

# But Where Are the Nine?

(Lecture delivered by Mr. W. J. Bryan at Chautauquas during the season of 1920.)

Ladies and Gentlemen:

You may not understand how difficult it is for one with a message to find a hearing. If he desires to make a political speech he can do so at meetings arranged by the party committee, but these meetings usually cover only about two months' time every two years, or, at most, about three months' time in presidential campaigns. Outside of these periods, opportunities for the discussion of political questions are rare.

If one desires to speak on religious subjects, he can usually find an opportunity in his own church, but there are so many different denominations that the opportunity thus afforded is necessarily limited and there are many subjects not entirely appropriate for a campaign meeting, nor yet entirely religious, but vitally connected with the public welfare. The Chautauqua platform is broad enough for the consideration of any question affecting human welfare, and the progress of civilization.

For a little more than twenty-five years I have been using the Chautauqua platform as a means of reaching the public in the discussion of questions which I deemed worth while.

The Chautauqua audience is the best that assembles in the United States, and that means the best in the world. It differs from the political audience in several respects. Those who gather to listen to a political speech may be divided generally into three groups: Friends, who are predisposed to accept what the speaker says, opponents who are inclined to reject what he says, and the curious, who retire when their curiosity is satisfied. Those who attend a Chautauqua are there to hear; if anything is said worth remembering, they remember it; if worth repeating, they repeat it. If, therefore, one has a message to deliver and desires that message widely disseminated, there is no better audience to which to present it than that which assembles under the Chautauqua tent.

A speech, to be timely, must fit into the present situation, and a speech made by a public man during a presidential campaign can hardly avoid referring to the problems with which the voters are dealing. I shall, therefore, illustrate my theme by reference to a few of these problems. But let no Republican be alarmed—I shall not deal with them in a partisan spirit. I am not foolish enough to make a Democratic appeal to a Chautauqua audience. It is hard enough for Republicans to listen to a Democratic speech at a public meeting; it would be cruel and unusual punishment to make them pay for hearing such a speech. I shall attempt to treat these political subjects on their merits, and yet, I can hardly hope to escape misinterpretation. I have tried as hard as anyone ever has to keep my speeches separate and distinct, but not always with success. When I make a purely religious speech, I am sometimes accused of talking politics; and when I make a Democratic speech it is often called a sermon—the explanation being that a good Democratic speech and a good sermon are so much alike that one will get them mixed.

I am not content, however, to spend the entire hour on political questions. At my age one cannot know how much longer it will be possible to make such tours of the country as I have been making since 1895, and I am not willing to discuss merely the ephemeral things that engage our attention in campaigns. Looking back over thirty years of active participation in politics I note that each campaign has had its paramount issue—an issue that absorbed attention for a time, and then disappears. I shall be disappointed if I am not able to so burn into your minds and hearts a great moral principle that you cannot forget it while you live. I desire to begin my address with a principle so important and so permanent that the discussion of it will be as appropriate two thousand years from now, as now. If you ask why I am so sure of its enduring interest, my answer is that it is as important today as when Christ laid emphasis upon it nineteen hundred years ago. As you may suspect, this truth is taken from the Bible, and I digress a moment to add that the Bible differs from all other books in that it never wears out. Other books are read and laid aside, but no matter how familiar you are with the Bible, some new truth is likely to spring out at you from its pages whenever you open it—

or some old truth will impress you as it never did before.

So with my theme. A few months ago I turned by chance to a verse from the story of the Ten Lepers, and the applications which I make of this truth today immediately suggested itself to my mind.

The Bible says as Christ entered a certain village, ten lepers met him, and, called out; Jesus Master, have mercy on us. He healed them. One of them, when he found that he had been healed, turned back, and, falling upon his face at Jesus' feet, poured forth his heart in grateful thanks, but the other nine, although they had received as much, passed on, receiving and enjoying, but giving expression to no word of thanks. Christ, noticing this, inquired: Were there not ten cleansed, but where are the nine? This simple question has come echoing down through nineteen centuries, the most stinging rebuke ever uttered against ingratitude. If the lepers had been afflicted with a disease easily cured, they might have said, anyone could have healed us, but only Christ could restore them to health, and yet when they had received of his cleansing power, they apparently felt no sense of obligation; at least, they manifested no gratitude.

Someone has described ingratitude as a meaner sin than revenge—the explanation being that revenge is repayment of evil with evil, while ingratitude is repayment of good with evil. If you visit revenge upon one, it is because he has injured you first, and the law takes notice of provocation. Ingratitude is lack of appreciation of a favor shown; it is indifference to a kindness done, and ingratitude is so common a sin among men that few have occupied the pulpit for a year without using the story of the Ten Lepers, as the basis of a sermon, and one could speak upon this theme every Sunday in the year without being compelled to repeat himself, so infinite in number are the illustrations. Nearly all who speak of ingratitude begin with a child. A child is born into the world the most helpless of all creatures; for years it could not live but for the affection and devoted care of parents, or of those who stand in the place of parents. If, when it grows up, it becomes indifferent; if its heart grows cold, and it is ungrateful, it arouses universal indignation. Poets and writers of prose have exhausted epithet in their effort to condemn an ungrateful child. Shakespeare's reference to it is probably the one most quoted. He says, "How sharper than a serpent's tooth is a thankless child."

