

wage for women. It seeks to improve the conditions under which labor is performed;—to secure the use of safety appliances in factories and on the railroads as a safeguard to human life and limb; it seeks also to secure just compensation for those who sustain bodily injuries in the trades, distributing the cost of inevitable accidents among the consumers of the products of industry, rather than allowing it to fall most heavily on the wives and children of injured workmen who are least able to bear the burden. Is not all this the worthy task of Christianity? If so, how can the Christian neglect his government which is the most powerful agency in attaining these good ends?

The trouble all along has been that Christians do not think of politics as a means of service to their fellow men. Christianity has concerned itself with charity,—with looking after wrecks caused by the injuries sustained on account of the failure of government to perform its proper function. Christianity must now concern itself not only with rescuing the victims that fall along the way, but must also see to it that the government is so conducted as to reduce the number of victims to the minimum. We must work at the task at both ends. As someone has strikingly put it, "All through the ages Christianity has been plucking brands from the burning. She must now turn the hose on the fire."

PERFORMANCE OF DUTIES OF CITIZENSHIP ESSENTIAL TO WELL ROUNDED CHRISTIAN CHARACTER

Thus I have shown what an all important factor the government is in obtaining those results in which every Christian must be interested if he be true to the teachings of his religion. In short, the purposes of Christianity and the purposes of good government are so much the same that the Christian can not render acceptable service to his God if he neglects his government.

All these good ends to be accomplished through our government, and yet we think of politics as a "dirty business," and we actually find men seeking to give evidence of their piety by claiming to have nothing to do with politics. I venture the assertion that there is no such thing as a well rounded Christian character which leaves out of the account the sacred duties of citizenship. Politics, you say, is a "dirty business" and this is your excuse for taking no part in public affairs, but Mr. Good Citizen, did you ever stop to think that politics is dirty because you fail to make it clean. The fact that politics is dirty so far from excusing you from participation therein, is an all controlling reason why you should go in and help to clean things up. You do not excuse yourself from house-cleaning because your house is dirty. No,—you clean it because it is dirty. But you say, what is the use in trying to clean politics,—just as soon as the cleaning process is completed some corrupt politician befools it again. True, but do you refrain from washing your hands today because they will get dirty tomorrow? No, my friend, such an excuse can not absolve you from the sacred duty of citizenship and there is little difference in the degree of guilt between him who helps to make politics dirty and him who fails to help make politics clean.

What we need is a political "house-cleaning" and the coming of women into politics with their well-known antipathy for dirt,—moral and material,—justifies the hope that from now on, "clean up" days will be more frequent and thorough.

You ask how you can help to purify politics? My answer unhesitatingly is,—by electing good men to office. Surely we can never have clean politics unless politics is administered by clean men, and how can we get and keep clean men in office unless we take the trouble to inform ourselves as to the record of the candidates?

RIGHT TO VOTE NOT A PERSONAL PRIVILEGE BUT A PUBLIC DUTY

The trouble with us is that we think of our politics as a personal scramble for office; as a mere test of the popularity of the candidates or the strength of the organizations behind them. We pick our candidates just as a sportsman picks his winner in a horse race and when we go to the polls we seldom think of the sacredness of the duty we are performing. We do not think of our votes as instruments of service to our fellow man. Cleveland said "A public office is a public trust." We must go farther and say that our vote is a public trust, not to be used for personal and private ends but to be exercised in the fear of God and for the public good. Public office is not a private snap, nor is the right to vote a personal privilege but a sacred obligation to be used for the benefit of our fellow man. If we have such a conception of the right of franchise we will not likely prom-

ise our votes and support to a candidate simply because he is, in common parlance, a "good fellow" or simply because he belongs to this faction or that.

THREE THINGS TO BE DEMANDED OF CANDIDATES

There are three things that we must demand of our candidates for public office: They must have a definite program for the public good. They must have character and ability. They must have courage.

A DEFINITE PROGRAM FOR THE PUBLIC GOOD

We must demand of our candidates that they have some higher ambition than the mere holding of office. We must demand to know what they propose to do after they get into office. Those who have to do with fixing the policies of the government, should be required to formulate and announce their platforms, to the voters. The business of the government is the people's business and they have a right to know the principles and purposes of those who ask for leadership. When they say to you, "follow me," you have a right to ask "Where are you going?" When I was a boy the windows of my home looked out over the grounds of that famous old church where Patrick Henry kindled the fires of the Revolution and delivered his famous speech "Give me liberty, or give me death." In those grounds are many ancient tombstones bearing quaint inscriptions. One is said to have been written by the deceased during his life time and ordered by him to be carved on his tomb. It reads:

"Stop my friends as you pass by,
As you are now, so once was I—
As I am now, you soon will be;
Prepare yourself to follow me."

An Irish plumber passing that way one day, put down his kit and began to study those curious lines and then taking out a piece of charcoal, he wrote on the marble under the inscription—

"To follow you I am not content
Until I know which way you went."

I commend to you, Mr. Voter, the wisdom of this cautious Irishman.

