**A Workingman’s Prayer for the Masses**

This 1894 “prayer” by “A Workman” (an anonymous contributor to the *National Labor Tribune)* is a response to Andrew Carnegie’s 1889 “Gospel of Wealth” essay. Read to see how this author disagreed with Carnegie.

Oh, Almighty Andrew Philanthropist Library Carnegie, who art in America when not in Europe spending the money of your slaves and serfs, thou art a good father to the people of Pittsburgh, Homestead and Beaver Falls. We bow before thee in humble obedience of slavery…. We have no desire but to serve thee. If you [say] black was white we believe you, and are willing, with the assistance of… the Pinkerton’s[[1]](#footnote-1) agency, to knock the stuffin[g] out of anyone who thinks different, or to shoot down and imprison serfs who dare say you have been unjust in reducing the wages of your slaves, who call themselves citizens of the land of the free and the home of the brave….

Oh, lord and master, we love thee because you and other great masters of slaves favor combines and trusts to enslave and make paupers of us all. We love thee though our children are clothed in rags. We love thee though our wives…are so scantily dressed and look so shabby. But, oh master, [you have] given us one great enjoyment which man has never dreamed of before—a free church organ, so that we can take our shabby families to church to hear your great organ pour forth its melodious strains….

Oh, master, we thank thee for all the free gifts you have given the public at the expense of your slaves…. Oh, master, we need no protection, we need no liberty so long as we are under thy care. So we command ourselves to thy mercy and forevermore sing thy praise.

Amen!

*Source: Letter from “A Workman” to the* National Labor Tribune*. Reprinted in The Coming Nation, 10 February 1894.*

1. Pinkerton was a private security and detective agency hired by US Steel to break up the Homestead Steel Mill worker strike in 1892. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)