

Mr. Bryan's Address to the Indiana Legislature

Secretary Bryan, accepting a joint invitation from the general assembly to address the Indiana legislature, delivered a speech in the assembly room of the house of representatives, Indianapolis, Indiana, Friday morning, February 5, 1915, at 11 o'clock. He was introduced by Speaker Charles H. Bedwell.

Mr. Bryan spoke as follows:

Governor Ralston, Mr. Speaker, Mr. President, Members of the Senate and House, and Ladies and Gentlemen:

I appreciate the honor that the legislative body of this great commonwealth has done me in inviting me to deliver this address, and I think the state will take judicial notice of the fact that it is a democratic legislature that I address. Therefore, I can deliver an address that will show democratic leanings. As a public officer I try to be impartial in the handling of public business, and in Washington we have a civil service which is being honestly administered, and no republican will be able to say that we unlawfully disturb the republicans who were put in by appointment and then covered by the civil service so that they could not be taken out. The civil service has never been more honestly administered than it has been under this administration, and yet I confess that it does give me some pleasure to reward a deserving democrat when I get a chance. And I have not found it difficult to find democrats who are deserving, for the few offices that are left open for appointment. Wherever I have been free to manifest my affection for those of my own party I have not been found wanting, and yet I recognize that the larger part of the public service is performed without regard to party differences. And more than that, I am convinced that the president's statement, recently made here, represents the highest standard of regard for party, namely, that he is the best partisan who loves his country better than his party; he acts for his party when he does his best to compel his party to put the country's good before the party's interest.

So, in speaking today, as one who is not ashamed to be a democrat, to a legislature that is democratic, I shall, while interpreting our institutions from a democratic standpoint, contend that a democrat can not be a good democrat unless the welfare of his country is his chief concern.

It makes a great deal of difference whether a man looks at public questions from the right standpoint; and in addressing you this morning I desire to present the two standpoints from which people regard republican institutions. The aristocratic standpoint is essentially different from the democratic standpoint, and a man's fundamental attitude colors every act, no matter along what line he acts, or in what direction his activities are exerted.

The democratic standard is, to my mind, the correct standard. I do not mean to say that a democrat is more honest than an aristocrat, but he is different, and this difference ought to be understood. When you come to representative government you find that it is interpreted in one way by the aristocrat and in another way by the democrat. The aristocrat believes that the people select representatives to THINK for them. The democrat believes that the people should THINK FOR THEMSELVES and select representatives to ACT for them. The difference is a fundamental one.

If a representative takes the aristocratic position he assumes the right to think for his constituents and he does not like to have them bother him by telling him what he ought to do.

The democrat believes that he has no business to represent his people unless he gives expression to their wishes and does what they want done. And the first point that I desire to emphasize,—and it is a very practical point,—is that it is the duty of a representative to carry out the will of his constituents. I have heard a good deal, from time to time, from representatives about their desires to follow their consciences. No man puts conscience higher than I do. You may have to decide the question—"ought a representative to follow his conscience?" I answer, undoubtedly,

yes! "Ought a representative to do what his conscience tells him is wrong?" I answer, unhesitatingly, "No!" But does that conflict with the democratic idea of representative government? No!

Suppose a representative is called upon by his constituents to do something that the representative thinks is wrong, ought he to do it? No! What ought he to do? Resign, and let somebody act who can conscientiously do what his constituents want!

That course reconciles the two duties, first, following his conscience and second, representing his constituents. But do you know that question very seldom arises until after the election? I have found that the man who CONSCIENTIOUSLY desires to do something his constituents do not want done, rarely feels his conscience acting until after the election. I have not much use for a man whose conscience hibernates during a campaign, and is awakened, when no special interest wants him to represent it.

I am sure that I will not offend anyone when I speak of a special interest, for that is the only thing that makes trouble in a legislature. A man has no difficulty in following the wishes of his constituents until some powerful influence begins to operate upon him, and I never speak to a legislature without emphasizing the people's right to have a representative who obeys his constituents, and I can prove to you that this is the idea of representative government that prevails among the people.

I cite you to the fact that every candidate who runs for an important office runs on a platform, and that in proportion as the subjects under consideration are important the platform is specific. Now, if the people elected representatives to think for them, why would they instruct them in a platform? And if they instruct them in a platform why do men accept office under instruction unless they intend to carry out the instruction?

If a man receives money belonging to another and embezzles it, we send him to the penitentiary. I contend that official authority is more important than money and I am hoping that in the development of free government the time will come when we shall punish, as a criminal, the man who embezzles power—who secures authority and then uses it for himself.

