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EDITORIAL

WHICH IS IT?

By DANIEL DE LEON

THE following is a news item from Lincoln, Neb.:

“The pastors of the larger Lincoln churches have signed an ironclad agreement intended to drive out the small church and bring greater revenues to the larger, longer established house of worship. The agreement is aimed at the exclusion of several projected new parishes.

“The Lincoln ministers take the stand that the field is already crowded. One of the ministers admitted frankly that the organization has all the features and aims of the big trusts incorporated under the New Jersey law. ‘Too many ministers are working for small salaries,’ he declared. ‘Congregations are too small; the salaries of the best ministers are too small. A remedy is the abolition of the small churches and congregations.’”

Is this a Trust or is it a Union?

If it is a Trust, is it not in confirmation of the Socialist position that as the American Church of two generations ago styled itself the “bulwark of chattel slavery,” so may the American Church of this generation be styled the “bulwark of wage-slavery”? If it is a Trust, it is an admission on the part of these clergymen that their ministry is a business, and their pulpit a counter over which merchandise is retailed, as over any other counter.

If it is a Union, is it not in order to have the anti-Trust Sherman Act set in motion against the gentlemen? Is not their conduct “in restraint of trade”? Should not a Danbury blanket injunction be issued against them?

Again, if it is a Trust, should not the President cause the Attorney General to bring an action under the Federal Act under which the action was brought against the Northern Securities? And should not the stock of the new Trust be listed on the Stock Exchange, either among “inside” or “outside” or curb securities?

If it is a Union, it could only be of the “pure and simple” Union,—where are its

walking delegates, its Murphys, Neidigs, Parkses? Or are these yet to be developed?

All these are thrilling questions. Not the curious merely, the serious also are anxiously looking for an answer.

Transcribed and edited by Robert Bills for the official Web site of the Socialist Labor Party of America.
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