would like a vast Oklahoma or a new continent welcome the presence and labor of freemen now held in thralldom of the unnatural system rightly named wage-slavery! Only yesterday in his article on labor, published in the *New York Journal*, Mr. Everett P. Wheeler said truly, "Even within a hundred miles of New York are thousands of acres of wild land. Manufacturing and agriculture have naturally seized upon the most attractive spots. But many more remain, and are equally capable of development." But the whole truth is that of these "attractive spots" already "seized upon," the greater part is not developed nor permitted to be used. It is not to wild land alone that labor should look for employment. A vacant lot on Broadway is as undeveloped and as unproductive as are the unploughed, ungrazed prairies of Texas. Under the single tax there would be abundance of land both rurul and urban in every state and territory over the possession of which there would be no competition, and which could be occupied without payment of rent or tax. Not wild, but very tame and inviting though now undeveloped land, on which man could make a better living than that made by the now overtaxed farmer. The value of what a man could produce or such "no-rent" land would be labor's lowest wage, for who would be fool enough to sell his labor for less than he could make as his own employer? If there were any then begging for work, it would be to have work done and not for an opportunity to do it.

Wage-workers, wage-slaves, as you sometimes call yourselves, if you must strike and strike you must, let it be for something more than the mere mitigation of a hopeless servitude. Let it be for freedom. Strike for the land. Then will your strike indeed be a sympathetic strike, a strike not for yourselves alone, but for all men everywhere and forever. Would you end this cruel, wasteful warfare of the centuries? Then join in a strenuous, orderly march to the overthrow of land monopoly. Henry George has touched the keynote of the only tune to which that march can ever be made. Fall in. Mark time, forward to the tune of the single tax.

Speech of Samuel Seabury.

The so-called labor laws of this State were enacted as a result of the intelligent and energetic agitation conducted by the trade unions of the State. Their enactment was finally wrung from a reluctant legislature. They provided that the employed of the State, of cities, and of contractors should be paid at the prevailing rate of wages. They also provided that the hours of labor required of such employees and of the employees of street railway corporations should be limited. For a long period of time public officials refused to enforce these laws. When it became no longer possible to ignore them, a policy of misconstruction was adopted. Thus in one case, where the statute provided that certain wages should be paid the employees of the Street Cleaning Department, and that extra pay for work on Sunday should be made, the clause relating to "extra pay for work on Sunday" was held to be applicable only to the hostlers, who were only one class of employees mentioned in the statute; and the reason for holding that the provision for extra pay for Sunday work was applicable only to the hostlers, and not to all the other classes of laborers required to work on Sunday, was that a comma instead of a semi-colon was used in the statute. The court also held that it was contrary to the policy of the State to encourage "the temptation to do unnecessary work on Sunday"; but as a result of the decision Sunday work was not discouraged; but the policy of paying for the work when done was discouraged. This is but one instance of the policy of misconstruction applied to these laws.

Another example reveals the policy of the different departments of the city government in relation to this law. The statute provided that workmen employed by the city should be paid the prevailing rate of wages. Public officials resorted to the trick of employing expert mechanics and workmen, such as carpenters, stone masons, or painters, as common laborers and then "detailing" them to do the work of an expert mechanic or workman. Thus, for instance, when a carpenter is employed, he is employed as a "laborer," and paid at the rate which laborers receive; but he is detailed to do work for which he should receive a much higher wage. This policy has been approved by the courts, and the construction placed upon the law is to the effect that the statute holds that workmen can only receive the prevailing rate of wages for the work which they were "employed" to do, rather than the work which they actually do.

The law was still further amended by the Legislature, so as to remedy the misconstruction placed upon it by the court.

It then became evident that the policy of ignoring the labor law, and of misconstruing its provisions, was no longer possible, and an open attack was made upon the constitutionality of the law.

In The People *ex rel* Rogers against Coler, a contractor engaged in city work agreed to pay his workmen the prevailing rate of wages. He admitted that he had not paid them the prevailing rate of wages as required by the law and his contract, and that the difference between the wages which he paid the men and which he should have paid them under the contract was $6,000. This sum the Comptroller refused to pay to the contractor upon the ground that he had violated the terms of his contract. The contractor secured a mandamus compelling the Comptroller to pay him this sum, which, under the law and the contract, should have been paid to the workmen. He secured the mandamus upon the ground that the labor law was unconstitutional. The Court of Appeals, by a divided court, sustained the claim of the con-

tractor, and held the law to be unconstitutional and void. I wish to review very briefly the grounds upon which the court held this law to be unconstitutional.

