

Address Delivered By

Chief Justice Eugene B. Gary, U. L. A.

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The Civilization of America

We shall discuss this subject under two heads, as follows:

First: The principles of civilization applicable to our democratic form of Government, and

Second: The dangers that threaten to destroy the very foundation of our Government.

FIRST HEAD

Civilization is composed of two elements—one being material in its nature, and the other moral or spiritual. The material element which consists of progress in the arts, sciences, literature, and in all fields of endeavor except those pertaining to the moral or spiritual element, need not be discussed as there is no criticism in that direction. Our discussion, therefore, under the first head, will be confined to the moral element. Both elements are essential to civilization, but the moral is far more important than the material element.

If one deduction from the past is clearer than another, it is that force as the corner stone of civilization is a snare and delusion. All history declares in terrible accents that the nation which relies upon military power alone, must perish. Every kingdom of antiquity has taught that lesson. The brilliant victories and splendid armies of Napoleon could not protect him from being an impotent spectator of the dissolution of the empire, he had spilled so much blood to found. However needed moderate military power may be, in the present stage of human imperfections, it cannot be more than subsidiary to a higher national aim, in order not to be a destructive poison to the nation which wields it. "All that take the sword shall perish by the sword" remains in its unalterable truthfulness a solemn warning, that civilization scorns to rest with any nation, whose ideal is fashioned by the god of War.

It is one of the truisms of history that the accumulation of great riches ordinarily is the beginning of a fatal decline among nations. The gathering of riches invites luxury and idleness. Dissipation and corruption inevitably follow. The finer sensibilities are deadened. Selfishness casts out brotherly love. Vice overcomes virtue. Virility is displaced by weakness. Vast as are the possibilities for good in the wise use of money, it cannot be more than handmaid in the economy of an enduring civilization. Music, art and literature, while they flourish under the protection of favoring conditions, do not constitute civilization. They embellish its glory, but do not contain the seeds of its maintenance.

Universal education has been hailed as the solvent for the evils of society. More thorough intellectual training and wider learning have

been championed, as the sure basis of a permanent civilization. But whatever other consequences may flow from the world war, it has proved beyond a doubt the fallacy of the notion, that education is the main pillar of civilization. In mere education Germany surpassed all other countries. Her proportion of illiterates was by far smaller than that of any other nation. Her percentage of highly trained intellects was larger than that of any other. Yet she began without excuse the greatest war of history, with jocular scorn of the opinion of mankind, and in defiance of the moral element of civilization. Never again can it be rightly urged that mere education is a worthy end. It but enhances the capacity for evil. Intellect alone, however highly trained, is not civilization.

We recall a conversation with Bishop Capers, who was a trustee of a negro college at Orangeburg, South Carolina. He stated that after serving for years with other trustees from the North who were interested in the welfare of the college, they reached the conclusion that mere education without moral training, does not tend to make desirable citizens; that it increases their capacity for crime without inculcating the proper influences that would prevent its commission.

The glory of Grecian civilization fell into decay because the cancer of immorality gnawed away its vitals. Spain declined because of the moral miasmas which infected her ruling classes. The shocking debaucheries of the times of Louis XIV stain the triumphs of his reign, and invited the excesses of the French revolution. The great and cardinal virtues of truth and justice are needs as imperative for nations as for individuals. In their strength **men** go forward to the highest achievements. In their decline **nations** forfeit the opportunity to advance civilization.

Morality and the spirit of an enlightened religion, are essential factors in the evolution of civilization. It has been the fashion of clever writers to deride one or another of the ten commandments, and to treat religion as a mere superstition of the past. But Christianity is not so easily destroyed. It is not an outworn fetich. Scarcely anyone would venture to question the wisdom and efficiency of General Joffre. It recently has been asserted of him, with every appearance of truth, that his moral energy is on a par with his military ability, and that his technical superiority is associated with a moral power, without which mere generalship would not succeed; and; in fact, hardly ever exists. Morality and religion are trite and insipid only in the eyes of scoffers. They are not only the saving grace for the **individual**; they are of the deepest practical consequence in the affairs of **nations**. A lack of morality in international relations has been a handicap to every nation against whom the charge could justly be laid.