CHARACTER AND ABILITY

Our candidates must be men of character and ability to perform the duties of the office to which they aspire. If we are contemplating the employment of a man in our business, we inquire into his fitness. We ask, Is he sober? Is he competent? Is he honest? Does he pay his debts? But when the public is about to hire a man, by electing him to office, any reference to his shortcomings is strangely considered mud slinging and usually redounds to his benefit. Slander should always be condemned. But the man or the newspaper which publishes facts as to the fitness of candidates for office ought to be considered a public benefactor. We should draw a distinction between campaign slander and a fair discussion of the character and record of the candidates.

There seems to be a strange and widespread confusion in the public mind on this question. The public seems to resent any exposure of the weakness of candidates, when as a matter of fact the only issue in many contests is the ability and character of the candidates. Let us remember too that a man who can not be trusted in private life, can not be trusted in public life.

COURAGE IN PUBLIC LIFE

We should demand of our public men that they have courage. Our political situation is full of problems of the greatest importance with which our public men fear to grapple because of the antagonisms which they might thus create. But we have a right to demand of all whom we entrust with leadership and all who ask us thus to honor them, that they aid in the solution of every important question related to the office they hold or to which they aspire. For them to fail to take a stand when such questions are at issue, is a display of cowardice which the people should not tolerate. The battles of peace can not be won under cowardly leadership; any more than wars can be won under cowardly military officers. The public man whose chief concern is getting elected, is as useless to his country as the soldier whose chief concern is his own personal safety. Beware then of the public man who is afraid to advocate measures concerning which there is difference of opinion! The wrong in government will never be righted by such men. On the other hand their presence in politics can but retard all processes of improvement. And yet let it be sadly admitted that the attitude of the average voter encourages such timidity. The average voter seems to delight in voting for a "good fel-

low" who never offends anybody by disagreeing with them, but believe me, no wrong is ever righted without giving offense to somebody and the number of people offended is often in proportion to the magnitude of the wrong to be corrected. I have sometimes heard good men justify politicians in their evasive policies. They say we can not blame candidates for getting all the votes they can. But if I am unwilling to get dollars by deception, how can I justify getting votes by the same method. And if it is wrong to get rich by fraud and concealment, how can getting office by the same method be justified.

"INCREASE MY COURAGE, LORD"

Some time ago I was seated at a banquet next to that famous old statesman, "Uncle Joe" Cannon, who has been in congress "whereof the memory of man runneth not to the contrary." Responding to a call for a speech the old man rose and in the most impressive way began to deplore the timidity of his colleagues in congress. He pictured them as sneaking into the cloak rooms and corridors when a vote was about to be taken on a question concerning which their constituents were divided. He then raised his long and bony arms and with great feeling and emphasis said: "If I had my way I would abolish the office of chaplain of congress and instead of having an opening prayer, I would require all the congressmen to join their hands and sing together the good old gospel hymn 'Increase my courage, Lord.'"

One of the greatest tasks of the day is to encourage the disposition on the part of the people to appreciate and honor those public men, who fight for principle, and to despise those who dodge great issues just as they would despise a man who flees when his country calls to arms. We have often heard it said that peace hath its victories no less renowned than war; that the country's greatest good has been accomplished by the efforts of noble men and women in times of peace. And yet while we make heroes of men who face death in time of battle, we have little to say in praise of those heroes of peace who sacrifice their personal interests in the advocacy of measures they believe to be conducive to the public good. On the other hand, we find ourselves honoring men who hold their public positions by reason of their failure to take a decided stand on public questions and the man who is really willing to fight for the public good is usually considered a stubborn disturber of the party's peace and unavailable for all party honors.

SPOILSMEN WHO LIVE ON THE PLUNDER OF PATRONAGE

We look with toleration and often with admiration upon the slickness of the politician who cleverly avoids every issue; who never leads public sentiment but who always follows; who has no convictions, who entertains no worthy aspiration; but whose only desire is to remain in power for selfish purposes. Such men invariably change as their personal interests dictate,—they do not belong to those brave spirits who fight and win the battles of right. They are mere camp followers who live on the spoils of war. They fill their greedy hands with the plunder of patronage, a by-product of the hard fought battles of peace in which brave men risk and often lose their political lives.

The attitude of most of our candidates for office is very much the same as that of the applicant for the position of school teacher when she was asked the shape of the earth. She answered, "Some say its flat; some say it's round. Give me the job and I'll teach it any way the school board wants me to."

"Winding in and winding out
Leaving the matter still in doubt
Whether the snake that made the track
Was going in or coming back."

We smile at this and yet if you will study your election returns you will find that it correctly describes the type of politician most popular with the voters.

THE BLAME PLACED

And whose fault is it?
It is the fault of the so-called good citizen. For the experienced politician knows that only about once in a decade do the people have spasms of political activity, while special interests with which he is secretly allied, are working day and night, while you and I are sleeping. I would not excuse a candidate for his unholy alliances but those are not innocent who by indifference make such an alliance profitable, thus putting temptation in their brother's way.

In the days of dueling men were required by public sentiment to settle their disputes on the so-called field of honor. John Hampden Pleasants, a Virginia editor was one of the great