First. THAT THE LAW VIOLATES THE CITY'S RIGHT TO HOME RULE, LIBERTY AND PROPERTY.

The decision has won some degree of popularity from the belief that this was the real ground upon which the decision was based, but this is not the case, since, under the decision of the court, the labor law would be held unconstitutional, even if it had been enacted by the city authorities. It is clear, therefore, that the fact that the city is denied home rule in this matter is not the reason for nullifying the law. Home rule for cities is a good thing, but as to whether cities should be accorded home rule, and if so, to what extent, has always been regarded by the courts as a matter for the Legislature to determine. The Legislature has always enacted laws which clearly and openly violated the principle of home rule, and yet they have not been held unconstitutional upon this ground.

Second. THE LAW VIOLATES THE CONTRACTOR'S RIGHT OF LIBERTY AND PROPERTY, AND CONFISCATES HIS RIGHTS UNDER HIS CONTRACT.

But surely this objection is not valid. The contractor is perfectly free to refuse to contract with the city, if the terms which the city proposes or the Legislature prescribes do not suit him. He is not compelled to enter into the contract unless he desires to do so. Nor does the law confiscate the property rights of the contractor under his contract. The contractor agreed to pay the prevailing rate of wages, and if he did not perform the contract, it is no injustice to him that he should not be paid the contract price, as if he had performed his work.

Third. THE LAW REQUIRES THE CITY TO EXPEND MONEY FOR OTHER THAN A CITY PURPOSE.

The constitution of the State limits the expenditure of city moneys to city purposes. Judge O'Brien contends that, to the extent of the sum which the city pays in excess of the lowest amount for which the labor could be obtained, the provision of the constitution limiting expenditures of money to city purposes is violated. So far, however, as existing city contracts are concerned, this decision does not save the city or State a single cent. It simply donates to the contractor the wages which the employees have earned. Before the contractors bid for these city contracts they knew that they would be required to pay their employees at the prevailing rate of wages. The bid or estimate which they made took this into consideration, and the sum which the city agreed to pay the contractor was sufficient, not only to fairly compensate the contractor, but to enable him to pay his employees the prevailing rate of wages. The decision of the Court of Appeals now relieves the contractor of his contract obligation, but does not make him refund to the city the money he receives from it. The decision enables every contractor to make a profit on the work of every employee, and to appropriate a part of the earnings of all his employees for every day's work done by them. Why is it a city purpose to pay this money to the contractor, and not a city purpose when it is paid to the employee?

Fourth. THE LAW VIOLATES THE PROPERTY RIGHTS OF THE LOCAL PROPERTY OWNER.

How is the property owner benefited by the city refusing to pay this sum to the employee when it is paid to the contractor? Why is it that the property of the local property owner is not taken without due process of law when the city takes this sum for the benefit of the contractor, but is taken without due process of law when it is paid to the employee?

Fifth. THE LAW FIXES AN INDEFINITE AND ARBITRARY STANDARD OF WAGES.

It is objected that the term "prevailing rate of wages" is uncertain and indefinite; but the prevailing rate is easily ascertainable. It is the prevalent, current, general, common rate; it is the common law rate of wages, and can be easily determined.

This decision strikes at the foundation principle upon which the labor laws of the State rest. These laws do not pretend to regulate the wages which one private citizen shall pay another. They simply provide that the State and those subject to State regulations shall pay the prevailing rate of wages. They are based upon the principle that the State or city, in its capacity of proprietor and employer, ought to be accorded the same right as is accorded to a private employer.

Encouraged by this decision, those opposed to labor laws have already commenced an attack upon the eight hour law, and it is difficult to see how the courts can sustain this law in view of their previous decision. The dressed stone law has already been declared unconstitutional and void, and the courts have intimated that those provisions of the law which give a preference to citizens over aliens will also be declared unconstitutional when brought before it for review. These laws, together with some injunctions which have recently been issued by the courts, show the hostile attitude which the judiciary maintain towards trades unions.

Professor Ely has well said: "Rule by judges tends to petrifaction, and is the conservatism of a revolutionary, because obstructive, type." An impartial observer must admit that the "revolutionary conservatism" of the judiciary is well shown in their treatment of the labor law in this State, and in their arbitrary and tyrannical use of the writ of injunction throughout the Union.

SPEACH OF REV. HERBERT BIGELOW.

