

## Political Corruption.

FROM A SERMON IN ST. PAUL'S  
METHODIST EPISCOPAL CHURCH,  
CINCINNATI, BY REV. DR. HAT-  
FIELD.

None of us can lay claim to infallibility in reading the signs of the times, but we must be blind, indeed, not to see that which calls for serious apprehension, if not for positive alarm. I offer no apology for speaking to you this evening of the prevalence of political corruption and crime in our country. The subject is one in which every American citizen has the deepest interest, and upon which the Christian pulpit of the land has no right to be silent. A country may be dishonored and ruined by extravagance, dishonesty and corruption as effectually as by intestine broils or armed rebellion.

I shall not act the part of an alarmist this evening, but shall endeavor in the use of words of truth and soberness to direct your attention to some matters that deserve the serious consideration of good men of all parties. Let us notice: First—The character of the men who bear a large, not to say a controlling, influence in the political affairs of our nation.

The theory on which our government is constructed seems to me not only reasonable and consistent, but almost perfect. Government is a divine institution, ordained of God for the benefit of the people for his own glory. The Scriptures determine nothing with regard to the power of government, but they lay down principles which promote personal freedom and the greatest good to the greatest number. The doctrine that all men are created equal; that they are endowed by their Creator with certain inalienable rights; that among these are life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness, was in the gospel long before it was put in the Declaration of Independence.

Our theory is that the wisest and best man will be sought out by the people, and selected to administer the affairs of the nation. Only a very moderate degree of intelligence and virtue would seem to be needed to secure this result. We might learn wisdom in this matter from the instincts of animals. A drove of wild horses, in preparing for defense or attack, place animals of the best metal and strength in the front, and in this regard they are no wiser than sheep, or the ass of the desert, or the stork in the heavens. But the political affairs of our nation are so wretchedly managed that one is tempted to exclaim:

"Oh, judgment, thou art fled to brutish beasts,  
And men have lost their reason."

Who of us will claim that our best men are uniformly or generally chosen to make and execute our laws? Examine the characters of office-holders, from Aldermen to United States Senators, and how many of them are men in whom the people have confidence, and for whom they feel genuine respect? Our first trouble in this matter lies in the fact, first, that large numbers of the voters of our country are mentally and morally unfit to exercise the elective franchise. Not a few of our politicians seem to be more than half insane on this subject of ballot. They speak and write as if voting was a sovereign remedy for the ills of the body politic. They seem to think that a ballot in the hand of a man who is ignorant, drunken and vicious, will certainly elevate and reform, if it does not glorify man. This is a most absurd exaggeration of an important truth.

Responsibility develops power, and the discharge of the duties of citizenship does something toward improving the character of men. But this educating process is slow at the best, and in many cases can hardly be discovered by the closest observer. Sentimental politicians grow poetic over the bits of paper that, dropped into the ballot-box, execute the will of freemen, as lightning does the will of God. But this pretty picture is spoiled as soon as we examine it in the light of common sense. If you go to the polls on election day you will see that not a few of these freemen cast their votes with no more idea of the principles of our government than they have of the philosophy of language. Ignorant and prejudiced, mere tools in the hands of designing demagogues, they are about as well qualified to bear the high responsibilities of citi-

zenship, as they are to calculate an eclipse. And as might be expected, the men they vote for are in many cases as fit to fill the offices to which they are elected as Caesar's horse was to act as Consul of Rome. The evil I am deprecating is aggravated by the fact that these ignorant and depraved classes generally act together in political matters. In certain districts in the city of New York, in which every house is either a brothel or a grogshop, or both, nine-tenths of the men always vote the same ticket. I remember an election a few years since, at which the voters of one of these districts in the Sixth Ward were all on one side with a single exception. Decency flies from these localities, and fellows of the baser sort have everything their own way, while every form of corruption grows with the rankest luxuriance. So long as an overwhelming majority of the voters of a city or State are honest and capable, they may be trusted to neutralize the influence of the class of which I am speaking. But we have selected a point in more than one of our cities where the abandoned and vicious classes so far control political matters that there is no longer any adequate protection to life or property. Give this class the same power throughout the whole country, and our government would not be worth a three-years' purchase. I do not despair of the country, or agree with those who pronounce free institutions a failure; but it is my most solemn conviction that we are at the present time carrying a load of ignorance and corruption as heavy as the country can stagger under.

