

GOSPEL OF UNIONS TOLD IN PULPITS

Chicago Ministers, Also Toil- ers' Leaders, Preach Labor Sunday Sermons.

MOVEMENT GIVEN PRAISE.

Objects and Results of Organized Efforts Recounted to Many Congregations.

Labor Sunday was observed in many churches of Chicago and its suburbs yesterday. Clergymen of practically all Protestant denominations preached morning and evening sermons on the subject of labor and trades unionism, and several labor leaders, including a woman trade unionist, mounted the pulpit of churches and told the assembled congregations of the work accomplished by labor unions and of the efforts of organized labor jointly with the church to bring about the brotherhood of man.

Roman Catholic churches also joined in observing the day.

The ministers in their sermons dealt out praise to the members of labor unions, who, through organized effort, worked unselfishly for improvement of social and industrial conditions. With equal force they condemned acts of lawlessness and brutality and held up the ideal of Christian character as necessary to leadership of organized workmen.

Higher wages, shorter hours of labor in order that the workers may have leisure for study and mental, moral, and spiritual development, sanitary workshops, safety appliances, employers' liability, and adequate compensation for injury and death were in- dicated by the clergymen and pleaded for by the labor men who talked.

Why Workers Drift from Church.

The reason why workmen are drifting away from the church was told by Oscar P. Nelson, president of the Chicago Postoffice Clerks' union, who spoke in the evening at the Olivet institute, Vedder and Penn streets. He said that workmen are so busy solving the "bread and butter" question for themselves and their families that there is no time left for spiritual development.

Miss Agnes Nestor of the Glove Workers' union and treasurer of the Women's Trade Union league, preached the morning sermon at the Winnetka Congregational church. She made a stirring plea for more humane treatment of working girls, and added that "piece work" with its "pace making" system, ruins the health and lives of hundreds of working women.

The labor leaders who made addresses asked the congregations to judge the labor unions by their best qualities and not by their weaknesses and their worst sides. They held up organized labor as a movement having much in common with the church and asked that the churches join hands with labor in the work of bringing about "physical salvation" for the toilers of the country.

Observance National in Scope.

Observance of the day was national in scope. Churches all over the United States, at the request of central labor federations, held special services in the interest of labor. It was, moreover, the first celebration of its kind in the history of organized labor in the country.

The plan of designating as Labor Sunday the Sunday immediately preceding Labor day originated at the Toronto convention of the American Federation of Labor last November. Secretary Frank Morrison of the federation first broached the idea and caused the adoption of a resolution requesting all churches throughout the United States and Canada to cooperate with organized labor in making the plan a success each year. Leaders in the federal council of the Churches of Christ in America also took the matter up and aided the labor leaders in making the observance of the day general in all Protestant churches.

Request, Here, by Federation.

In Chicago the request for an observance of the day was made by the Chicago Federation of Labor, and labor speakers were selected by President John Fitzpatrick. It was said that this was the first time that churches had permitted labor leaders to occupy their pulpits and preach the doctrine of "trades unionism."

As a result of the movement a larger number of workmen attended church services than is usually the case. Members of small local unions went in a body, and others attended services with their families and friends.

The labor leaders who preached, in addition to Miss Nestor and President Nelson, were L. P. Straube, business manager of the Allied Printing Trades council, Sedgwick street Congregational church; A. C. Anderson, secretary of the Painters' District council, Fifth Presbyterian church; A. A. Allen, associate editor of the Union Labor Advocate, Seventy-seventh Street Methodist church; Emmett Flood, organizer for the American Federation of Labor, Endeavor Presbyterian church, Cornelia and Paulina streets.

Organized Labor's Objects Praised.

The Rev. Duncan C. Milner, pastor of the Ravenswood Presbyterian church, in his evening sermon praised the objects of organized labor and urged legislation in behalf of the toilers. He said in part:

"The signs of the times indicate progress in the relations of capital and labor. There have been many changes within the last few years.

"Instead of dwelling alone on billions of capital invested and the millions of profit, there has been more concern for the hundreds of thousands of human beings whose toll has made possible these mighty industries with their swollen profits.

"Financial investments and profits have been exalted as more precious and important than human life and happiness.

"There should be enacted legislation that will provide liberal compensation for injured men and provision for their families without liability of court delays by the influence of corporations, and without need of spending a large share of the compensation in lawyers' fees.

"Nothing has done more to intensify hatred of the people against employers of labor than the sight of men crippled in industry and left to suffering and penury, or widows and orphans of such men doomed to pauperism and shame.

"Cry of Children Re-echoed."

"The 'cry of the children' has gone up to heaven and has been re-echoed on earth, and our country has recently witnessed a real springing of the people against the employment of children.

"The general movement for shorter hours of labor is a token of mental and moral advance among wage earners. The increased leisure is not desired for dissipation but for more devotion to personal culture and to the betterment of the home.

"The bitter opposition to the organization of labor is passing away. Organized capital has long held sway and cannot consistently refuse the privilege to the multitudes of men who are the representatives of industrial democracy, in which they ask a share in the government of industries to which they have given their lives.

"All rich men are not selfish and greedy, thinking only of swelling their fortunes without regard to their brothers who toil, and who think much of blacklists and lockouts. There are men of wealth who think of themselves as stewards appointed to make the best possible use for their fellow men of the wealth entrusted to them.