It is a startling fact that, while in every other department of human activity there have been enormous changes, there has been almost none in the statement of moral systems, or of the vital principles of religion. The ten commandments were phrased in their present form more than three

thousand years ago. The great truths of Christianity have been declared and known to mankind, these two thousand years, but not one jot or tittle has been added to their force in all these years. The capacity of man for intellectual progress seems greater than for moral progress. The hard lesson has not yet been fully learned that the consequences of individual or collective wrongdoing, cannot be avoided. Weakening of the moral fibre follows inevitably from infraction of the moral law. No dogma of religious belief, can wipe out that stubborn fact. Civilization is dependent upon a moral environment. That is its vital principle. Its material resources are but a means towards the improvement of that environment.

The renunciation by this nation of all selfish desires in the world war, has been of deepest signification in the evolution of mankind. The words that "right makes might" voiced by Lincoln, was a signal contribution to the statecraft of civilization. Early in the present century one of our ablest cabinet officers declared that the foreign policy of the United States might be summed up in the Golden Rule and the Monroe doctrine. The statements of the war aims of this country since the world war have been illustrations of the golden rule policy announced by him. That rule has been the dream of prophets, philosophers and poets. For more than two thousand years among diverse races, it has been preached as the guide for individual conduct. Teachers of morals and of religion have sought to impress it upon each succeeding generation for **personal** action, but never before has it been adopted as the avowed policy of a **powerful nation**.

One of the most remarkable illustrations of the consequences arising from the refusal to follow the Golden Rule, is the League of Nations, which was organized principally to prevent future wars. Of all the representatives of the large nations, President Wilson alone, advocated that Rule in adjusting the rights and powers of all the nations, including the small ones. The fact that the other representatives of the large nations, refused to co-operate with him in following the Golden Rule, caused the failure of the League to accomplish the good results which were anticipated.

Although President Wilson's advocacy of the principle announced in the Golden Rule was not adopted, he touched a responsive chord in the hearts of the people, throughout the different countries. and today he is regarded as the greatest man in the world.

In assigning the cause of the downfall of Rome's civilization it has been truly said:

"A constitutional government the most enduring and the most powerful that ever existed, was put on its trial and found wanting. We see it in its growth; we see the cause which undermined its strength. We see attempts to check the growing mischief fail, and we see why they fail.

It was an age of material progress and material civilization, an age of civil liberty and intellectual culture. The rich were extravagant, for

life had ceased to have any practical interest, except for its material pleasures. Religion once the foundation of laws and rule of personal conduct, had subsided into opinion. The educated in their hearts disbelieved it. Temples were still built with increasing splendor; the established forms were scrupulously observed. Public men spoke conventionally of Providence, that they might throw on their opponents the odium of impicity; but of genuine belief that life had any serious meaning, there was none remaining beyond the circle of the silent, patient, ignorant multitude.

The difficulty of conduct does not lie in knowing what is right to do, but doing it when known. Intellectual culture does not touch the conscience. It provides no motives to overcome the weakness of the will, and with wider knowledge it also brings new temptations.

With all his wealth there were but two things the Roman noble could buy—political power and luxury. The elections once pure, became matters of annual bargains between himself and his supporters. The Romans ceased to believe and in losing their faith, they became as steel becomes when it is demagnetized; the spiritual quality was gone out of them, and the high society of Rome itself became a society of powerful animals, with an enormous appetite for pleasure.”

We proceed to the discussion of the dangers that threaten the very foundations of our Government. De Tocqueville in his book entitled, “Democracy in America” uses these words:

“I hold it to be an impious and an execrable maxim politically speaking that a people has the right to do whatever it pleases; and yet I have asserted that all authority originates in the will of the majority. Am I, then, in contradiction with myself? A general law—which bears the name of Justice—has been made and sanctioned not only by the majority of this or that people, but by a majority of mankind. The rights of every people are consequently confined within the limits of what is just. A majority taken collectively may be regarded as a being whose opinions, and most frequently whose interests are opposed to those of another being, which is styled a minority. If it be admitted that a man, possessing absolute power, may misuse that power by wronging his adversaries, why should a majority not be liable to the same reproach?”

The rights of the people to which he refers are thus declared in the Declaration of Independence:

“We hold these truths to be self-evident; that all men are created equal; that they are endowed by their Creator with certain inalienable rights; that among these are life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness; that to secure these rights, governments are instituted among men, deriving their just powers from the consent of the governed.” And the Federal and State constitutions, in order to protect those rights, provide that “no person shall be deprived of life, liberty or property without due process of law.”

