

MORAL ACTION IN GOVERNMENT.

Society organized constitutes government—that which we call the state. Unorganized society is a condition of depraved humanity from which all civilized communities wish to escape.

Society must exist. In the Divine economy it is something that grows; and is not made. It is not to be manufactured at will, or let alone at pleasure. With its growth there are growing and increasing demands which can only be met by organized efforts.

The rights of men to be protected are rights that already exist in individuals, but which in an individual capacity cannot always be preserved. Bad men are found in all communities who do not hesitate to trespass and even trample upon the rights of good men; but good men never upon the rights upon bad men. It is the good who suffer as a rule—the weak by the strong when unrestrained.

Communities are powerless to enforce the right, in the absence of organization, but the state has all power to both make and enforce such regulations as may be deemed best by the community for their general welfare and progress in all rightful development.

We are all born into society, and cannot escape from it if we would. It is no creature of human volition; it grows out of the very wants of humanity. Such is God's ordination and He has adopted and fitted the human soul for society, and has rendered society necessary for it.

The law then, upon which society rests and is organized, is a divine law; and its duties are equally plain; which are to provide for bodily wants, and educate the soul for obeying the law of its creation.

The child is born under such circumstances as to render the family a necessity, and God requires parents to protect, nurture and educate their offspring. Upon the family is built all the other organizations of society, and in this is involved the duty of teaching and training—the duty, as far as it can be exercised, of leading and aiding reason to obtain mastery over the will. This great trust of teaching and training is committed to no one man, to no limited organization of men; it is committed to humanity as a unit, as a totality.

The powers of society, therefore, are properly limited to its duties. Its duty is to teach the untaught, and lead the unthinking to thought and correct moral action. Whatever is necessary to this end, it can do; but nothing against this. It can make no law of its own to supersede or override the law of God, as it has no commission from God for any such purpose. Society then in all its arrangements, is appointed to enforce in time the laws of God, not to violate them. Such is the full extent of its power; it can show no authority for any other purpose.

Every being has duties to discharge towards every other human being, but men are everywhere found who do violate God's laws, do refuse to discharge their duties, and

do disregard the rights of their fellow men. This is a universal fact, limited to no time or place, to no degree of intelligence or civilization; wherever man is found, there are also found rights violated and wrongs committed. The family has failed to prevent them, and the community, as such, has no power to compel obedience, to enforce law and order; hence the State, clothed with authority to cause right and justice to be done among men, becomes a necessity, and, if a necessity, then a right.

The State is the embodiment of the authority and power of the community, organized to enforce right and to prevent wrong; and this right and wrong are founded upon the character and legislation of God Himself. Any other theory would involve the absurdity of organizing the State for the protection of rights, which as yet did not exist. The admission of a God in morality implies that all right and all justice in the universe must be divine right and divine justice.

Man's moral regeneration and perfection are sought after and are the end of divine government, and should be the aim and tendency of all human governments, which should be administered by minds filled with Divine love and wisdom.

St. Paul declares distinctly that all civil authority is ordained of God, and not less distinctly does the same doctrine flow from the premises lying at the root of all morality.

The state is under law as much as the individuals of which it is composed—the law of God, by which law the State must be governed, if it will continue legitimate.

While the State exists of necessity the form of its organization is a matter of expediency. As in all other things the best should be selected; that form which will be most likely to place its vast powers in the hands of those who will act in unison with the great work of human recovery and perfection.

Three forms of government have had advocates and prominence among enlightened nations of Christendom. The monarchical, the aristocratic and the democratic. The first idea was that of all power in one; the second in a few, and the third in the many. This last, as the word democracy implies, is a government of the people—of the many. They have the right to form and shape the government, to make and unmake this form, and change it as to them may seem most convenient to the public welfare. They may provide how the right men shall find their way into the right places, and what powers they shall exercise when there.

A pure democracy always implies a habit of self-government on the part of the citizen; the habit of subjugating will to law, of subduing nature to reason, of acting in obedience to the right and the true. This requires not only a knowledge of the law, but a disposition to obey.

All genuine democracy must be founded upon intelligence and honesty. The success of democracy

as a practical form of government may be forecast, whenever it is ascertained which of the two influences is the strongest, intelligence and honesty, or ignorance and dishonesty.

Democracy is no doubt the highest development of human government. It places power in the hands of the intelligent and the good; and they should select for official station only the wise and the good. If bad men steal into power, they can be displaced, for wicked men with intelligence are the bane of every democracy. They are like poison circulating in any system of government. These are the men who are heard talking loudly of the dear people, and assailing all honest intelligence, laboring to create feelings of enmity between classes, in order that they may crush out the power of honesty, and replace it with the rule of knavery and wickedness.

Under this form of government citizens have a very important duty to perform. They are indirectly the rulers, as all appointments are in their hands, and the policy also, as through this power of appointment the citizen can carry his own views and opinions into acts of legislation and government.

The duty of an election is an important one, since it is the object of all organization to select the ablest and best men for public trusts. In all elections the citizen is bound to look to the qualifications of the person for whom he votes. He can only vote for honest men, if he would discharge his duty to his country. By this term honest I mean something more than a mere negative quality; I mean that character in a man which will lead him to seek for the true and the right, and then carry them out with a purpose that knows no hesitation. Such a man may be trusted any and everywhere. Party will never blind his intellect or warp his judgment, or mislead him in his action. He never will be found shaping his course and his policy with reference to popularity, unless honesty and fidelity will secure it. A learned judge once said: "A politician who hints a lie to obtain a vote, is a liar; nay, if he ever allows men to vote for him under the impression that he is what he is not, he is also guilty of falsehood; and a man who will lie, directly or indirectly, to carry an election, is as destitute of real honesty as the thief and the robber."

This democratic principle is scarcely possible except among a population of some intelligence. The public mind must have advanced far enough in civilization and mental and moral culture to admit the necessity of law, and also the necessity that all minds must yield obedience to this law and the results of its action. In such an organization, majorities must stand for the right, for the expression of the State, and the declaration of its political judgments.

Such a judicial decision may help to determine the character of many who seek for office in our day, especially in this Territory. On the other hand an elector has no right