"Union labor is not properly represented by the blackmailers, sluggers, and boycotters. We believe that organized labor is one of the mightiest forces of today in the uplift of human society."

Organized Labor; Its Purposes.

Secretary Anderson of the painters' union in his sermon in the evening said:

"What does labor stand for? The brotherhood of man! The right to live, breathe, and enjoy the privileges that God has given us. For he has not said that by the sweat of

thy brow shalt thou earn thy bread? And he also meant that when we had sweated for it it belonged to us.

"I will briefly tell you what the cardinal principles of unionism are.

"The consolidation of all working men and women into one great federation where an injury to one is the concern of all. Shorter hours of labor, more time for recreation, thought, amusements, and study. The abolition of child labor. The more sanitary inspection of factory and store.

"Organized labor is interested in all these problems. Health is the most necessary, for if the health of a man or woman is taken from them then will they become dependent upon others, either members of their own families or public wards. Therefore, organized labor is in the front fighting for measures in our legislative halls, in our city councils, in clubs and societies.

"How can we get men interested in the church?

"As this subject is foremost in the minds of our greatest thinkers I dare not try to explain why, but perhaps I can suggest a reason or two. The majority of churches do not in its true sense uphold organized labor. Some of the worst enemies that organized labor has are ardent churchgoers, giving freely to the church and the poor, but will not sign an agreement with labor to run a closed shop or employ union men or women. Union workers do not want charity. All they ask is a living wage sufficient to enable them to take care of themselves.

What Unionists Have Accomplished.

"I am not here to defend organized labor," said Editor Allen of the Union Labor Advocate in the Seventy-seventh street M. E. church. "Those who know it know it requires no defense. To those who do not know it, I wish to speak. I want to tell you of some of the good things it has done.

"The child labor law, found on the statutes of more than one-half of the states of the union, is the creature of the trades unions. The abolition of sweat shops, insanitary conditions in factories, the shortening of hours of labor and increase of wages are due, not to the humanitarian views of employers, but to the steady pressure brought to bear by trades unions.

"Many humane employers would like to grant these reasonable concessions but the competition of inhumane employers makes them the creatures of the system.

"Intoxication has been on the decrease in the past twenty years. Trades unions are entitled to a full share of credit for this. The higher a man's self-respect is raised, the less he is disposed to make a beast of himself."

Tells Working Girls' Condition.

Miss Nestor enlightened the members of the First Congregational church of Winnetka as to the true conditions of the working girl in a short talk on "The story of the life of our girls who work in factories."

"The only way to get shorter hours and better conditions is by organization and legislation," said Miss Nestor. "We, of the American Federation of Labor are doing all in our power toward organization and to obtain proper legislation we must place before intelligent people the facts concerning the working girl and her surroundings."

Warning against intemperance, indifference and socialism as the greatest evils which beset the cause of labor was sounded by Rt. Rev. P. J. Muldoon, bishop of Rockford in a Labor day sermon at St. James' Pro-Cathedral at Rockford.

"The dangers which beset the cause of labor are greater and more numerous than ever before," said the bishop. "Shake labor free from drink and that will be a day of freedom."

Government ownership and control of monopolies was declared by the Rev. Norman B. Barr of the Olivet Memorial church to be a remedy for present industrial ills.

Cites Capital and Labor Perils.

Organized labor and organized capital were praised by the Rev. C. Frank Vreeland, pastor of the First Rosebud Baptist church. He said:

"Organized labor has done much for the betterment of the American laborer and the American home and is all right when properly conducted. Organized capital has done not a little for the larger good of mankind, but the danger of both organizations comes through the demands of unscrupulous men who seek to oppress for selfish ends."

"Men shall not live by bread alone" was the text of the labor sermon by the Rev. H. E. Peabody in the South Congregational church.

"The more fully we know ourselves the more firmly I believe shall we be convinced that on the whole this great movement of the world's toilers is evidence of a divine will

with them to make the most of their human lives," said he. "It is one factor in the coming of the kingdom of God on earth, for which we daily pray. Its triumph will be a personal boon to many an anxious toiler in this church and in thousands of other churches."

Sees Church Place for Solution.

The only place where the labor problem can be solved is in the church, in the opinion of the Rev. John W. Welsh, pastor of the California Avenue Congregational church. He said:

"The church always has been, and always will be, the great champion and friend of the laboring man. There are some crazed folk to whom such a statement will seem absurdly untrue; they have felt the pressure of industrial ills.

"After studying the situation, it has appeared to them that all the great institutions of organized society are against them; the great corporation from which they receive their pay check, and the institution called 'government.'

"Also that other institution, the church, where possibly his employers and his 'bosses' go—and where he has seldom or never gone—presumably this institution is but a department of that organized tyranny which seems bent upon glutting itself with all the good things of life, the product of his toil and sweat, while he, the producer, is being ground to powder."

No Labor Parade in City.

For the first time in several years Labor day will be observed today without the usual parade of unions affiliated with the federation. In South Chicago, Blue Island, and other suburbs, however, labor marches will be held. Members of the Women's Trade Union league will turn out on review in the South Chicago demonstration.

The parade idea was voted down overwhelmingly on a referendum vote sent out by the federation. Officers of unions said the members were tired of spending the day in marching and that the expense of a parade was too great.

Instead of a street demonstration the unionists will attend picnics and family outings. A picnic will be held by the Building Material Trades council at Riverview park and John J. Brittain and other business agents will hold forth at Hawthorne park.