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### REV. MR. ORR OBJECTS. Insists That Ministers Staunchly Speak Out for the Right.

To the Editor of The Wageworker—As I read the charge of the "Chicago Public," published in The Wageworker, my first thought was to smile and pass it by as absurd. But on reflection I thought that I might, at least, show how impossible it would be to sustain the charges.

Read this and ask yourself, "Could it be proved?"

"When labor organizations strike, the pulpit thunders; but with only here and there an exception, its thunderbolts are leveled at the organized men whose struggle is for a bare living for hard work.

"Against labor strikers the pulpit is seldom slow to thunder its anathemas. But how many pulpits have thundered against the wholesale sacrifice of children in factories and mines for the enrichment of men who contribute temples and observe forms?"

"As an institution the pulpit, and as a class the clergy, are allies of despoiling privilege."

The majority of the clergy are from the so-called "working class." Would you or should you expect them to lose sympathy for the people from whom they came? If they are not worth more than the salary received, they are not worthy of the ministry. They have chosen the ministry for the good that they may do; that they may represent among men the Christ (a workingman), and bring His teachings into the lives of men. Should you expect a class of men with such a purpose in life to be time-servers, to be influenced by money or men, to be afraid to apply the teachings of Jesus to social and economic questions? Is there anything of which you may think that could make such a class of men "allies of despoiling privilege?"

The charge is very general and points to no specific instance where the clergy as a whole opposed the workingman in a struggle for his rights. I might ask, where did the clergy stand in the Homestead strike, in the miners' strike, in the late strikes at Chicago? Did they denounce the employer, i. e., the capitalist? Did they denounce the employee, i. e., the striker?

The clergy over the whole country, with but few exceptions, were arrayed on neither side. Because the Christ message which they had to deliver is for men and not for any particular class of men. Because they believed that the panacea to solve the problem of distribution is to be found in the teaching of Jesus Christ as given to us in the New Testament. Almost without exception where the question at issue was discussed, the employee was favored. In one of our church papers, Dr. Cyrus Cort wrote an article favoring the course taken by the mine owners during the late strike. The next issue of the same paper fairly bristled in its condemnation of the views of Dr. Cort. Seeing that he had not the sympathy of his brethren, he wrapped the cloak of silence about him and dropped from view.

In December, 1902, Dr. Hillis preached a sermon at Central church, Chicago, in which he condemned one phase of the labor union. He assumed that unions reduced the competent to the level of the incompetent. On this assumption he based an attack on labor unions. So exceptional was this attack to the utterances of other clergymen that it was copied by nearly every city paper in the country. We venture the assertion that few of the clergy were willing to accept the position of Dr. Hillis on the labor union question. At the same time we believe that he would strike fearfully at a wrong wherever he saw it. The sermon expressed somewhat the influence of environment. If he had been in close touch with working men and union labor the greater part of his life, his point of view would have been different and his concepts would have been of a different color.

The clergy, with the press, have been instrumental in bringing to the front the question, "How did you accumulate your wealth?" And they have been compelling men to give an account of their stewardship. Having been born and brought up in a Christian family, the home of working man, and being myself a craftsman, I speak as one having authority. I have always been, more or less, in touch with the church and its ministers and I have for the first time to hear a clergyman condemn a "striker" for "striking." I have heard them condemn lawlessness, and rightly, too, but never the striker or his right to strike. I have often, yea, numberless times, heard from the pulpit the teachings of Jesus which condemn selfishness, greed, injustice, sweat-shop principles, child labor and other forms of oppression. I know and am persuaded that there is not money enough in the

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United States to still the tongue of the true minister of Jesus Christ. And there are thousands of them who, like John Knox, "never feared the face of man."

The best friends the laboring man has on this earth are the church of Jesus Christ and the clergy. When a paper on the subject of "Labor Unions" was read by a union man before the ministerial association of Lincoln, it was endorsed without a word of adverse criticism. I question seriously if any other body of professional men would have accepted some of the views of the reader without protest. And yet there was not a dissenting voice from that large body of ministers. We therefore believe that the ministers of Lincoln are in hearty sympathy with the wageworker. One thing of which I am sure, that there are no strings attached to the pulpit of St. Mark's Reformed church and working men will always find themselves welcome at the services.

In conclusion let me venture the assertion that the writer of the article published in the "Chicago Public" has had little or no experience with the church or with the clergy.

P. M. ORR.

### CENTRAL LABOR UNION. Will Meet Next Tuesday Evening and Elect Important Committee.

The Central Labor Union will meet next Tuesday evening, and one of the items of business to be attended to is the election of some very important committees. Two of these committees—organization and home industry—are especially important. The organization committee, if it will, can do a great work in Lincoln. There are several lines of employment that need organizing, and a hustling committee could do it without doubt. The home industry committee can help in many ways to enlarge Lincoln's manufacturing interests.

The fraternal delegates from the Ministerial Association will be on hand next Tuesday, and something interesting will be brought out. Let every accredited delegate be on hand and assist in making the work of the Central Labor Union count for something.

### ON TIMELY TOPICS. Another Minister Takes Up Discussion of the Labor Question.

The pulpit is rapidly arousing itself to the necessity for considering the acute problems of the day, and there is no more acute problem than that which includes the great labor question. More and more the ministers are studying social conditions, and as they do so they become more and more convinced that there is something radically wrong. As a result they are preaching along lines that, while old as Christianity itself, are yet new. Rev. W. M. Balch, pastor of Trinity Methodist Episcopal church, Sixteenth and A streets, announces a series of sermons on the general topic, "The Kingdom of Heaven in the Problems of Today." There will be four sermons in the series, the first one on next Sunday evening on the subject, "The Problem of the Corporation and the Program of Christianity." Following in the order named, each Sunday evening, the other topics will be, "Labor Unions and Human Brotherhood," "The Christianization of Business," and "The Christianization of Politics."

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