If we turn from voters to our professional politicians and office-seekers, the view is even more disheartening. New York has its rings and combinations that manage its politics, and steal right and left by thousands and millions of dollars, until the Empire city is threatened with bankruptcy. And the same corruption, on a smaller scale, obtains in all our chief cities. If things are not as bad in Cincinnati or Chicago as they are in New York, it is only because the pool from which the rascals steal is not so large and deep as the one in which Tweed and his associates disport themselves.

It would be false and unjust to say that we have no honest and unselfish politicians, but it is true that their reputation as a class is unquestionably and notoriously bad.

If, like the children of Issachar, we would have understanding of the times, we must consider, secondly: The means that are now in common use to secure election in office. It has been said that no "citizen should desire or decline any office under the government, or within the gift of the people." The rule in the main is a good one, and if it could be adopted would redeem our country from a multitude of evils. At present our best citizens not only shun office, but generally take little interest, and no active part in political matters. This, as a matter of course, leaves the field open to corrupt and mercenary demagogues. And what are the means to which these men resort to secure a nomination to the office to which they aspire? I almost wish one of your old and experienced politicians could take my place for about ten minutes, and tell you how these things were managed. I am not a politician, but I can throw some light on this subject. To begin at the beginning. The caucuses and primary meetings are pretty generally held in grog-shops or other disreputable places, into which the better class of citizens do not care to go. This makes things pleasant and easy for the men who are not over fastidious about their associations, and who are never more at home than when in a saloon or beer garden. Then the convention is packed, and a nomination secured by fraud and corruption. Men are nominated for legislative and municipal offices who are notoriously in sympathy with the criminal classes. Things have come to such a pass in many places that politicians of the lowest class have everything their own way. Ministers are warned against soiling their black coats by having anything to do with politics. Christians are admonished to keep out of these "dirty waters," and to devote themselves to their appropriate work in the church and the Sabbath school. The motto, "All is fair in politics," is in high repute, and men who are so old-fashioned as to propose to keep a good con-

science are voted an incumbrance and a nuisance.

Things have reached such a pass that our best citizens, who are sensitive and retiring, are fairly driven from the field, and the work of virtually determining who shall make and execute our laws is left to saloon-keepers, vile politicians and unprincipled party hacks. The people, who have a real interest in the country, are still graciously permitted to ratify the nominations made by those enterprising demagogue candidates for office, consort with the rabble and pander to their depravity as a means of securing their votes. Men who aspire to our highest municipal offices, or to a seat in Congress, drag themselves through beer gardens and saloons, guzzle whisky with the Irish, drink lager beer with the Germans, and are hale fellows well met with thieves and gamblers, all to show that they sympathize with the dear people. Worse than all this, if possible, if the corrupt use that is now made of money in political life. In many cases nominations are purchased, votes are bought and sold with hardly an attempt to conceal the infamous transactions. Men will tell you that they cannot accept a nomination for the reason that they are not able to pay the expenses of an election campaign.

It should be known that there is no call for large sums of money in a political canvass that is conducted with honesty. There are certain legitimate expenses for halls, tickets, printing, etc., but sending large sums of money from Washington or New York, to be used in an election in Ohio or Indiana, is to be deplored by all good citizens. Such moneys are almost sure to be used in one way or another in corrupting the people. There was a time when almost every American citizen regarded the Senate of the United States with respect and admiration. Now places in that honorable body are bargained for, bought and sold, in the most open and shameless manner. Men stained with this infamy still show their brazen faces among honorable men and lay claims to respectability. We have reached the lowest point of humiliation in this matter within the last two or three weeks. On a resolution declaring that a man who forces himself into the United States Senate by bribery and corruption is unfit for a place in that body, we find a wide difference of opinion among Senators. Some of those honorable men (are they not all honorable men?) are not prepared to say that, and others of them make pettifogging pleas in defense of the guilty parties which are an insult to the moral sense of the nation.

We notice more distinctly, third, the reprehensible practice which now prevails among men in office. Some of them are fostered by the abominable maxim, "To the victors belong the spoils." Whoever first framed this expression deserves to have it so associated with his name as to render his memory forever infamous. The practice it was used to justify has opened a Pandora's box of evils upon our country.

