

**THE REVOLUTIONARY  
FUNCTION OF THE  
MODERN CHURCH**

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The revolutionary Function of the modern Church by John Haynes Holmes

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**JOHN HAYNES HOLMES**

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# The Revolutionary Function of the Modern Church

By

**John Haynes Holmes**

(Minister of the Church of the Messiah, New York)



"The old order changeth, yielding place to new,  
And God fulfils himself in many ways,  
Lest one good custom should corrupt the world."

TENNYSON : *Idylls of the King.*

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To

THE GLORIOUS MEMORY OF

THEODORE PARKER

"The religious faculty is the natural ruler in all the commonwealth of man. Therefore have I always taught the supremacy of religion and its commanding power in every relation of life, both the life of the individual and the life of the state."





## PREFACE

THIS book is at once a survey, an argument, and a plea. It is a survey of much of the best thought of our time upon many of the phases of what is known as the social question; it is an argument for the essential identification of religion and the social question; and it is a plea for the recognition of this identification upon the part of those who control the church.

Many books have been written during the last few years upon the social aspects of religion, and this book may perhaps be regarded as only one more. No one of these books, however, so far as I know, (1) has gathered up the lessons learned of late in other fields of social experience and shown their meaning in terms of religion; (2) has shown that the question of the church is thus not something apart by itself, but only one phase of the modern social question as a whole; (3) or has shown the one fundamental reason why, in dealing with the individual, the church, like every other redemptive agency, must go behind the individual and grapple with the social organism itself. It is these three things that this book attempts to do; and it may therefore not unjustly be described, perhaps, as breaking some new ground in this much-ploughed field.

The substance of this book has been stated many times during the past year in public addresses in the pulpit and on the platform. The material, however, has been rearranged, and much new material added; so that the work, as here presented, is practically new. It is sent forth to that larger audience of readers, which can never be reached by the spoken word, with much misgiving and many fears, but in the fervent hope that it may at least quicken some minds to a new understanding of religion, and awaken some hearts to a new service of the Kingdom of God on earth.

J. H. H.

Church of the Messiah  
New York City.

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