

### Mr. Bryan on "Why I Lecture"

"Why do I lecture?" I would prefer to discuss the subject in the abstract, stating the advantages of the lecture platform in an impersonal way, but I yield to the opinion of the editor of The Ladies' Home Journal and answer the question which he propounds.

There is, however, but little difference between the two methods of treatment, for the reasons that lead me to make use of the opportunities offered by the lecture platform are, I presume, the same that lead others to do so. The overshadowing reason for lecturing, whether at Chautauquas or otherwise, is that there is no other audience which gives one the same latitude for the presentation of general subjects in a non-partisan and nonsectarian way.

There are certain expenses attendant upon a public meeting which must be paid by somebody, and that somebody may be, first, the speaker—which would necessarily limit speaking to those who have leisure and are able to pay not only their traveling expenses but the expenses of advertising, hall, etc.; second, a limited number of enthusiasts in the community—which would put an unfair burden upon a few; third, those who attend—where the expense of a meeting is divided among the audience, the expense is light upon each one, and, since the attendance is voluntary, no injustice is done.

In political campaigns the speaker is usually a person in public life whose speeches are repayment, in part, of his obligation to his constituents; the local expenses of the meeting are paid out of the campaign fund. Such speeches are of course political, the needs of the campaign being so urgent that the speaker has no time, and the audience no patience, for the discussion of subjects of a general character.

In the case of religious addresses the local church organizations furnish the auditorium, and here, too, the speaker is, by the proprieties of the occasion, limited as to his line of thought.

There is practically no forum, except that furnished by the Chautauqua platform during the summer and by the lecture platform during the entire year, for the presentation of those subjects which appeal to the general mass of the people without regard to party or creed.

The winter lecture course is supported by the leading people of the community, and the same is true of the summer Chautauqua, which, whether held in an outdoor auditorium or in a tent, accommodates crowds which are too large for the ordinary halls.

During my college days I had the privilege of hearing Wendell Phillips on "The Lost Arts," Robert Ingersoll on "Shakespeare," and Henry Ward Beecher. Later I have heard Wendling, Taylor, Talmage, Burdette, Dolliver, Nugent, and many others. At the present time the lecture platform can claim among its friends a number of the most prominent of our public men, ministers and educators.

It is now nearly twenty years since I began to use the platform as a means of reaching the public. During that time I have discussed governmental questions, political economy, sociology, ethics and religion, the lectures delivered most frequently being "A Conquering Nation," "The Value of an Ideal," "The Price of a Soul," "The Signs of the Times," "The Making of a Man," "Fundamentals," and the "Prince of Peace." The last named is the best known, having been delivered all over the United States and in other parts of the world.

So highly do I value the character of the lecture audience, and the privilege of speaking to such an audience, that I have never for a moment thought of abandoning the lecture field. If I were financially able to speak without remuneration and to pay my own traveling expenses I would still avail myself of the lecture platform and would prefer it to speaking under conditions which, by placing a pecuniary burden upon a few persons, would seem to put me under obligations to them.

I say I would—perhaps I should say I think I would. If I had the means I might yield to the temptations that so often come with wealth, and spend my time looking for comfort. It may be fortunate for me that I am compelled to earn my living year by year, and I know of no more legit-

### Boys, Will You Sign the Pledge With Me?

A pledge of total abstinence is being signed by a host of boys in Michigan—why not the boys of other states as well? A book will be opened at The Commoner office, wherein will be entered the names and addresses of those who sign this pledge with me. Cut out the pledge, paste it on a piece of paper and sign it. Lay the pledge away that you may have it as a reminder of the decision you have made, but send a postal card to The Commoner, stating that you have signed it, and giving your age and address. If you do

not care to state your age, use the word "adult," instead of giving the number of years. Receipt of these pledges will be acknowledged by publication in The Commoner in which only the name and address will be given. Ask others to sign with you—secure as many signatures as possible—and thus be the means of spreading the influence of the pledge. Those who abstain from drink do good not only to themselves, but to those also who are encouraged by their example.  
W. J. BRYAN.

