

A learned judge, in a most carefully prepared decision, has announced the principle that there can be no property rights in the streets except the rights to be found in a strictly construed franchise grant; and that the use and benefit of the streets by the public and for the public, whether in the form of supervision of existing roads or the authorization of competing ones, must be at all times paramount to any implied privileges or advantages of a former grantee.

Thus we see in Cleveland the situation reduced to its lowest terms—namely, that the existing public-service corporation is merely a tenant upon the property of the municipality, and that any further favors or grants of whatever nature must be secured by an appeal to the public and the people owning the streets.

Naturally, at the end of a five-year struggle the people of Cleveland are perhaps more highly educated in the matter of franchise values and character of public service than are any other people in the country.

The two great events that have grown up around the granting of special privileges to great public-service corporations have been political activity, resulting in the debauching of public service, and over capitalization, resulting in unfair and excessive rates and meagre extension of service.

Take the right to grant franchises worth millions from the council, or rather put it back in the first instance to the people themselves that they may direct the council to do their will, and political graft and corruption must be materially lessened.

It may be possible to corrupt a small body of lawmakers, but it is hardly possible to corrupt the public at large.

Grant franchises on condition that the books of public-service corporations must be open at all times to public scrutiny, and campaign contributions and lobby funds cannot be hidden.

Have the books open and the public informed as to the cost of construction, maintenance and operation, and the public will know whether or not the rates which it pays for services are fair.

As far as I have seen, I believe that the public of Cleveland are most jealous in guarding the rights of invested capital, but I believe that they can no longer be deceived by watered stocks and bonds.

I believe that out of this struggle will come a better public service, cleaner politics, lower cost to the public; and that this will be accomplished without working the least hardship to legitimate invested capital.

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### WM. J. BRYAN ON CHILD LABOR.

An Interview with Mr. Bryan at the Jefferson Banquet in Chicago, Sept. 4, 1906. Reported by Marion Foster Washburne for the Chicago Record-Herald of Sept. 7.

"We have no right to the labor of children," said Mr. Bryan. "It is one of the worst evils of the present day and should be corrected. If children are driven to toll before they have received a sound education and before their bodies are grown, where are we to look for the future citizens of the country? This is to destroy our civilization in the mak-

ing. Every boy and girl has a right to demand of the state an opportunity to become a healthy, intelligent citizen, capable of self-maintenance and self-government."

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"You have been talking of special privileges, Mr. Bryan. Do you not think that the cruel competition, rendered abnormally fierce by the fact that some of the competing parties play with loaded dice, is what drives manufacturers and employers of labor to these unnatural devices to cut down the cost of production? Do you think that political laws under the present unjust economic conditions can remedy these evils? Will not such laws merely be evaded? Will not children continue to labor when their labor is an economic necessity, no matter what the legislature says about it?"

"Well, there is always some evasion of law, of course," he replied; "but I think laws have their effect, for all that; and that it is our duty to pass as good laws as we can, and to do our best to get them obeyed."

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"But will they be obeyed, if they run counter to economic laws? It is true, isn't it, in the broad sense, that every man has his price?"

Mr. Bryan smiled the smile of the idealist—of the man who has faith in his fellows.

"Oh, I don't know! Some of them seem to hold their ideas of duty above all price," he replied.

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"But put the price high enough—let it be, say, the actual bodily life of a man's wife and children. Wouldn't a man disregard a good many laws to keep them from starving? And under present conditions isn't that practically the position a laboring man is in when he sells the labor of his children? He must sell their labor, or they will all go down. What, under such circumstances, is a state law to him?"

"You are putting it pretty strongly," said Mr. Bryan. "I don't know that there is so clear a connection between special privileges, monopolies, and this great evil of child labor. I am a conservative man—perhaps you have heard that? Well, I am, really; and I like rather to understate than to overstate. But I will say that a sound political law must not run counter to an economic law. We must make it as easy as possible to do right. We need a law in every State forbidding children to work before they are 14 years of age, and forbidding their employment by any factory or business concern; but we need also, and more than that, such a change in economic conditions as would enable fathers to support their own families without recourse to the labor of their own children. I am glad that the women are becoming aroused on this subject, and I wish they could be brought to see that it makes a difference to them, and to their children, and to all children, whether the party in power is a party that stands for special privilege or one that honestly stands for equal opportunity for all. I believe that the very life of the Democratic party depends upon its being able to prove, not only by its platform, but by the character of the men who manage it, that it stands ready to do battle for the people; and I am intent upon proving this point beyond the possi-

bility of a doubt. If, then, it is proved, it surely is important to every woman as well as to every man to see to it that we no longer endure the rule of a party which allows special privileges and monopolies so to increase the pressure of poverty that at last it drives the people beyond their strength and tempts them to do such unnatural things as, by early labor, to destroy their own children. Certainly we ought so to remedy conditions that no such pressure is put upon any man. We have no right to tempt the people beyond their strength, nor even up to it. We ought to make it easy for them to be good. The government ought to be upon the side of every man who is willing to do right—not making it hard for him, not testing his virtue, but helping him along.”

