

ETHICS
OF
POLITICAL
PARTIES.

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"Any section of men who nominate Candidates of their own for presidency and vice-presidency of the United States, constitutes what is known as a political party." There have been many political parties since the first was organized. There has been a constant struggle between them for supremacy. Part of the time one is in the lead, and the rest of the time is occupied by others.

There has always been at least two great political parties in this country, and this fact perhaps accounts for the continuous rapid growth of this nation as compared with some others. History shows that the secret of the many political revolutions in France and the Spanish-American republics, have been caused by the want of two great political parties to check each other and champion the rights of the people. Whenever republics have fallen, the fall has been the result of struggle between minority parties.

Without political parties, this nation would be helpless in the choice of a president who would command the respect of the nation, and could have no legislation that would satisfy the wants of the people; but while

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these parties seem essential to progress, and we, as well as others, have progressed by them, do we conclude from this that while our people as a result of progressive evolution, have risen from the lower depths of ignorance to a higher, and still higher standard of knowledge and morality, until they have reached the present high standard, that while all other things must either progress or die, our political parties have been perfect from the beginning, and do not need to be changed to suit the times and requirements of the people?

We are told that the end of growth is the beginning of death. If this be true, then the party that is not willing to open its mind to the truth, profit by others' experiences, take up with the new requirements that naturally came along with new conditions in life, and grow with the growth of other departments in life, will, instead, tightly grasp the worn-out reins of government in one hand, and with the other, slowly dig a grave in which to hide her withered form.

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"A party does not always thus die. It may hold together long after its moral life is extinct. Guelphs and Schibellines warred in Italy for nearly two centuries after the Emperor had ceased to threaten the Pope, as the Pope to befriend the cities of Lombardy. Parties go on contending because their members have formed habits of joint-action, and have contracted habits and prejudices, and also because the leaders find this advantage in using these habits and playing on these prejudices. The American parties now continue to exist, because they have existed."

While political parties have seemed to be essential to the growth and development of the nation, are not their evil effects an object-worthy of our consideration? Most parties have within their bounds, some representatives who work for selfish ends. Their whole ambition seems to be to control elections so that their party will come into power, and they will be rewarded for their efforts by being given an office where they can enjoy life by doing almost nothing, except draw their salaries, draw smoke from the end of "the weed," as beer

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from the keg.

Is such office holding sanctioned by the average American of today? Not so! The young American of today is being taught that it is not enough to "live and let live," but that he must "live and help others to live"! To do this, the educated man, when he gets into office, will not only strive to fill his office in a way that will be an honor to himself, but will also put his body, mind, and soul to work in the interests of the people.

Another evil that comes as a result of political party competition, and is of more importance than it is generally thought to be, is the spirit of social persecution that is manifest among the more ignorant class of people.

In the times of the French Revolution, the people were persecuted for their religious beliefs. In those times, it was considered a small thing to cut-off the heads of those who disagreed with the parties in power. In this day and age, our political parties look back on those bloody days, shudder at the thoughts of such horrible deeds,

Thank the Lord that they are not like other men have been, then win an election, step into the power and control of the affairs of state, and with all the power they can command, proceed to cut-off the social and political heads of as many of their opponents as they can reach, not with the sword or chopping block, but by means of oratory and the printing press.

Is this spirit not a relic of barbarism, that we as students should earnestly work to eradicate? Are we "living and helping others to live" when the greater part of our energy is being spent in showing a social coolness to those who differ with us, or in mentally slashing to the right and left into the ranks of our opponents, without considering that while they are perhaps in the minority, they have as much right to their opinion and to a place in this universe as those who are more powerful in the line of government?

When we think how much the happiness of mankind depends on the individual actions of neighbors toward

neighbor, we should be stimulated to learn to respect the opinions, not only of those who essentially agree with us, but of those whose opinions are radically different from ours. We have no more moral right to send an individual, family, or party, into social ostracism because of their individual, family, or political beliefs, than the leaders of the French Revolution had to slaughter their opponents, who differed with them in religious belief, or the Turks have for killing those who are honest and truthful.

After noting the evils and dark side of political party rivalry, are we to conclude that the world is gradually growing worse and worse, and that the evil in men is gaining control of them to such an extent that in the near future the struggle between the different classes of people will become so great that only those will be able to live who are fortunate enough to belong to the predominating class? Not so:

We are told that there can be no evil without the presence of good. It is the new, better ideas of political action as

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reform measures that have made the old ideas seem bad. The political party that is allowed to continue to control the affairs of the nation from year to year without being interrupted or interfered with by another party of different political belief, will soon become out of date, and behind the times of the American people; but when two or more parties are constantly striving to gain the confidence of the people, all that is bad in either one of them will soon be made prominent by the better ideas of the opposite set. The constant competition between parties for supremacy, also has the effect of keeping each party, and every individual in each party, aroused to see the best side of their cause, and to reject those things that can be improved upon.

A party may never have a majority vote of the people, and consequently never come into the control of the affairs of the state or nation, and still be one of the leading factors in the development of righteous government, by setting forth new and progressive ideals for others to work up to. Some of the greatest men of history

who have accomplished the most to promote the interests of mankind, have died before there was the faintest idea that their efforts were of any value to the people.

So it may be with the political party. It may be born, live a minority life, die a natural death without having had any apparent beneficial effects, and then after many years, its teachings may shine forth with the result of completely revolutionizing the government for the best-interests of man.

Competition between the different political parties also causes in us a strong desire to ascertain the exact truth concerning the disputed points; and as the judgments of the wisest men are liable to contain some fallacies, and it is not a mark of intelligence for one to be too hasty in regard to his opinion of others, or in deciding, without careful consideration, that a thing is or is not good for man, we are left to investigate matters for ourselves, and try our best to have truth conquer; for while we do not want to be the "first on whom the new is tried," neither do we want to hold to the old beliefs of our fathers, and hinder progressive evolution by being the "last to lay the old aside."