The sage of East Aurora thinks that Robert Ingersoll has rendered religion a valuable service in helping to tear down the bulwarks of superstition Doubtless that is so. But an immeasurably greater work has been dneo

by Henry George in building up a faith in which logic and sentiment join hands, in a knowledge of the laws of life and respect for human rights.

We are accustomed to think of George merely as a political reformer. But a man cannot sound the depths of his philosophy without seeing that first of all he was a religious teacher. For his age he was and is the great religious conservator. He has announced a program of social reform, which, as Tolstoi says, is as irrefutable as the multiplication table, a program which is as just as it is logical and which has the indispensable merit of being capable of peaceable and gradual application. But this program is nothing more than the application of those fundamental principles which, in the abstract at least, religion has always taught.

Institutional religion, however, has beeen paralyzed by that subtle atheism which says that although a thing is right still it may not be practicable. Henry George had the strength of the clergyman's convictions. He showed men the practicability of the fundamental teachings of religion. The greatest danger to religious faith is that it should be so taught as to appear to have no vital bearing upon the problems that most concern men. A man of shallow mind may find satisfaction in professing a faith which is irreconcilable with the social order which he helps to maintain. The church has been driving the best men into atheism by making apologies for wrongs from which religion should save the world. By showing the possibility of a better social order Henry George has been saving men from unbelief and has helped more than any other man to apply the motive power of religion to the eminently religious work of social reconstruction.

Religion has its origin in the fact that it is as much a part of man's nature to aspire to perfection as it is to hunger for food. This religious instinct which makes of man a progressive animal finds expression in the prayer "Thy Kingdom come, Thy will be done on earth as it is in Heaven." Never content with present attainment, man is always a certain amount of degradation and poverty as inevitable. Henry George showed that the problem of the production and distribution of wealth, the problem of taxation, all social affairs, in fact, were subject to the reign of natural law. He showed that the poverty which men had dutifully submitted to as a part of the natural order was evidence that man has not yet learned to arrange his social life in accordance with the natural order. In helping men to see the operation of natural law in the domain of political and social affairs, Henry George supplied a compass which will direct the reforms of the future; he added much to the support of a rational faith; he widened the scope of morality and dignified the minister of religion by showing him that public morality is as necessary as private morality, that the nation as well as the individual must learn the true meaning of that prayer, Thy will be done.

An incomplete theology has left men with the impression that the Almighty would not trouble himself about so trifling a matter as the subject of taxation, but that people were free to adopt any method of raising public revenues which might suit their fancy. With a deeper philosophy and with a profounder faith, Henry George knew that nothing was too trivial to be governed by natural law. He knew that God has a way of raising taxes as well as of holding the stars in their courses. He knew that in the act of raising public revenues men would work their own unhappiness until they learned the one natural way. Thus not only in the matter of taxation, but in all other matters, he taught that it was the chief function of government to discover and obey, and not to make laws. He made the act of voting an act of worship when he showed that true prosperity could not exist until the laws of the state were made to conform to that moral government, that natural order, which is supreme above the nations.

The first part of Governor Altgeld's speech was wonderfully analytic and full of suggestions, but the latter part was keenly disappointing.

W. J. Bryan sent the following letter:

KANSAS CITY. Mo., Sept. 2, 1901.

To D. B. Van Vleck, Secretary, New York City:

DEAR SIR:—Please present my compliments to the workingmen assembled at the dollar dinner, and express to them my regret that I cannot be with them.

If I were with them I would like to emphasize the following: The laboring men are so numerous and influential that they have it in their power to remedy even the political conditions confronting the country. Concerted political action on the part of labor in the factory and on the farm will make the Government what the fathers intended it to be.

From Michael Davitt the following letter was received:

WASHINGTON, D. C., Sept. 3, 1901.

A. J. Boulton, Chairman:

I regret I have found it impossible to accept the invitation to attend the dinner on the 7th instant. Prior engagements stood in the way and I can only write to heartily wish success to your gathering and to every effort to make Henry George's unselfish labors for humanity and the great truths and principles for which he stood throughout a nobly righteous career better understood and better known over this great commonwealth.

It remains to be said that to Mr. A. J. Boulton and Mr. D. B. Van Vleck great credit is due for the pronounced success of the dinner and the arrangements generally.

AT CLEVELAND.

The banquet at Cleveland to which about 140 men and women, members and guests of the local club, sat down was a pronounced success. Henry George, Jr., was the guest of honor.

Dr. A. J. Kreidler was the toastmaster, and the arrangements for the celebration