Hugh S. Legare, one of our greatest scholars and jurists, thus speaks of the sacred nature of these rights: "Our written constitutions do nothing but consecrate and fortify the plain rules of ancient liberty, handed down with Magna Charta from the earliest history of our race. Before the colonies existed, the Petition of Rights, the Magna Charta of a more enlightened age, had been presented in 1628 by Lord Coke, and his immortal compeers. Our founders brought it with them, and we have not gone one step beyond them. They brought these maxims of civil liberty, not in their libraries, but in their souls; not as philosophical prattle, not as barren generalities, but as rules of conduct; as a symbol of public duty and private right, to be adhered to, with religious fidelity. And the very first Pilgrim that set foot upon the rock of Plymouth, stepped from a living constitution, armed at all points to defend and perpetuate the liberty, to which he had devoted his whole being."

The word "majority" was used by De Tocqueville in the sense of "ruling class," in predicting the dangers that would threaten the destruction of our Government.

We further quote from him as follows:

"In my opinion the main evil of the present democratic institutions of the United States does not arise, as is often asserted in Europe, from weakness, but from their overpowering strength; and I am not so much alarmed at the excessive liberty which reigns in that country, as at the very inadequate securities which exist against tyranny."

"When an individual or a party is wronged in the United States, to whom can he apply for redress? If to public opinion, public opinion constitutes the majority; if to the legislature, it represents the majority, and implicitly obeys its injunctions; if to the executive power, it is appointed by the majority and remains a passive tool in its hands."

"I do not say that tyrannical abuses frequently occur in America, at the present day; but I maintain that no sure barrier is established against them, and that the causes which mitigate the government, are to be found in the circumstances and the manners of the country, more than its laws."

"In the United States the unbounded power of the majority which is favorable to the legal despotism of the legislature, is likewise favorable to the arbitrary authority of others in authority. The majority has an entire control over the law when it is made, and when it is executed; and as it possesses an equal authority over those who are in power, it considers public officers as its passive agents, and readily confides the task of leaving its designs to their vigilance. The details of their office and the privileges which they are to enjoy, are rarely defined beforehand; but the majority treats them, as a master does his servants, when they are always at work in his sight, and he has the power of directing or reprimanding them at every instant."

"In general the American functionaries are far more independent

than the French civil officers, within the sphere which is prescribed to them. Sometimes, even, they are allowed by the popular authority to exceed those bounds; and, as they are protected by the opinion, and backed by the co-operation of the majority, they venture upon such manifestations of their power as astonish a European. By this means habits are formed in the heart of a free country, which may some day prove fatal to its liberties."

"It is important not to confound stability with force, or the greatness of a thing with its duration. In democratic republics, the power which directs society is not stable; for it often changes hands and assumes a new direction. But whichever way it turns, its force is almost irresistible. The Governments of the American republics appear to me to be as much centralized, as those of the absolute monarchies of Europe, and more energetic than they are. I do not, therefore, imagine that they will perish from weakness.

If ever the free institutions of America are destroyed that event may be attributed to the unlimited authority of the majority, which may at some future time urge the minorities to desperation, and oblige them to have recourse to physical force.

Anarchy will then be the result, but it will have been brought about by despotism."

"In the United States the majority which so frequently displays the tastes and the propensities of a despot, is still destitute of the more perfect instruments of tyranny.

"In the American republics the activity of the central government has never, as yet, been extended beyond a limited number of objects, sufficiently prominent to call forth its attention. The secondary affairs of society have never been regulated by its authority; and nothing has hitherto betrayed its desire of interfering in them. The majority is become more and more absolute, but it has not increased the prerogatives of the central government.

"Nor does the people entertain that full consciousness of its authority, which would prompt it to interfere in these matters; it knows the extent of its natural powers, but it is unacquainted with the increased resources which the art of government might furnish.

"This point deserves attention; for if a democratic republic, similar to that of the United States, were ever founded in a country where the power of a single individual had previously subsisted, and the effects of a centralized administration had sunk deep into the habits and the laws of the people, I do not hesitate to assert, that in that country a more insufferable despotism would prevail, than any which now exists in the absolute monarchies of Europe; or, indeed, than any which could be found on this side the confines of Asia."