It is easy to trace the growth of this evil; no man living can conjecture where it is to end. George Washington was President of the United States for eight years. During his administration he removed nine men from office. John Adams was President four years, and during that time displaced ten office-holders. This makes an aggregate of nineteen men to twelve years, and I am not aware that any one of the number was removed on political grounds. Thomas Jefferson was President eight years and removed forty-two office-holders, a little more than five a year on an average. Madison, during the eight years of his administration, put only five men out of office. Monroe, during his eight years, removed nine. John Quincy Adams filled the Presidential chair for four years and during that time only two of the army of office-holders were de-capitalized. This brings us to the reign of Andrew Jackson, which inaugurated a new dispensation. For twenty years the removals by his predecessors amounted in the aggregate to only sixteen. Within twelve months from the time of his inauguration, he had removed two hundred and thirty office-holders, or about three times as many as had been removed by all his predecessors for a period of forty years. And he prosecuted the work with relentless vigor until he struck down about every political opponent upon whom he could lay hand. Whatever service General Jackson

rendered his country in other respects, in this matter he inflicted an injury from which we have suffered for more than forty years, and the end is not yet.

It has come to be understood that the emoluments of office are distributed as a reward for partizan services. When an office is to be filled the question is not, "Is he honest? Is he capable?" but "What has he done for his party?" Of late years the abominable system of which I speak has taken on certain new and odious features which make it doubly detestable. The distribution of government patronage is now claimed as one of the prerogatives of members of Congress. They claim that the offices in their several districts are to be placed at their disposal, and used to reward their friends. One of these Representatives, no matter whether he comes from the swamps of Florida or the backwoods of a frontier state, no sooner reaches Washington than he waits upon the President or the heads of departments to demand places for his henchmen. If told that there are no vacancies, he demands that some be found or made, and if this is not done, look out for war on the administration. Dealing with these hungry cormorants is often the most perplexing and laborious of all the work of the President. When our martyr President was straining every nerve to save the nation from impending ruin, his life was nearly worried out of him by this herd of office-seekers. When the present occupant of the White House tried to shake off these greedy leeches, the professional politicians of the country sent up a howl of indignation that was long and loud. This they kept up until they raised a commotion, which culminated in the Cincinnati Convention of 1872. Perhaps no fact in American history shows more clearly the degradation into which we have fallen than the opposition that is made to the civil service reform.

I express no opinion as to the form that has been adopted in the examination of the applicants for office. I only know that competent and reliable men were employed in the preparation. But that some examination should be had, and that men should not be engaged to perform a given work until they have shown a capacity or fitness for it, is a self-evident truth. The lack of such an examination has drawn swarms of incompetent men to Washington, many of whom have found employment under the government, and there remain fastened like barnacles on the Ship of State. The strongest business house in the country would become bankrupt in less than three years if its affairs were interfered with by outside parties, as Congressmen interfere with the business of the departments at Washington. Probably one-half of the clerical force employed at Washington could perform all the work that is now done, if they were competent for their places, and worked as men do in private business houses. Men hold clerkships and draw salaries regularly, who can hardly read or write, and whose services to the country are not worth the cost of the sugar to sweeten their grog. Yet members of Congress protest against any system that will weed out these incompetents and prevent a perpetuation of their class. And the conduct of these Congressmen is perfectly consistent with their theory concerning the distribution of government supplies. Why should men be examined with regard to their ability to discharge the duties of an office when their appointment to that office is demanded on other and entirely different grounds?

One of the worst features of our times is the distrust that generally prevails with regard to the personal honor and honesty of our public men. The partisan newspapers are censurable for the indiscriminate manner in which they accuse their political opponents of dishonesty. But these accusations inflict slight permanent injury on men of unquestionable integrity. If men in public life have the reputation of being false and mercenary, they may generally thank themselves for it. Time is pretty sure to measure out impartial justice to all of us. If men are elected to offices in which the salaries only yield them a frugal support, retire from this in a few years with an ample fortune, the people will strongly suspect that this thing has not been done honestly. And the people are right in their suspicions. Our legislative bodies are infested by a gang of

lobbyists who are always ready to buy votes or influence at the market price. If a street is to be opened, a school-house built, a city railroad extended, or any other job engineered through the Common Council, somebody is on hand with a bribe for the members who are ready to sell their votes and their souls.

