

(February 11th, 1908.)

Ideals.

BY HON. WILLIAM JENNINGS BRYAN.

ADDRESSING the Canadian Club on "Ideals," Hon. William Jennings Bryan, former Democratic candidate for the Presidency of the United States, who was accorded an enthusiastic reception, said:

Mr. President and Gentlemen,—This is a very cordial welcome, so cordial, in fact, that I cannot take it all to myself. It bespeaks to me the friendship you feel toward the great country of which I am only a small part. I am glad to have the opportunity of speaking to you, and am gratified at the more than complimentary terms in which I have been presented to you. I am not vain enough to think that all the good words spoken are to be taken at par, for I am aware that everyone who reaches any distinction shines somewhat from rays reflected from the larger things with which he has been dealing. If, then, I am a luminary at all, I am not a sun, shining in the brilliancy of its native, original light, but a moon, reflecting the radiance—

A voice, interrupting: A full moon. (Laughter.)

Mr. BRYAN, continuing: I must inform my friend that I am a teetotaler. (Renewed laughter and applause.)

You have a great country up here. And a great people, too. And you are connected with great countries and great peoples, both politically and geographically, peoples who have made great contributions to the welfare of the world. I appreciate the great contributions the English-speaking world—the British nation—has made to the welfare of the world. The greatest contribution which your nation has presented to the advancement of mankind is the establishment of free speech. You boast of the principles of free government; you boast of the influence of the ordinary man on the Government, yet I am convinced that the power of free speech is more elementary than that of free government. Without free speech free government had never been born; with free speech you cannot have despotic government. Free speech is the right of the individual to express his convictions. It is a right valuable to him, and it is a right valuable to all who associate with him. It is a right valuable to the man in office, as well

as to the man out of office. The man, who is a man, in office is filled with worthy desires to do what is best. He needs the help of his enemies, sometimes more than the help of his friends. His enemies are more frank with him. Sometimes he thinks they are too frank, but I don't think that can be. Truth is always able to defend itself in any controversy with error. (Applause.)

There are those who see danger in the doctrine of free speech. I would risk that danger. In Great Britain they have freedom of speech, and it has proved a great protection to a great country. Here in Canada you have freedom of speech. This Club owes its origin to your devotion to free speech. It is, I understand, an organization for the purpose of stimulating the discussion of public questions. You invite people of every shade of opinion, and they may say what they please. It is a worthy purpose. When one is willing to have opposition views fully expressed, he shows a larger faith in the correctness of his own views than when he tries to repress them. The tribute of free speech belongs to that great nation which has done so much to advance the world's progress, the great nation with which you are identified.

I have mentioned the matter of free speech in my introduction because it is one of the first ideals I have set myself to speak to you upon for a short while this afternoon, and because I desire to express my appreciation of this Club, which stands on the principle of free speech and invites people of all shades of opinion to come here and show their confidence in their views by presenting them before you.

In speaking outside one's own country a man must be more careful in what he says. If I were at home there are many questions I would gladly discuss, but I cannot carry domestic questions with me, and I cannot take up the questions of the country into which I go. Therefore I am properly compelled to lay aside the politics of my own country, and to avoid the politics of the country whose guest I am. Under the best of circumstances it is difficult for one to make a speech upon political topics which is not open to political misconception. In my own country I sometimes speak on political subjects, and sometimes on religious topics. I try to keep the two apart, but I rarely make a political speech upon which I am not accused of trying to preach a sermon, or seek to deliver an address on a religious subject upon which I am not represented as trying to talk politics. I suppose it is because there is so little difference between a good Democratic speech and a good sermon. (Laughter.)