But it is not my purpose to speak today of thankless children; I shall rather make application of the rebuke to the line of work in which I have been engaged. For some thirty years my time has been devoted largely to the study and discussion of the problems of government, and I have had occasion to note the apathy and indifference of citizens. I have seen reforms delayed, and the suffering of the people prolonged by lack of vigilance. Let us, therefore, consider together for a little while some of the priceless gifts that come to us because we live under the Stars and Stripes—gifts so valuable that they cannot be estimated in figures, or described in language—gifts which are received and enjoyed by many without any sense of obligation, and without any resolve to repay the debt due to society.

These gifts are many, but we shall only have time for three. The first is education; it is a gift rather than an acquirement. It comes into our lives when we are too young to decide such questions for ourselves. I sometimes meet a man who calls himself "self-made," and I always feel like cross-examining him. I would ask him when he began to make himself, and how he laid the foundations of his greatness.

As matter of fact, we inherit more than we ourselves can add. It means more to be born of a race with centuries of civilization back of it than anything that we ourselves can contribute. And, next to that which we inherit, comes that which enters our lives through the environment of youth. In this country the child is so surrounded by opportunities, and by the coercions that compel it to take advantage of these opportunities, that it enters school as early as the law will permit. It does not go to school, it is SENT to school, and we are so anxious that it shall lose no time that, if there is ever a period in the child's life when the

mother is uncertain as to its exact age, this is the time. I heard of a little boy who, when asked how old he was, replied, "I am five on the train, seven in school and six at home." The child is pushed through grade after grade, and, according to the statistics, a little more than ninety per cent of the children drop out of school before they are old enough to decide educational questions.

Taking the country over, a little less than one in ten of the children who enter our graded schools ever enter high school, and not quite one in fifty enter college or university. As many who enter college drop out before the course is completed, I am not far from the truth when I say that only about one young man in one hundred continues his education until he reaches the age—21—when the law assumes that his reason is mature. I am emphasizing these statistics in order to show that we are indebted to others more than to ourselves for our education; even those who secure an education in spite of difficulties have received from someone the idea that makes them appreciate the value of an education.

When we are born we find an educational system here; we do not devise it, it was devised by a generation long since dead. When we are ready to attend school we find a school house already built; we do not build it, it was erected by the taxpayers, many of whom are dead. When we are ready for instruction we find teachers prepared; they were prepared by others, many of whom have passed to their reward.

How do we feel when we complete our education? Do we count the cost to others and think of the sacrifices they have made for our benefit? Do we estimate the strength that education has brought to us and feel that we should put that strength under heavier loads? We are raised by our study to an intellectual eminence from which we can secure a clearer view of the future, do we feel under obligation to act like watchmen upon the tower and warn others of the dangers that they do not yet discern? We should, but do we? I venture to assert that more than nine out of ten of those who receive into their lives, and profit by, the gift of education are as ungrateful as the nine lepers, of whom the Bible tells us—they receive, they enjoy, but they give no thanks.

But, it is even worse than this; the Bible does not say that any one of the nine lepers used for the injury of his fellows the strength that Christ gave back to him. All that is said is that they were ungrateful, but how about those who go out from our colleges and universities—are not many of these worse than ungrateful? When President Roosevelt was in the White House he went down to Harvard to speak to a class of law students. In the course of his remarks he told the students that there was scarcely a great conspiracy against the public welfare that did not have Harvard brains behind it. He need not have gone to Harvard to utter this indictment against college graduates; he might have gone to Yale, or Columbia, or Princeton, or to any other great university, or even to smaller colleges. It would not take long to correct the abuses of which the people complain but for the fact that back of every abuse are the hired brains of scholars who turn against society and use for society's harm the very strength that society has bestowed upon them.

Let me give you an illustration in point, and so recent that one will be sufficient. A few weeks ago the Supreme Court at Washington handed down a decision overturning every argument made against the Eighteenth amendment and the enforcement law. Who represented the liquor traffic in that august tribunal? Not brewery workers, employees in distilleries, or bartenders. These could not speak for the liquor traffic in the Supreme Court. No! Lawyers must be employed, and they were easily found, big lawyers who attempted to overthrow the bulwark that society has erected for the protection of the homes of the country. Every reform has to be fought through all the courts until it is finally settled by the highest court in our land, and there, vanquished wrong expires in the arms of learned lawyers who sell their souls to do evil—who attempt to rend society with the very power that our institutions of learning have conferred upon them.

My second illustration is even more important for it deals with the heart. I am interested in education; if I had my way every child in all the world would be educated. God forbid that I draw a line through society and say that the