
Speech at the Third Anniversary Celebration of Myron Reed's Broadway Temple, Denver (February 6, 1898)

It is with profound satisfaction that I remember my attendance at the services of this temple a year ago. This magnificent assemblage bears testimony that the Broadway Temple Association has increased in usefulness and power, which is a source of great gratification to me. In this day, when we have so much degeneracy, it is well we have a Broadway Temple.

Lust for Gold a Great Evil.

One of the evils that afflict humanity is the lust for gold. it is infinitely better to love humanity. Over this temple there presides a minister [Myron Reed] that has made it possible for some children to come to his dust when he dies and say, "the world has been brighter and better for us because he has been here."

Unless the brotherhood of man is a fact, this earth is a jungle and we are wild beasts. I know we hold up our hands in horror when we read of the cannibals. When I see on every hand the evidences of man's inhumanity to man, I ask myself the question: "Are we quite certain we are not devouring each other?" As long as the sweatshop in which children exist in filth, in misery, and in rags are permitted to exist, we can lay no just claim to being a civilized nation. As long as the coal miner delves in the caverns of the earth and is compelled to created wealth at wages of 42 cents per day, his family living in want and despair, we can lay no just claim to civilization.

Mr. Debs here read a clipping from a Chicago paper which told of a man sentenced to prison at his own request, merely to obtain food and shelter. He said the papers were filled with such recitals of the sufferings and wrongs of the poor.

That such crimes as these do not shock the nation and throw it into convulsions is surprising. The trouble is that we are so engaged in keeping

our own heads above water that we have no time to think of the miseries of the poor, which are found in all the cities of this country. There are three or four million men out of work and many millions who are permitted to exist at the wages the corporation capitalist fixes. The world has little sympathy for the unfortunate. All the original forces of society and the power of the government are directed against the poor. There is so little inducement to help the poor. Be one to assist in building up institutions to grind him to the earth and you are respected. Help the weak to escape from the grasp of the oppressors and you are considered unfair. In this day we need such persons as Samuel Adams¹ and Harriet Beecher Stowe.²

Brighter Days Ahead.

I don not take a gloomy view of the situation. I realize that in this crusade splendid men and women are again coming to the front. That there are such persons as Myron Reed is the assertion that the time will come when there will be no master and no slave.

Debs here took occasion to eulogize Mr. Reed. He said he had known him at his home and in the East, and at that place he is loved and respected as much as here.

I love him myself, and when I see him I want to put my arms about him. I love a man who preserves the integrity of nature, who is true to his own heart and brain. I love any man who scorns to barter away genius for financial consideration. This life is short and we cannot afford to capitulate to money. St. Paul said it was the root of all evil³ and Shakespeare said it was vile trash,⁴ yet we all give time to appreciate it. George M. Pullman was a money-getter and he died a mendicant... Pullman has probably realized that shrouds have no pockets. The man who gives over his life to money-making makes a mistake. It is a good servant but a heartless master. To a certain point a man may control his money, but beyond that point his money controls him. Under the competitive system under which we live, the strong and the cunning only become rich.

We are on the eve of a worldwide organic change in which the dollar is to be dethroned and humanity exalted. A change under which cannibalistic competition no longer will rule. Then will we have the basis of

civilization. We will realize that the earth and its fullness are the natural heritage of all the people.

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¹ Samuel Adams (1722-1803) was a Massachusetts politician who played a leading role in the American revolutionary government.

² Harriet Beecher Stowe (1811-1896) was the author of *Uncle Tom’s Cabin* (1852), a best-selling melodramatic novel which shocked public sensibilities by exposing the brutality of slavery and helped the controversial abolitionist movement gain public acceptance.

³ Allusion to *1 Timothy*, chapter 6, verse 10.

⁴ Allusion to *Julius Caesar* (1599), Act 4, Scene 3.