

Opportunities, Duties And Responsibilities Of American Legislators

In choosing this subject and what I have to say, may not seem appropriate, but I have a deep sense of conviction that some preachers and public speakers of the present day have a disposition to avoid meeting squarely and discussing fully and plainly the public needs of church and state.

We are living in an age and a country full and replete in opportunities and possibilities, and at the same time fraught with graver dangers and responsibilities than any preceding period of any country. It is these opportunities, possibilities, dangers, and responsibilities, that I propose to discuss, applicable to both, church and state, and will endeavor to show that some preachers, public speakers, legislators, both state and national, which form such an important part in our national and home life, may assist in making this a Christian nation, in fact as well as in name. There are also great and ever expanding possibilities that should be the rightful heritage of every one of this free soil.

I am a firm believer in the doctrine, that, this is a country divinely set apart and reserved as a habitation for man, where he may grow and develop in that perfect manhood, which shall bear the nearest affinity to God. A country in which he can raise up a people peculiar to himself, as Israel was of old. The basic principles of our government were founded upon justice and the equal rights of man and has been the boast and pride of ages. Wisdom and a deep sense of duty is shown in every fabric of the many and varied rights which our forefathers wove into this wonderful woof of governmental principles. It has been the wonder and admiration of every nation on earth. It has protected us from foreign foe, and withstood the horrors of the Civil, Spanish and World wars. These divinely inspired rights have been the shelter of the toiling millions, in years past, and are their hope and reliance in the ages to come. In them honest wealth is safe and secure, and they are its protectors in the coming future.

Our system of government was designed, intended and amply provided, with the means to secure to the greatest number, the greatest possible good.

That nation is strongest, and her people the noblest, whose strength rests upon the whole people. None too weak on account of poverty and oppression, and none too strong on account of wealth and favoritism.

That we are facing a crisis in our national life, is apparent to every one who desires to know; that disease

is afflicting our system of government has been diagnosed by every student of history; money and great riches are coming to be the God and goal of the man and womanhood of our sons and daughters; positions of honor and trust are being regarded as a private asset in the hands of the individual to be used to further his own ambition and personal welfare; and of that of those who have bought and own him; disregarding the needs of the great masses whom they are intended to represent, they are taking from those who have not, and giving to those who have abundance.

Money and bribery are making a farce of the electric franchise, and public office bought and sold, as in governments that exists, now, only in history. Laws are enacted and legislation defeated at the instance of mighty interests by whose grace legislators occupy unworthy places in legislative halls; judges are elected not for their legal learning and integrity, but because they belong to some party or interest whose bidding they are expected to obey. The administration of laws and affairs are for the favored few, and those whom they should protect and defend are crushed and defeated by unholy hands laid heavily upon them.

Brain and character are no longer at a premium but for their stead is substituted the dollar and the rogue. Men of power, as the term should be properly applied, great men, trained in state craft, and imbued with a deep sense of duty, men learned in the law, who recognized it as a rule of action, commanding that which is right and forbidding that which is wrong, who knows right as might, are being forced from executive chairs, legislative halls, and the judicial bench.

Must this land of opportunities and nation of equal rights be sacrificed to the greed of gold and the love of power?

Is There not a Man?

"Formed on the good old plan, A true, brave, and downright honest man,

Who blows not trumpet in the market place,

Nor in the church with hypocritical face,

Supply with cant the lack of Christian grace;

Loathing pretense to do with cheerful will

What others talk of while their hands are still?"

I do not desire to be understood as saying that all our people occupying positions of honor and trust, or who control great intrusts—men of affairs—are all corrupt, but to the con-

trary, we have the Walshes, Norrises, LaFollettes, Roosevelts, and the Al Smiths, all of whom are Andrew Jackson Democrats and Abraham Lincoln Republicans, who are equal to, and capable of performing every duty resting or incumbent upon them as American citizens.

In former years changed conditions have tried the stability of this government to the breaking point and then tried it again and there has always been men of the hour with sufficient strength to meet every emergency that has arisen.

Daniel Webster once said that no government is respectable which is not just; that without unspotted purity of public faith, without sacred public principles, fidelity and honor, no mere forms of government, no machinery of law, can give dignity to society.