Hamilton expresses the same opinion in the *Federalist*. He says:

"It is of great importance in a republic, not only to guard the society against the oppression of its rulers, but to guard one part of the so-

ciety against the injustice of the other part. Justice is the end of government. It is the end of civil society. It ever has been, and ever will be pursued, until it be obtained, or until liberty be lost in the pursuit. In a society, under the forms of which the stronger faction, can readily unite and oppress the weaker, anarchy may as truly be said to reign as in a state of nature, where the weaker individual is not secured against the violence of the stronger."

Jefferson has also thus expressed himself in a letter to Madison:

"The executive power in our Government is not the only, perhaps not even the principal object of my solicitude. The tyranny of the legislature is really the danger most to be feared, and will continue to be so, for many years to come. The tyranny of executive power will come in its turn, but at a more distant period."

A fine illustration that the predictions as to our dangers have, to a great extent, been fulfilled will be seen by the following words of Ex-President Woodrow Wilson:

"One of the powers we fear, is the control of our life, through the vast privileges of corporations, which use the wealth of masses of men to sustain their enterprise. It is in connection with this danger, that it is necessary to do some of our clearest and frankest thinking. It is a fundamental mistake to speak of the privileges of these great corporations, as if they fell within the class of private property. Those who administer the affairs of great joint-stock companies, are really administering the property of communities, the property of the whole mass of men, who have bought the stocks or the bonds that sustain the enterprise. The stocks and the bonds are constantly changing hands. There is no fixed partnership. Moreover, managers of such corporations are the trustees of the moneys, which they themselves never accumulated, but which have been drawn together out of private savings here, there and everywhere.

"What is necessary in order to rectify the whole mass of business of this kind, is that those who control it, should entirely change their point of view. They are trustees, not masters, of private property, not only because their power is derived from a multitude of men, but also because in its investments, it affects a multitude of men. It determines the development or decay of communities. It is the means of lifting or depressing the life of the whole country.

"They must regard themselves as representatives of a public mind. There can be no reasonable jealousy of public regulation in such matters because, the opportunities of all men are affected. Their property is everywhere touched, their savings are everywhere absorbed, their employment is everywhere determined by these great agencies. What we need therefore, is to come to a common view which will not bring antagonism, but accommodations, programmes of enlightenment and readjustment, not revolutionary but restorative. The processes of change are largely processes of thought, but unhappily they cannot be effected without be-

coming political processes also, and that is the deep responsibility of public men. What we need, therefore, in our politics, is an instant alignment of all men free and willing to think and to act without fear upon their thought.

"Constitutional limitations are adopted as much for the protection of the rights of the minority, as of the majority, and likewise to protect the people against their own action, until they have had time to give due deliberation to any suggested changes, in the organic law.

"Men sometimes talk as if it were wealth of which we were afraid, as if we were jealous of the accumulation of great fortunes. But such is not the case. The people have not the slightest jealousy of the legitimate accumulation of wealth. Everybody knows that there are many men of large means and large economic power, who have gained it not only by legitimate methods, but in a way that deserves the thanks and admiration of the communities they have served and developed. But everybody knows, also, that some of the men who control the wealth, and have built up the industry of the country, seek to control politics, and also to dominate the life of common men, in a way in which no man should be permitted to dominate."

At an annual meeting of the American Bar Association, Senator Wm. E. Borah (whose name is being prominently mentioned in connection with the Presidency of the United States) made an address in which he thus spoke of the duties of the lawyers when they enter the halls of legislation as members:

"The American lawyer looks out upon a field crowded with problems equal in moment and fully as difficult as those with which Selden and Marshall dealt. He ought to find time, if possible, to share in the pleasure and exhilaration as well as the glory of working, not now and then but daily in this vineyard.

"But while this seems to be the plain duty of the lawyer not in office, what are the equally plain and more obvious duties of a lawyer, who has entered the halls of legislation as a sworn officer, and with the public alone for his client?

"I do not believe that a lawyer has any more right as a matter of correct public service to hold a retainer, while writing a law in the public interest, and that a law which may affect his client adversely, than has a judge to hold retainers from which those whose interests may be affected by the decision which he renders or the judgment which he signs. Is it not as important to the public, that laws be framed free of the influence, conscious or unconscious of private interests, as that they be administered free of such influence? Custom has inured us to a difference code of ethics, but this custom has brought in its wake many inapt, inefficient statutes, timid and ineffective in their terms, shielding special interests and protecting private advantages, and altogether inefficient for the service and protection of the public interest.

