
Address to the Christian Labor Union, Sherman Street Methodist Episcopal Church, Milwaukee, January 9, 1896 [excerpts]

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MILWAUKEE, Jan. 10 [1896].— Eugene V. Debs delivered an address before the Christian Labor Union at the Sherman Street M.E. Church Thursday night [Jan. 9], during the course of which he arraigned the church. He said:

“No man can honestly accumulate \$1 million. Where there is such accumulation there must be robbery. One of the great faults of a large portion of the Christian clergy is that they fail to arraign rascality in high places. I know it is difficult for the ministers to discuss the questions which arise between capital and labor. The church can not array itself on either side. I don't want it to take sides, but I believe in speaking the truth.

“If a man can not hear the truth from the pulpit the church is better off without him. I know it is hard for a minister who receives his salary from the rich to speak against their misdemeanors. There are rich men who use the church to uphold them in their nefarious practices in accumulating wealth through the present unchristian laws.”

While he lauded the “Little Church Around the Corner,” he said all churches were not solely places of worship. He referred to Trinity Church, New York, with its \$100 million within the shadow of which thousands are destitute. It has \$100 million invested in property. It is a usurer, and much of its property is rented for unholy purposes. He claimed the church could and should be a factor in the solving of the

labor problem, but it should not be subservient, but should be the fearless and sympathetic church, such as Christ designed.

At the close of the lecture Rev. Mr. Starkweather announced that a conference of the prominent labor leaders of the country and of prominent churchmen will be held at his church in April to devise a plan for the solution of some of the labor questions.

Edited by Tim Davenport

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