

The oration of Mr. Bennion, which was received with the deepest interest, was as follows:

In the life and relations of mankind certain natural and fundamental principles may be recognized. Among them are the rights to personal liberty, the freedom of thought and the possession and control of property. These principles were once only feebly realized; but, in course of centuries, have come slowly to be known and acknowledged. Applied to man as a member of society, they have been called the "law of equal freedom" which claims for man the right to exercise his faculties and to enjoy the fruits of his labor, so long as he does not interfere with the rights of others. If uncivilized society brute force holds sway over the finer instincts of man and the principles of association are but little understood. It is natural to find in such tribes the power to take and to hold is the law in matters of ownership. The idea of plunder necessarily bunts the idea of property; the disregard of the rights of others makes a proper regard for the rights of self impossible. In primitive societies many evils result from this vagueness of moral perception. Life and property are not safe. Men as a matter of course become warriors both for attack and for defense.

It is not desirable here to trace the obscure beginnings of government or of state organization but only to contrast them with later developments. The primitive man, as seen in our uncivilized races, differed from the modern in mental characteristics and social tendencies; so likewise the forms of government suited to early societies differ from those of modern states. The more ancient organization protected to some extent the personal and property rights of their subjects, but did not give to them full liberty to the exercise of their faculties. Although they may have had no book of statutes yet custom was their law. The citizen was supposed to exist for the benefit of the state, and not the state for the benefit of the citizen. But with the growth of society and the development of civilization external restraints have been gradually weakened and respect for individual liberty has been correspondingly increased. This evolution of the idea of government has continued until it is now generally recognized that its function is not to regulate our ideas, our work, or our exchange; but to secure to each his natural rights, and to prevent a few from monopolizing the sources of the necessities and comforts of life. Viewed in this light it must be evident that law or force which goes beyond this government function restricting the exercise of the faculties and interfering with the control of private property is a violation of the principle for which it stands.

Blackstone says "that no human laws are of any validity if contrary to the law of nature, and such of them as are valid derive all their force and their authority, mediately or immediately, from this original."

If this is a fundamental truth, as we believe it is, then as men become capable of conforming to the laws of nature through personal insight and moral power, the need of

human laws and external control is diminished. "Just as much as the love of God's law is diminished," says Herbert Spencer, "must the fear of man's law be called to supply its place." This relation of human laws to the law of nature is not always clearly defined. Human laws are sometimes confounded with justice, and it is supposed that whatever is enacted by legislators is the supreme moral law. The fact is the moral law is before the law of man and independent of them. Human governments are instituted to protect those that conform to the supreme moral law and to restrain those that injure their fellow-man by disobeying that law.

Another common error is the notion that the state is an almighty power able to give to the citizens all sorts of benefits and that it could make all the citizens rich and prosperous if only the right political party could get control. Instead of the people's support, the government it is thought that the government should support the people. Of course it would follow that instead of the people's controlling the government the government should control the people. The French constitution of 1848 declared itself a republic for the purpose of raising all the citizens to an ever increasing degree of morality, enlightenment and well being, as though France were some divine spirit, apart from and above the people, merely changing its form that it might be the better able to bless the people with its bounties. With this magical conception of an all wise and all powerful state it was naturally thought to be the duty of government to dispense bounties and to supervise the private affairs of the citizens. A French political party of fifty years ago closed its manifesto with the declaration that government ought to give a great deal to the people and take little from them. The question as to where the government gets this "great deal" seem not to have been considered. But the people expected it; and no political party could hope for success at elections unless it made some sweeping promise. In consequence every successful party was a party of promises, promises which, in the nature of the case, it could never fulfill. The history of these times is a history of disappointments and political revolutions, the result of a mad desire for the realization of an impossibility, like a child's crying for the moon.

America has been afflicted and is afflicted today with this same mental delusion. Almost every great corporation sends an attorney to Washington to seek legislation that will add millions to those already acquired. And every now and then a labor leader arises who would lead an army of the unemployed to the capital, demanding work of the government.

The nation is greatly alarmed at this action of the laboring man, but is his act more unreasonable or more pernicious than the act of the capitalist in sending his attorney? How can the government furnish labor for the unemployed? How shall it pay them except by taxing money from the people; and that by force, that is by taxation in some form or other.

This is at once recognized as an in-

justice. But the demand of the capitalist is still more unjust. He wants to get something for nothing, and that something must be taken from his fellow-citizens. If he is seeking to avoid competition, and, by securing a monopoly, to add and artificial value to his product, he is seeking the enrichment of himself at the expense of others. If it is a bounty he demands the question at once arises, how shall the government pay him for the manufacture of an article unless it takes the money from private purses? A direct violation of the law of equal rights.

But he does not mean to be dishonest. His demands are based upon a misconception of the powers of state. Commenting upon this popular mistake, Bastiat says: "Government is the great fiction through which everybody endeavors to live at the expense of everybody else. The difference between Bastiat and these government seeking capitalists and unemployed laborers is that the latter have not yet realized that it is all a fiction.

The latter part of Mr. Bennion's oration dealt with the subject of excessive public service in the way of state inspection of private industry.

#### NEWS NOTES.

Should the government accept the proposition of the Union Wrecks to provide a diagonal armor for the battleship Wisconsin, now in course of construction at the Potrero, it will mean a great deal for San Francisco in that it will in all probability result in an armor plant for that city.

CONSTANTINOPLE, June 8. — The British, Russian and Italian ambassadors are sending representatives to Thessaly with instructions to report upon the situation here. The third meeting between the Turkish minister for foreign affairs, Tewfik Pasha, and the ambassadors of the powers to arrange a permanent basis for peace between Turkey and Greece, takes place today.

Carol Dyer, aged 24, living at Stockton street, San Francisco, attempted suicide shortly before 10 o'clock this morning by drinking the contents of a vial of chloroform. She had been keeping company with a young man named Frank Vance, and her attempted suicide was occasioned by a quarrel between the couple shortly before the act was committed. It is thought she will die.

A Los Angeles special to the San Francisco Chronicle under date of the 8th instant, says: A telegram received at San Bernardino this forenoon announced the blowing up of a boiler at the smelter at Oro Grande, killing one man, wounding others and wrecking the plant. Coroner Keating took the noon train for the scene. The disaster is a heavy blow to Oro Grande, as the smelter was a new enterprise.

On Tuesday evening Mrs. Libb's Swift of Santa Cruz, California, attempted to commit suicide by cutting her arm several times with a razor, but failed to reach an artery. Before making the attempt she attired herself in her best dress so as to be ready