"A member of Congress is in an indefensible position, who is called upon to legislate concerning those matters in which his clients may have an interest, and which may concern them vitally.

"I venture to prophesy that the people will in due time, insist that their representatives in Congress shall stand free from the relationship of client and attorney, with reference to all those matters upon which they are called to legislate, as now characterizes the great tribunal, which passes finally upon the constitutionality of the laws which we make."

One of the reasons generally assigned for the breakdown in the health of our Presidents, is because they are overworked on account of the additional duty imposed upon them by their political party, of assuming political leadership while holding the office of President. The two offices are entirely inconsistent, and the remarks of Senator Borah are as applicable to the Chief Executive of our Government, as to the members of Congress, mentioned by him.

In addition to the ruling class mentioned by Ex-President Wilson, there is another class composed of the labor organizations, which is very numerous and powerful. It does not undertake to accomplish its purposes so much by legislation, as by "strikes" and refusal to work. This however, is not all it does, when there is a refusal on the part of the ruling class, to comply with its demands. Labor frequently resorts to violence, which partakes of the nature of an incipient revolution, resulting at times in the loss of lives and the destruction of property. These are dangers that threaten the existence of our civilization and the very foundations of our Government. In the introduction in his book, De Tocqueville says:

"Amongst the novel objects that attracted my attention, during my stay in the United States,, nothing struck me more forcibly than the general equality of conditions. The more I advanced in the study of American society, the more I perceived that the equality of conditions is the fundamental fact, from which all others seem to be derived; and the central point at which all my observations constantly terminated."

In these few words he clearly states the reason, why the ruling class of combined capital and the labor organizations are a menace to our civilization and to our Government, to wit: **They destroy the equality of conditions in our country. The danger increases in proportion to the inequality of conditions which they bring about.** From what has already been said, it clearly appears that the perpetuation of our Government, is dependent upon the development of the moral element of civilization.

The next question that logically arises is: How can this moral element be developed? Our answer is, by the active participation of woman in public affairs. Woman by nature is more gentle than man; and is more inclined to follow the moral teachings of Christianity. Furthermore, she is on general principles, more opposed to war, and dreads its consequences more than man, because the home means more to her than it does

to him. In the mad rush of man to develop the material element, he overlooks the moral, which is far more important.

When woman fully realizes that the way to prevent wars, is, by the teachings of morality, she will organize throughout the world, and will even create a league composed of delegates from the different nations, who will confine their discussion to moral questions.

The Nineteenth Amendment of the Federal Constitution provides:

"The right of citizens of the United States to vote shall not be denied or abridged by the United States or by any State on account of sex."

The training she will receive in dealing with moral questions, will be of immense benefit to her as a statesman, when she exercises her rights under the foregoing provision. She will then have the opportunity of making and of enforcing laws that will reflect her moral ideas.

A curious novel appeared in the literary world a few years ago, to which its author had given the peculiar name of "She."

It contains a weird description of English travellers landing upon the savage coast of Africa, where they found marks of a past civilization.

There was the ancient stone wharf imbedded in the mud, and there was, also, the long forgotten canal.

It tells how they struggled up the lonely river, and across the morass to the City of Kor, then in ruins.

Those of you who may have read the story will recall no doubt, the vivid picture of the deserted and crumbling Temple of Truth.

Within its inner court was a statue of the goddess, who once had innumerable worshippers.

On the pedestal there was a magnificent marble globe, upon which stood a sculptor's dream of female loveliness.

A veil was over her face, and her hands were extended in supplication. There it stood, divine amid the desolation, silvered in the moonlight which softened while it illuminated every outline; and thus it had stood for ages; Truth beseeching the world to lift her veil.

Permit us to say in conclusion, it is our prayer, that when the Judges, the lawyers, the jurors and witnesses, are called upon to administer the laws as a sacred trust in the beautiful Temple which you this day are dedicating they may never forget that Truth is ever beseeching the world to lift the veil from her eyes, in order that the sword of Justice may avenge all wrongs, and that only the right shall prevail.