When the railroad monopolies desire to influence Congress or a State Legislature they know just how to place their stock or money "where it will do the most good." If a few votes are needed to secure the annexation of Alaska, or to cover up enormous rascality in the construction of the Pacific Railroad, somebody puts in an appearance with the means of buying those votes even if they cost thereby a thousand dollars apiece. How has the cheek of every honest American citizen been crimsoned with shame at the revelations of the Credit Mobilier that have come to light within the last few months. At the present it is almost impossible to separate between the innocent and the guilty in this matter. We may charitably hope that some who are now in disgrace will yet be vindicated from the aspersions that have been cast upon them. But there is no escape from the fact that others of hitherto good reputation have been guilty of deliberate falsehood; if not of guilty perjury in their efforts to exonerate themselves from this wretched affair. And these men have dishonored the country as well as disgraced themselves. We say of their self-destruction as Anthony said of the murder of Caesar: "Oh what a fall was there my countrymen. Then you and I and all of us fell down." And Congress for the vindication of its honor does nothing more than select two of the offenders and express in mild terms its disapprobation of the course they had pursued. It is well, perhaps, that they went no farther, for this same Congress closed its last session by an act so infamous that it must hereafter be known as the big steal of the year 1873.

The raid upon the Treasury of the United States in which one or two millions of dollars were carried off by men who had no shadow of right to it and which opened the way for stealing uncounted millions in the future, should consign every man engaged in it to a political grave with no hope of a resurrection.

This act of perfidy was perpetrated under circumstances that aggravated its essential villainy. There were more than fifty men who had been elected to Congress with a tacit agreement that they were to receive a salary of \$5,000 a year. Or to state the matter more accurately, as Congressmen spend on an average only about one-half their time at Washington, they were to be paid for services actually rendered at the rate of \$10,000 a year. This salary they had received, and for it they had given their receipts.

These men now tell us this salary was inadequate; but they intimated nothing of the kind when they were hanging round the doors of conventions, seeking a nomination, or begging for the vote necessary to elect them.

If you had been on the floor of the House of Representatives, as I was, when this bill of abominations was being rushed through, you would probably have felt as I did, that the men who were most anxious for its success would probably make more by this steal than they had earned in any honest way in any five years of their lives. And the "bill of appropriations" was made to carry this infamous rider, so that the thimble-riggers and artful-dodgers of the House might tell their constituents that they could not vote against an increase of salary without imperiling the bill providing for the legitimate expenses of the government.

Then millions were taken from the Treasury of the United States, too, at a time when the country is burdened with an enormous debt and suffering from all the evils of a depreciated currency. We ought, perhaps, to be grateful to these honorable gentlemen that they did not, while their hands were in the Treasury, take \$50,000 apiece, instead of \$5,000. The arguments used to justify the present grab would be just as good to excuse one ten times as large.

The people are not to be blamed for having been betrayed and robbed by their servants in this instance, as they had no intimation or suspicion of what was to be done. But we are a pitiful set indeed, if we tamely submit to this outrage. These men have been false to their constituents and recreant to the interests and honor of the nation. In the future whenever one of them presents himself as a candidate for the suffrage of the people, let good men of all parties combine to teach him that this is an offense the American people will never forgive or forget. Any political party, no matter what its past history, that justifies or excuses the crowning act of infamy with which the recent Congress closed its session, deserves to be annihilated. Here I leave the subject for the present.—Cincinnati Commercial.

## Opinion of Chief Justice McKean.

DELIVERED APRIL 2, 1873.

TERRITORY OF UTAH, } March  
Third District Court, } term 1873.

Joseph W. Haskins, } In ejectment  
vs. } for the Montezuma silver mine.  
Enos W. Wall et al. }

The plaintiff interposes a challenge to the array of the jury, on various grounds stated in writing and placed on file. The defendants controvert some of those grounds and demur to others. The positions taken by either party will be sufficiently referred to in the opinion of the court.

F. M. Smith, J. Rosborough and Z. Snow, in support of the challenge, cited the records of this court and of the Supreme Court of the Territory, also the Laws of Utah, p. 69, Sec. 2, etc., laws of 1870, p. 126; 1 Peters, 340.

C. H. Hempstead, J. Spratt, and Wm. Haydon, in opposition, cited 2 Graham & Waterman on New Trials, 153, 159, 160; Laws of Utah, p. 68, Sec. 4; 1 Greenleaf on Ev.,