In our city some years ago a worthy movement was started in the interests of good civic and federal government. On the Sunday night before the election the churches held a joint meeting to discuss good government and pure politics. A Republican attorney was asked to speak for the one side, and I had the honor to be invited as a Democrat. I was pleased with his speech, and he seemed satisfied with mine, and the audience made no hostile demonstration. A few days later a man stopped me on the street and told me he heard it said that Bryan had desecrated the Presbyterian Church by making a political speech. He told them to vote for Judge Brodie, the Democratic candidate for mayor. I assured him he had been misinformed, but he retorted, "Well, you kept telling the people to vote for the best man, and everybody knew who that was." So you see it is very difficult to avoid misrepresentation. (Laughter and applause.)

In New York you have to be very careful, even about quotations. If, for instance, I quoted from a Democratic authority, the Republicans would attack the authority, and I have been too busy to take time to defend all the authorities. So I decided to quote from the Scriptures, and leave them to fight it out with the Bible while I went on about my business. But I fear I would not be safe from misrepresentation quoting from even the Scriptures in New York. Suppose, for instance, I were to read from Proverbs, "A good name is rather to be chosen than great riches, and loving favor more than silver and gold." Some paper would, I fancy, accuse me of attacking certain of their prominent citizens. (Renewed laughter.) So you see one has to be careful. And out of his own country he should be even more careful than at home. He must be careful to avoid anything that has to do with local issues.

I want, then, this afternoon to speak to you a few words upon "Ideals," and how they control the life, and to apply them in a general way. I hope to make my words helpful, and to avoid straying in forbidden fields.

Have you ever tried to measure the value of an ideal on a life? Go to the home of a man of wealth, whose only son has gone the downward path of dissipation, and for whom there is no hope of reform. Ask that father what he would give to be able to implant in his boy an ideal that would turn his steps upward and enthrone him in all the majesty of supreme manhood. That is the worth of an ideal. It would make a man of the son instead of a wreck. And the father will tell you that he would willingly give all his money for such an ideal. But

an ideal cannot be purchased with money. It is the measure of the difference between success and failure; it is the measure of the difference between a noble life and an ignoble career; it is often the measure of the difference between life and death.

Think for a moment of the terrible increase in the number of suicides, which is a saddening fact of our modern life. I do not mean those cases where "reason dethroned leaves the hand no guide," but of those unfortunate ones who find no joyful purpose in life, and deliberately end it, those who cannot find life worth living. They have taken to themselves a false ideal of life. If we measure life by what we get out of the world we will be disappointed, for the world is inconsiderate and selfish. But if we measure life by what we put into the world, then we have our happiness in our own keeping. If our standard of happiness is gauged by what people do for us, we will suffer many a pang; but if we measure it by what we do for others, we will have no time for disappointment or despair in finding time to do all our heart bids us undertake.

An ideal is a permanent thing, and because it is a permanent thing it is important that it should be a high one. Let me speak for a moment as a parent to parents. Aid your child to get a firm hold of a high ideal. Teachers, too, have a splendid opportunity and privilege. Remember that ideals are among the few permanent possessions that this world knows. If you give a man bread he will hunger again; if you give him clothes they will wear out, but give him a high ideal and it will be with him every waking hour. It will permeate him and ennoble his whole life, lifting him to a higher conception and a broader view of life.

This is a world of change. A man may make plans, and circumstances will change them. Circumstances have changed many plans I have made. Ambitions are turned aside by circumstances. Mine have been. (Laughter.) But an ideal dominates life, determines character, and fixes a man's place among his fellows.

I have now in my mind's eye a laboring man who has surrounded himself with a library of over 500 volumes. He knows more of the philosophers, the historians and the orators, and knows them intimately, than many men who have the most complete but idle book-shelves. This man might have gone out at nights and wasted his substance in riotous living, but he did not. Somehow, somewhere, he had taken hold of a high ideal.

I think of another, a young man of 18 years of age when I first came to know him. I watched him for five years as he patiently, persistently pursued a high ideal. He did not seek wealth. He had an ideal greater than to stand guard over a box of money. He had small leisure for study, but when others were spending their substance upon that which satisfieth not, he was seeking to equip himself for the service of his countrymen.