In our day and generation let us seek to raise and improve the moral sentiment so that we may look, not for a degraded, but for an elevated and improved future. When both we and our children shall have been consigned in the house appointed for all living, the love and pride of country, will glow with equal fervor among those to whom our names and our

blood shall have descended.

I have said on prior occasions, that the church was becoming commercialized, and have been criticized for the expression and similar expressions along the lines of reform, because our present surroundings are much worse than we have ever experienced. I repeat here, now, that the church is becoming commercialized, and it is the rich and the influential that the church is attempting to secure for membership, not for the price of their souls, nor for the uplift of society in general, but on account of the size of their purse and the money they contribute for the erection of church temples, and the support in some instances of an incompetent and selfish ministry. It is every church for itself in the way of numerical strength and outward appearances, regardless of the purity of membership and the benefit and influence they should have on society. I have heard it remarked, and not without the truth, that different denominations would rather see men unsaved and out of the church, than belong as a member to a church not their own.

Who are the individuals that are sought after and entreated to become Christians and members of the church? Is it the poor and needy, the distressed and oppressed, who need the influence of the church, its uplift and Christian help? Or is it the men and women who need not to be strengthened in the way of earthly comforts, who refuse themselves to discharge the duties which they are able to discharge, and which rests upon them as good citizens?

Honorable W. J. Bryan has said, that men are judged today by earthly possession and what they have been able to amass together of this world's goods, rather than by the size of the heart, and the texture of the brain. This statement is applicable to the church as well as to society.

You ask what our legislators have to do with all this.

What can they do?

I answer by saying "They are the lawmakers and should legislate and pass laws that would restore to the American people a democratic form of government, a government of the people, for the people, and by the people, like Andrew Jackson and Abraham Lincoln fought for."

You ask, what have our legislators done, both state and national?

I answer by saying "They have legislated and passed the unworkable prohibition law that was vetoed by the noble and far seeing man, Woodrow Wilson, in 1919." "They have passed laws that our supreme courts have declared null-and-void and unconstitutional, they have legislated and passed laws that have refunded to Wall Street and its associates hundred of millions of dollars in tax rebates and we have millions of unemployed, millions of hungry men, women and children begging for something to eat, and at the same time the farmers have the philanthropists farm boards working for them and they are compelled to take from 70c per bushel to 80c per bushel for their wheat that cost them 95c per bushel to grow and market it."

No wonder Senator Barkley of Kentucky said that the farmers of America were thirty billion dollars worse off than they were eight years ago.

They have legislated, passed, and enforced a wet, man-made law in defiance of God's laws, that has sent a poor widow woman to the penitentiary for life for selling a pint of booze and being a three time violator of the wet man-made law.

I do not believe the poor widow got justice, even if the Reverend Untrue Wilson did say that she should have been sent to prison for life be-

fore she was married.

They have passed laws that men have violated by swindling our government out of hundreds of thousands of dollars and have got by with it without even a jail sentence.

The affairs of state are not alone responsible for present-day conditions. Bishop Foster says the church of God is today quaking the world. Its members are trying to bring it down to the level of the ungodly. The ball, the theatre, nude and lewd art, social luxury, with all their loose moralities, are making inroads into the sacred enclosure of the church, and as a satisfaction for all this worldliness, we are told that the churches in great cities have become almost abandoned; that the parks and ball games are being resorted to on the sabbath, instead of the church.

It is the old trick of Satan. The Jewish church struck on that rock, the Roman church was wrecked on the same, and the Protestant church is fast reaching the same doom.

Christian America was hit a hard blow in 1928. I have recently been informed from the pulpit that one Protestant church alone fell off in membership twenty-five thousand in 1929. Why? I firmly believe that Christian America forgot her God in 1928 and wandered off after financial and political fraud and corruption.

Me thinks I can see Christian A I with all his dry hosts standing on Mount Vernon witnessing the defeat of his dry promises of 1928.

There is a way that seemeth right to man but the end thereof is destruction and misery.

Come now let us reason together. Though our sins may be as scarlet they can be made white as now.

Seek ye first the Kingdom of Heaven and its glory and all necessary dry politics will be added unto you.

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