

Read before a men's club  
Episcopal Church at Cotonsville, Pa.  
May 18, 1909  
Our Ideal

When I was with you before, I made an assertion something like this, "It makes but little real difference to us as a people so far as the form of our government is concerned which of the two leading candidates is elected to the presidency; for so long as the American people are so jealous of their form of government as they now are, it will be safe in the hands of either of these men." This evening, I wish to talk to you about America and Americanism. Who are we, what have we done, and for what do we stand? Every nation upon the earth or that has ever been upon the earth has stood for some ideal. The Greek for the Beautiful, the Hebrew for Religion, the Roman for Law and the English for Individual Liberty.

The little stream beginning on a mountain top winds its way down the mountain side, is joined by other streams until it becomes the mighty river, bearing upon its bosom a world's freight of humanity; so with civilization. Beginning with the dawn of God's creation of man upon this earth, it has trickled down the ages, joined here by national ideal and there by national ideal until to-day we have the mighty stream of civilization bearing upon its bosom all the nations of the world. Each nation of the past has been a little rivulet of ideals emptying into the stream of advancing civilization and each has added something to the power of the stream. What has America contributed? For what do we stand? Before answering this question, let us glance at other nations for just an instant. The Greeks, Hebrews, Romans and English each represent a type of mankind, each was homogeneous and therefore thought alike. America, on the other hand, was from the beginning and now is the most heterogeneous people upon the earth. We are made up of practically every type of

mankind. We are a people peculiar to ourselves. The world has never before seen a nation composed as we are and yet we are as strongly a nation as any upon the earth. The ideal, therefore, that holds us together must be an ideal that appeals to mankind in general. What is it? That ideal is popular government. We stand for a form of government in which the governed have absolute say as to the form of administrative law, executive law and every other kind of law. We stand for Democracy or Republicanism.

~~But~~ the ideal that made us <sup>↓</sup> a nation has swept over the world in wave after wave of revolution until all forms of tyrannical government have passed from the face of civilization. The French Revolution in a succession of waves lasting to '76 was only the beating of this ideal upon the shores of the impetuous French. The same thing has taken place in Germany, Austria, Italy, Russia, Japan and Turkey.

~~In order~~ that this ideal may make itself felt, it <sup>is not</sup> will not be necessary for other governments to take on the form of government found in America. The distinction is of a finer nature than that. There is a distinction between Political Freedom and Individual Freedom. Political Freedom "is the power of the people themselves to determine what form of government shall be established and what shall be its power." Individual Freedom is that "security derived from the law whereby one is protected by the government from the violence of other individuals." In the United States, all male citizens over twenty-one years of age have political freedom, while all other citizens have <sup>only</sup> individual freedom. The ideal, therefore, that America has contributed to the stream of human civilization is political freedom. We are ~~therefore~~ the most individualistic people upon the earth, and as long as our present ideal dominates, we can never have a national or state religion ~~and the fear so often~~

~~expressed by protestant churches that Catholicism will control our state is absurd.~~ <sup>secure as a nation</sup> We are ~~safe~~ so long as the ideal that now rules lives and will be until this ideal dies and another takes its place as the central thought in our life. If this ever happens, and God forbid that it should, then we will follow the new ideal until it, in its turn, is emptied into the great stream of life. But if a new ideal ever comes, we will become a new nation and the America of to-day will be found in the archives of the world's past to be studied by the new nation just as you and I study the Rome of the Caesars. ✓

Turning now from the theoretical speculations of an uncertain future to the stern realities of to-day. What does this ideal demand of American citizenship? By it, we have thrown open the gates <sup>of</sup> our land to suffering humanity practically the world over and there is pouring into our midst a constant stream of mankind alien to our ideal, out of touch with us at almost every point of our national life. The great problem for us, therefore, is to keep the rising generations in touch with our ideal and to convert our immigrant population to our way of thinking. This is the most stupendous task ever yet undertaken by a nation. Here and here alone do we find justification for the expenditure of public funds for public education. Indeed, our first duty is to make true, as well as to make good American citizens. An ideal like ours calls for the highest type of <sup>mankind</sup> ~~mankind~~. If the body politic is to be the final judge in all matters, state and national, then that body must be of a high order of ~~mankind~~. In other words, we have emptied into the stream of civilization an ideal that, to live, will impel a rapid advance of civilization. This ideal will live and mankind will therefore make more rapid strides in civilization than has ever before been known.

~~Copy 2~~ Our ideal has swept ~~it~~

*But if we would keep the fire burning we must foster public education*  
But public education must be fostered. The time ~~will~~ *will* soon come when ~~the~~ *in our* children this land ~~or~~ *will* be ~~made~~ *forced* to attend school and it would be better still were they ~~made~~ *by law* to attend the public schools. Public school teachers must be paid better salaries and the requirements for the practice of the profession of teaching must be ~~made~~ so rigid that only the efficient will be licensed.

