

defer action in the direction suggested in your letter of March 9th, and to wait until normal conditions again prevail.

Too Poor to Go to Church.

To the Editors of *The Civilian*:

Among some very clever things said by Prof. J. W. Robertson is, "The influence of the fishermen of Gallilee, the tent-maker of Tarsus, and the carpenter of Nazareth on the growth and civilization of the world," etc., etc. Most people are ready to admit that it is a good thing to go to church, though about one-fourth of the population of this city never go to church at all, and it would be hazardous to say that these people are very much less moral and less void of the evils of common humanity than the churchgoers. Catholic people as a rule make it a point to go to church on Sunday, but these people have an advantage in this regard over the Protestants, in that there are services in the Catholic churches every hour on Sunday from six o'clock up to 10.30 or 11, and it is an easy matter to attend some one of the masses, while, to go to an early mass does not require one to be dressed in fashion, as is almost absolutely necessary to be in order to attend a high mass at 10.30 or 11, or to attend the one regular Protestant service at 11 o'clock.

But would anybody believe that there are families, whose bread-winner works for the Government, that are too poor to go to church, at least to the regular 11 o'clock service? Well, there are and until the time comes when going to church will not be almost the same as going to the movies, and until dime collectors at the churches shall be cast into the exterior darkness, and a few other changes as to dress, social standing, etc., then poor people will continue not going to church. It is said that poverty is the surest road to Heaven, and that God looks at the man of wealth and trembles for his salvation, and looks at the honest labourer in

whose heart, and in whose home there is peace, and feels like congratulating him that he is not rich. So far so good. There is a class of married men in the Government service who are doing all kinds of labour for the Government and receiving wages under \$800 a year. This class includes checkers, sorters, packers and messengers, a great many of whom are in the stationery department of the Government Printing Bureau; also quite a number of clerks throughout the whole service, their scale of wages runs from \$12 to \$15 per week, and a man, to fill those positions, must be a fair scholar, must be decently dressed and clean shaved and present at all times a clean and neat appearance. Most important of all he must be strictly honest and reliable, all of which qualifications come pretty high for a wage of, or equal to, \$12 to \$15 a week. This man does not live as a Christian ought to live; in fact, he cannot, though he has a steady position. What can a man with two to six children do working for \$12 to \$15 per week? What can he afford to give his church? To do justice to their families most of them cannot very well afford to give anything to the church. Many men in Ottawa, in the Government service, are in this position. They would like to go to church with their wives and families, but they have really not the wherewith to place on the collection, though the usher might get them a pew to sit in if they presented a fairly neat appearance. But a neat appearance in both husband and wife and the children costs money and is sometimes more than a family man on \$12 to \$15 per week and salaries ranging from \$500 to \$800 a year, can very well afford. These people are honest—they must be to hold their positions in the Government, and are naturally proud in their honesty—in their poverty—and so prefer to stay at home from church on Sunday.

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Dept. of the Interior.