I have had the opportunity, when going through Chicago, to visit the Hull House, founded by Jane Adams, that wonderful institution that has wrought such good among those who needed most. I found more than 5,000 names upon the books of the institution, mothers with little babes, children who had been given kindness. It was for the young women a home and to the young men a meeting place. There I found engaged in the great work twenty young men and women, all college bred, who had somehow and somewhere got an ideal of life above the sordid interests of self, and had gone out and devoted their talents and their energies to lightening homes that were dark.

There is a revolution in the life when the ideal changes. I remember a college man, fourteen years my senior, who, until he was grown up, devoted himself to getting all the husks out of life. He became a tramp, with no fixed purpose or abode. One night, when passing a hall in which a revival was in progress, the prodigal strayed in. He was converted and decided forthwith to become a minister. Earning his board and clothing, he went through a theological seminary, and preached the Gospel till he died. Here, through a greater Power than man's, an ideal was changed in the twinkling of an eye.

Not long ago I met a Christian woman, happily married, whom I had known some years before. When I had known her then she had been reading a weird novel which had taken a great hold upon her. In it was a heroine, Sal, who was accustomed to ride a horse bareback and shoot Indians while the horse was running. This was her ambition. When, therefore, I saw her later with a Christian helpmate in a Christian home, I realized that there had been a change in her ideals.

Four years ago it was my privilege to visit the country home of the Russian philosopher, Leo Tolstoi, whose life and history are household knowledge. He was born to the ranks of the nobility with every social distinction, and won for himself an assured place in literature by his books of high-class fiction. He "sounded all the depths and shoals of honor." Yet, at the age of 48, life seemed vain and empty, and he

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wanted to die. He had found it all so meaningless that he had sought death. The ring in the ceiling from which he had sought to hang himself was shown to me. But there was a change in the ideals of this great man's life. He was born again. And for more than thirty years he has been living the life of a peasant, and preaching to all the world the great philosophy, "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and thy neighbor as thyself." Tolstoi's throbbing heart has been felt in every civilized country in the world. He has found it infinitely more satisfying to give his great message of love to the world than to shine in the social and literary circles to which he was born. What is the result? There is no civilized community in the world where Tolstoi's throbbing thought has not been felt. I had visited all the capitals of Europe, yet when I returned home there were more people who wanted to hear about Tolstoi than about all the other persons of prominence in the Old World.

High ideals are valuable, not only for the individual, but for groups of individuals. A high ideal is essential to the enjoyment of domestic life. Marriage rests far more for its success upon the ideals of the husband and wife than upon the size of their house or the extent of their fortune. If you enter upon marriage in the same spirit as some trade horses—each trying to get the best of the bargain—how can you expect to be happy in it? It's worse than a horse trade. If a man cheats in a horse trade he has this advantage, he may never again see the person he has cheated. But if he cheats in marriage he will see her whom he has cheated every day, and perhaps sometimes be reminded of it. (Laughter.) And it is just as bad, only not quite so frequent, when the cheating is on the other side.

There is an ideal for domestic life. The man and woman should be bound by the ties of love. Each should be willing to contribute a full part, to share in the trials as well as in the triumphs. Start out to build up the home with high ideals.

There should be business ideals. It is just as impossible to build a house successfully without a plan as to try to build up a business without an ideal. In these days when competition is so sharp it has almost come to be accepted that a business man must turn aside occasionally when it is necessary. This should not be so. Once there was a good woman went to the store of a dry goods man to get some calico to color some easter eggs. It was shown her and she asked the clerk if it was sure to fade. The clerk told her that it was,

but the proprietor, who was passing, stopped and rebuked him. "But," said the clerk, "she wants it to fade." (Laughter.) That is the way with too much of our business life. Things are represented not as they are, but as the customer wants them to be. There never was a time when honesty in business was more needed than now, and there never was a time in which honesty in business paid more than it does now.

