ's reconciliation by being a reconciler.

### III. THE RESPONSIBLE USE OF LABOR

The Philippine government is engaged today in a development program aimed at raising the standard of living of the whole nation. As Christians, we are called upon to view the goals of economic development in the light of the Biblical Faith. Throughout the world, peoples and their governments are asking the question: "How can we reach a higher standard of living?" As Christians we are concerned that men everywhere have opportunity for a full life, both materially and spiritually. But the Christian is concerned that economic development and a higher standard of living do not become ends in themselves. While a higher standard of living may assure a more abundant material life, it does not guarantee that men will be more obedient to God in the use of their goods. There is, in fact, always the danger that in abundance men will forget God.

In working for a higher standard of living, the Christian's goal is a responsible economic order. Within this responsible economic order, the Christian seeks the effective use and development of the resources which God has provided him in this life. The Christian recognizes his responsibility for the effective use of his own labor, and also the effective use of labor within the economic life of