Resting as this government does ~~of~~ *of* upon the heads of an intelligent citizenship, its safety and security depend upon the standard of living of the average citizen. If factional jealousy or sectional spirit ever dominates national loyalty, then we are confronted with a most serious danger. But ~~so~~ *so* long as our ideal is held close to the hearts of the people, we may rest assured that our ship of state will sail on and that our nation will remain both strong and great.

But while I have an unshaken and an undying faith in the spirit American with an almost unlimited confidence in the people of our land, I fully realize that to keep our ideal as an active factor in our national life, it must be constantly renewed in the life of rising generations, and new immigrants must be constantly and properly infected by means of public education either ~~by~~ *in the* public schools or by contagion from those with whom they associate. This ideal must permeate all Americans ~~and~~ *and* the best way is ~~undoubtedly~~ thru our public schools.

Public schools, therefore, should be filled with public spirit and free from partisan politics. It is, as I see it, the duty of every loyal American to give of his time and substance to the betterment of our school systems. It is the duty of each community to make its public school the centre of its local patriotic life. Just as the temple was the centre of life for the Hebrew and the forum the centre of Roman life, so the public school must be the centre of American life. And it is.

Here in our public schools, the parents should meet together on an equal footing and thus the community becomes more thoroughly democratized. The present tendency <sup>in some localities</sup> to make of our schools only ~~the~~ place for the dispensing of information to the young is wrong. Each school should be a centre for the life of a given community. Employer and employe should meet here on equal terms; for here we have a common interest.

To-day, American life is trying to organize itself. Clubs and organizations are almost innumerable. Every community is literally teeming with organizations, such as book clubs, sewing circles (another name for gossiping societies) purely social organizations of a part only of the community, whist clubs, political clubs, church clubs, labor organizations, combinations of capital and on thru a variety of organizations that if enumerated would lead one to think that we are as a people one series of organizations. What does this all mean? Only an attempt upon the part of Americans to centre their life around some norm. The salvation of our ideal depends upon the centering of our life in the temple of our national greatness - our public schools.

When the people of our land awake to a full realization of what our schools mean to us as a people, then the profession of teaching will no longer be looked upon as simply a means of livelihood, but as the guardian of American life and the shaper of American destiny. In this profession, should be drawn the purest, the noblest and the best of American talent. It is to be deplored greatly that the present day tendency is to drive young men of real worth from this field of national activity. It stands in our land second to no profession.

*There are men in our nation who realize*  
~~I have given you this evening from the depths of my heart the~~  
*these facts and realizing them have given their lives*  
~~why reasons some men are public school teachers. I have no apologies to make~~  
*to the work*

to any man for the choice I have made in the selection of a life work. I am proud of the fact that I am a public school man for here I can serve my state, my nation, and my generation in the best way. In what I have said, you see the spirit that pervades ~~our~~ <sup>this Maryland</sup> ~~clan~~ the nation's public servants and the direct contributors to the world's advancing civilization. D

~~If my thesis is true and I am sure it is, then our state, "Maryland, my Maryland" needs greatly a great state college to be at the head of our system of public education. This is necessary for the completion of our organization of public schools. I know of no other state in which so much public funds are spent for the maintenance of private or non-state institutions. If the salvation of our national ideal, the source of our national greatness and our justification for an honorable place in the list of the world's great nations, depends upon the maintenance of our public schools, the temple of our national ideal, then, we, as a people, need to complete our organization of public schools by building a great college or state university as a fitting cap to our present well organized system of education.~~ The safety of our state government and the security of our homes depend upon ~~an~~ <sup>the</sup> intelligent <sup>character of our</sup> citizenship. Intelligence is the world's most bitter enemy to crime and our nation's most secure safeguard. Our individual security and national greatness depend largely upon the average intelligence of our citizenship. Never before has so much depended upon the average intelligence. May we as a nation awake early to our great opportunity and to our national need. We are awake, for all over this land school houses are springing up as if by magic, and our people are filling themselves full of our national ideal and they are spreading it to the four corners of the earth. Before it, ignorance and superstition are disappearing and this old world is getting closer and closer together. The hunter in Africa is in touch with his American home and we read in

Copy p 2 to his nephew

the morning paper of Kermit's Night on Horseback. Never before was it so true that "Day unto day uttereth speech, and night unto night sheweth knowledge" and that "There is no speech nor language, where their voice is not heard", ~~the David did not mean this.~~ We have cast into the stream of human civilization a current that will help to shape the destiny of the world and that now is lifting mankind to a higher plane of life and a more complete realization of God's plan for the universal brotherhood of mankind. For "If I am destined your lordling's slave, by nature's law designed: why was an independent wish e'er planted in my mind?" This independent wish has here found its full realization and mankind is becoming nobler and better.

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