There is need for high ideals in the professions. Take the medical profession. There are higher aims for a doctor than to collect his pay; it is his privilege to help make life worth while and to help others to live. He should have a higher ideal than that of making money. He should cultivate a passion for his profession and aim to give the world something of benefit to the whole race.

And the lawyer—does he have ideals, too? Yes, and there is as much difference between the ideals of the different lawyers as one can find. There are lawyers who will willingly secure acquittal of those they know to be guilty. There are lawyers who will seek to obtain for their clients what they know they do not deserve. The lawyer is an officer of the court and is sworn to assist the administration of justice. All the client is entitled to expect from his lawyer is his full duty; when he goes beyond that, he goes at his own peril. There are lawyers who have spent a lifetime trying to obscure the line between right and wrong. In this they lose character, and by-and-bye the power themselves to discern right from wrong. The power to discern truth is in proportion to the search for it. There are lawyers who have boasted of getting clients acquitted whom they knew to be guilty. I do not know how they can do so. Show me a man who obscures the truth for a fee, and I will show you a man who is losing his character and his ability to discern right from wrong. Of course there are lawyers who can fool a judge a few times, but he soon gets to know them. Your tricky lawyer may lead a judge into a hole two or three times, but he can't do it for long. By-and-bye the judge doesn't even follow what the lawyer says, for he's watching for the hole all the time. (Laughter.) It means much to have the confidence of the jurors in a lawyer's integrity. If they know they are listening to a man who will, under no circumstances, try to mislead them, they will lean with increased confidence in what the lawyer says.

High ideals are valuable for all occupations and professions. I think I shall mention one other, the newspaper business. Of the value of an ideal to a newspaper I am constrained to

speak, for the newspaper occupies a large field in the life of to-day. Journalism is the largest field a man can enter, and it is in proportion to the ability of a paper to mould public opinion that the journalist has a responsibility to use his influence on the right side of every question. His paper must stand for right as he sees it. There is no other rule by which to measure men. The larger the opportunity, the greater the responsibility, and the journalist has a heavy load of responsibility. In our country I am sorry to say some of the newspapers are not conducted along the lines laid down by high ideals. Some are the instruments of predatory wealth, and seek to take advantage of the public. The owners hide in the background, where they can't be found, and they hire brilliant men of education to chloroform the public, while the owners pick their pockets. I hope the disease has not spread to your country.

The ideal for the newspaper man is to stand out and give to the public the information that the public needs on questions upon which it is called to act. A true journalist is a watchman on the watch-tower, proclaiming what he sees. If he is bribed to silence or misrepresentation, his guilt is greater than that of the ordinary person, because his higher place has given him greater responsibility. Upon him the public relies for its safety from marauders. Great and terrible in his responsibility if he speak not true, or submit to be bribed into silence.

Then there is the party ideal, for ideals are valuable in the life of party politics. In all countries where the voice of the people rules, party is an important instrumentality. Every country has at least two parties. It is necessary to have two parties. I have never doubted the wisdom of a Republican party. You need one party to watch the other, though I sometimes thought there were more in the Republican party than were necessary to do the watching. (Laughter.) Now we must have ideals in public life, and it is as important that our party ideals should be high as it is that our individual ideals should be high. Party brings together those who desire to secure legislation of a certain kind. There are, of course, differences of opinion, even within a party. You can't have all think alike. If they were all the same it would mean that many did not think at all. Some will be more radical and some more conservative, but the direction in which all are going is the same. Parties, I say, are necessary, but in my ideal of party I should say that what each party stands for should be distinctly stated. It should be of such a character that the

people can understand and go out and decide for themselves. There is no more justification for the deception of a party to obtain power than for the deception of a party to obtain money. And when a party has stated its position, code, creed, or platform, and obtained office by it, it should stand by it. Embezzlement of power is more serious than embezzlement of money. I am more anxious to have my party right than I am to have it in power. True, we cannot always agree. I often read editorials in Republican papers, which I wouldn't print in mine, and which my friends would never have written, yet if events prove that they were right, I will rejoice. If my own defeats have been for the good of my country I shall rejoice. And don't think that I am unselfish. I have had some regrets over my defeats, yet it is better that my enemies should bring good rather than that I should bring harm to my country. The man who saves his country saves himself. I would prefer that the enemies of my country might bring her good than that her friends bring her harm. If the enemies of my party can devise a better system of government than I, they are not my enemies, but my friends.