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### THE SMELL OF DEATH IS ON THEM.

Dost know these shining dames  
Who toil not, neither do they spin? Their names  
Spell gold—yet tears I see on every thread  
Of costly clothing; by their side the dead  
I smell who died to weave that cloth! Canst tell  
Them from the lilies of the field? 'Tis well!  
Or in the still hours of the night canst tell  
The sobs of children from the dreadful noise  
Machines make, when—deprived of childhood's toys—  
The little ones in factories tall stand guard  
O'er flying wheels, and through the night work hard,  
Robbed of their sleep and play?

—Caroline Pemberton.

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### THE CHURCH AND WORKINGMEN.

J. W. Hart, President Pasadena Labor Council, Writing  
in *The Christian Advocate* of October 4, 1906.

Allow a workingman to give his side of this subject. We may be all wrong, but you will never set us right by ignoring us. The policy of suppression has signally failed in Russia. We are tired of articles from those who are vouched for as “more than ordinarily intelligent workingmen,” and who write to please the enemies of labor.

The danger point is the fearful line-up in the contest. If the industrial problems are to be settled by workingmen, gathered in saloons and well-to-do people gathered in churches, each misunderstanding and misrepresenting the other, God have mercy on our great cities. The slavery question might have been settled without the sacrifice of a drop of blood, and for one-tenth the treasure. It was passion and prejudice and the refusal of each side to consider the claims of the other that made the bloody sacrifice necessary. Years ago Bishop Newman said the labor question was a more difficult and dangerous problem than the slavery question. The blackness of the cloud which then was no bigger than a man's hand should make men with less prophetic souls at least candidly consider the question, and be willing to give the other side a fair hearing.

The position of the church on economic questions does not by any means satisfy workingmen. Many of our church leaders were active in the anti-slavery movement, and they have never got beyond that. Give a man the right to come and go as he will, the employer the right to hire and discharge at will, and that is all there is to it in their estimation. Comfortably housed and well fed they have no concep-

tion of conditions among honest, hard-working men. Those of us who have been pinched realize that wage slavery may be about as bad as chattel slavery. Slavery is the curse and it matters little what adjective you put before it. To give one man or set of men the power to compel others to work at starvation wages is slavery.

Strikes and lock-outs, mobs and violence are but incidents in a great conflict. Where one man is killed in these disturbances hundreds of children die because of conditions for which there is no excuse. The children who are not properly housed, clothed and fed, and who have not the vitality to carry them through the bitter cold of winter and the heat of summer are just as certainly murdered as are the victims of the riots. Not only are the men responsible for these conditions given the highest seats in the synagogue, but the fathers and mothers whose hearts are sore and bleeding from the loss of their little ones are told that if they would not waste their time in idleness and their wages in drink they could provide all right for their children. . . . It is false, it is cruelly false. The loss of our loved ones is hard enough to bear without the church compelling us to listen to such misrepresentations. The men who work for fifteen cents an hour at uncertain employment cannot give their children that which every child is entitled to. Those of us who receive “good wages” cannot do it. The articles on the care of children . . . have no value to poor people. It is mockery to tell such men to give their children fresh air and sunshine, fresh milk and eggs, fresh fruit and vegetables—how can the ill-paid men buy anything fresh?

If there was famine in the land and no help could be given we might stand these things, but the problem of production has been so successfully solved that we have “over-production” in every department of industry. The cause of the trouble is that a few are determined to pile up millions they have no use for, and we will not stand it to see our children sacrificed on the altar of greed and oppression.

If the only answer of the church is that capital has a right to buy labor where it can buy it the cheapest, and the law must protect capital in this right, we may expect the worst. Without doubt the church represents the best sentiment of the nation and if it cannot reach a broader platform where the rights of all are safeguarded by law, then the workingmen will have less and less regard for law, and lawlessness will go on increasing. If we are to respect law the law must be respectable. Laws must be just and righteous to command a loyal support.

If the church would bring to this question its conscience and its brain power, the problem could be solved with little difficulty. If ministers would preach on these everyday questions they would investigate and think more, and would give their help where it is so badly needed. Probably some have not sense enough to touch this question without doing more harm than good; undoubtedly some would “toady” to the rich and some would “pander” to the poor; but the great majority of intelligent ministers who are so earnestly striving to live the Christ life, and to do efficiently the great work Christ has left for them to do, can successfully solve this greatest problem that our country has ever faced.