Why do I lay this foundation? Because I intend to build upon it. If what I have said is sound; if what I have said is democratic; if what I have said is in harmony with the principles of free institutions, then it ought to be applied to the forms and methods of government.

There are different forms of government and we have gone back to the Greek for the language that describes these different forms. We have the word MONARCHY, and it means a government by one person, a king, an emperor, a kaiser, a czar, a monarch. But the tendency towards free government is so strong that monarchies are being limited; the whole progress of the world is towards increased limitations upon arbitrary power and the enlargement of the authority of the people.

Next to the monarchy comes the aristocracy. The word ARISTOS, means the best; but it was an assumption of virtue that was given to a few; an aristocracy is a government in which a few control. But history shows that wherever there was an aristocracy the number of those who exercised the ruling power continually increased, and it became more and more a democracy.

The third form of government described by these Greek words is the democracy. And what does the word DEMOCRACY mean? A government, in which the people rule. Of all the names that have ever been used to describe a party, I insist that no other word so fittingly describes a party dedicated to the doctrine of democracy, no other word so describes the ideal party as the word democracy. It is not so well understood in Europe, however, as it is in this country.

I never understood until a few years ago what an advantage the republican party had in appealing to those who come from across the sea, but I had my attention called to this advantage in several different ways within a short time. First, a Swedish minister, in Nebraska, told me it was difficult to get people from his country to under-

stand that the republican party had no special connection with a republic. He said that his people, in coming to a republic, seemed to assume that the republican party was the party of a republic. That was the first time I had my attention called to it. Shortly after that I visited France, and went into the country about forty miles to talk to a peasant in order to get his point of view. He answered my questions freely and when he was through I thanked him, and as I started away, he told my interpreter to tell me that he was glad I was a republican, that he would not have talked to me if I had not been. I had then run for president twice on the democratic ticket, and yet that man spoke of me as a republican.

Not long after that a man brought me a copy of the New York Independent containing a biographical sketch of a man from southern Europe who had secured property and influence among his people in this country. The story of his life was presented in this magazine, and my attention was called to something like this: He said that, after he had been here for a little while, he went to a political meeting, and that the speaker said that the republican party believed in a republic, but that the democratic party wanted an Irishman named Bryan for a king. He said that as he believed in a republic he joined the republican party. And when I quote a little more, you may think that possibly he joined the right party. He said they asked him to be naturalized and he said he had not been here long enough, but they told him to be naturalized anyhow, because it would only cost him \$1.75 to be naturalized and that he could get \$2.50 for his vote.

The word DEMOCRATIC is, I repeat, the best name that a party can have in a country like ours, but to have that name involves certain responsibilities.

It is a misfortune for the son of a great man to be measured against his father's reputation; it is a real misfortune, because those who measure him against his father's reputation generally forget that there is a generation between them. The disadvantage of having a good party name, such as our party has, is that every man who calls himself a democrat is measured against the name. A democrat, if he does not believe in the rule of the people, is marked lower than if he made no claim to a high standard.

Now, in these latter days, they have invented two other words that describe a perverted democratic government. One is PLUTOCRACY, or the rule of money; a plutocracy may dominate the government in a democracy, and it is the duty of democrats to see that our democracy is not converted into a plutocracy. It is the duty of democrats to see that money is not put above man.

Sometimes when, in speaking, I mention Jefferson and Lincoln I find the audience applauding Lincoln more than it applauds Jefferson; and then I remind the audience that that is unfair because Lincoln said that he had not a political principle that he did not get from Thomas Jefferson. And certainly the statesman who can give political principles to all the world, as Jefferson did, ought not to be rated lower than those who took their principles from him.

Upon no point did Jefferson and Lincoln agree more thoroughly than as to the relative importance of money and man. Jefferson's whole philosophy may be condensed into a sentence when I say that he put man first and money afterward. And yet Jefferson never expressed this idea as aptly as Lincoln did, and, strangely enough, when Lincoln, in 1859, stated this relation, with an aptness that will never be surpassed, he was writing a letter to the REPUBLICANS of Boston, who were celebrating JEFFERSON'S birthday. Lincoln expressed his regret that he could not be present, but paid as eloquent a tribute to Jefferson as was ever paid, and then he used these words: "The republican party believes in the man and the dollar; but in case of conflict, it believes in the man before the dollar."

Jefferson never put the idea as strongly as that, and yet that was the very idea upon which his political philosophy was built, and that idea remains and every party that is democratic must, in case of conflict, put the man first and the dollar afterward. In a plutocracy the dollar is put first and the man afterward, if at all.

In a democracy, I repeat, we must avoid the plutocratic idea. But that is not the only danger that threatens a democracy. I can not give you a Greek word for it, but if you will let me make up a word, part American and part Greek,