Nations should have ideals. I am anxious for my nation to have a high ideal. What shall be the measure of its greatness? The ideals of greatness for a country are like those by which we measure individuals. The same principles that apply to the individual, the man, apply to a group of men, the community, the nation. When, in the days of old, the disciples quarrelled among themselves as to which should be greatest, Christ rebuked them. "Let him who would be chiefest among you be the servant." Service is the measure of greatness. The greatest nation is the one that does the most of good, that gives the greatest measure of service. The great nation is the one that renders large service. Its greatness is not to be measured by the size of its army or by the strength of its navy, but by the service it renders to mankind. And when you measure nations by this standard, you will have peace and fellowship among them. I am not one who believes that it is part of the Divine plan that one nation's prosperity can be built upon another's misfortune. I could not worship God as I do if He had planned the world so that the permanent misfortune of some country must be the basis of the permanent prosperity of the others. And I cry shame upon the doctrine of those who say that there must be an uneducated class for the thinkers and the educated to build their fortunes upon. Every child should have the right given it to education, not alone in the

common schools, but in the high schools and in the colleges. Instead of attempting to stop the progress of the masses, we should all be earnestly engaged in handing them the helping arm. Then let us put behind education a conception of life that will make all anxious to work for each other, to minister to the great needs of the world, and to teach the educated man that his knowledge and training have not been given him to free him from work, but to enlarge his possibilities for service. In no country on earth should they teach the heresy that it is more respectable for a young man to spend in idleness the money earned by someone else than to be himself a producer of wealth. A young man should be ashamed to sponge on the world for a living, and not give adequate service in return. (Applause.)

Every human being has inalienable rights that government did not give and that government cannot take away. Tariffs cannot wall them out. A man can do just as he pleases until he trespasses on the equal right of someone else. The community can do as it will until it touches the equal right of some other community. Follow the argument up till you have every nation working out its own destiny in the world. There is the right and privilege to set a good example. That is the Christian doctrine, that others, seeing our good works, may be constrained to glorify our Father. That is the most potent influence that goes out from the upright life, and from the upright nation.

We have heard much of the "yellow peril." China cannot increase in strength until she increases in intelligence. And when she increases in intelligence she will know, as we know, that it is better to respect the rights of others than to trespass upon them. God speed the people of Great Britain and America who are planting schools and missions in the Orient land. You can't hurt the world by helping the people of the world. So we help ourselves by helping them. We say to them, we will trade with you, and you with us. The trade will be valuable to each of us. We will thus increase their productive power, raise their ideals and their standard of life, and they will make a larger demand for what we sell.

I want a national ideal that is good enough for every nation. I want a national ideal that will be imitated and adopted by other nations. I am no monopolist. I want all to share our blessings. I want to see us all establish the ideal of service as the measure of greatness.

We are anxious to engage in rivalry with you—a rivalry which will inspire no harsh feelings and work no ill—a rivalry in the doing of good. I want my nation to live on such terms as will make people not fear our flag, but love it, and the doctrines of human rights it stands for. I am not anxious that people shall bow to the Stars and Stripes, but I am eager that they shall turn their faces toward it and thank God that it is a flag that stands for human rights.

In one of the closing chapters of Carlyle's "French Revolution," he says, "Thought is stronger than artillery parks, and back of thought is love." I am ambitious that my nation and yours shall rule the world by its thought, and the thought that has love back of it. I am ambitious that they should be the rivals of every other nation who can carry the brightest light, and best lead other nations to the higher ground.