#### Total Abstinence Pledge

*We, the undersigned, promise, God helping us, never to use intoxicating liquors as a beverage.*

<i>Date</i>	<i>Name</i>	<i>Age</i>	<i>Residence</i>
<i>Nov. 28, 1914.</i>	<i>William Jennings Bryan.</i>	<i>54.</i>	<i>Lincoln, Mich.</i>

(This is the temperance pledge in Mr. Bryan's own handwriting that he presented to 5,000 boys at Ann Arbor. It will be circulated all over the state by boys of the Y. M. C. A. Mr. Bryan believes that 50,000 Michigan boys will sign with him.—Detroit (Michigan) Times.)

While Mr. Bryan asks the readers of The Commoner to sign with him, he desires it understood that his object is to secure signers, not merely to enjoy the honor of signing with others. If any one prefers to sign by himself, let him do so. Or, if he prefers, let him ask any one he pleases to sign with him. But whether alone or with another, let him SIGN.

imate means of earning an income than that afforded by lecturing.

If the means employed are honorable the "making of a living" is not open to criticism; and in what respect is lecturing less honorable than other occupations or professions? It is considered proper for a lawyer to collect a fee for the services which he renders to his client—for the speeches which he makes to judge or jury; the teacher is paid for the instruction given; the minister is supported by the members of the congregation to which he preaches; the journalist is paid to write editorials; and the public servant draws a compensation collected from the people by taxation.

The minister does not receive so much per sermon, but the pay which he receives is none the less remuneration for his pulpit work; the senator and the member of congress do not receive a specified sum for each speech, but their speeches could not be delivered without the annual allowance paid them. In some countries public service is rendered without compensation, but in such countries office-holding is necessarily confined to the well-to-do, and the tendency is everywhere toward our system, not away from it.

But I presume I have been asked to write upon this subject because of the criticism directed against me for lecturing since I took upon myself the duties of the office which I now hold. I have refrained from making any general explanation, because it would seem like a reflection upon either the intelligence or the honesty of the public to assume that they could either share in, or be affected by, the attacks which have been made upon me in this respect.

If lecturing is a legitimate occupation no just objection can be raised to an official's lecturing, unless in doing so he neglects public duties. The announcement which I made in the very beginning covered the entire case, namely, that I would lecture at Chautauquas during a part of the time allowed me for vacation—the amount of lecturing to be determined by the amount that I needed to make my income equal to my expenses.

I do not care to add anything to my accumulations during my term of office, but when I laid the matter before the president he saw no objection to using so much of my vacation as was necessary to save me from actual loss. It surely is not necessary to point out that one accepting a cabinet position adds the expenses of official

life to his fixed charges and must pay both out of his income.

Thirty days' vacation is allowed to government officials each year, and they almost invariably take advantage of the vacation, using the time as they see fit. As the vacations are taken at different times, the officials accommodate each other, the work of the department concerned goes on.

We have had so many important questions before the state department during the time I have occupied the office that I have not been willing to be absent even for the rest. I spent less than ten days in the lecture field during the year 1913, and less than five working days during the year 1914—or less than one-fourth of the time allowed me by law for a vacation during the two years.

The Mexican situation kept me at the department during the summer of 1913, and the European situation during the summer of 1914. It is not, however, unreasonable to hope that normal conditions may be restored before my term expires, and that I may be permitted to indulge in the relaxation which the rules contemplate—and I find both relaxation and inspiration, as well as addition to my income, in meeting the people face to face, in talking to them about matters which I deem of importance, and in drawing from them the strength and encouragement which association with the people alone can give.—Ladies' Home Journal.

#### A CASE IN POINT

The stand-pat republicans profess to be very confident that the spirit of reform has run its course and that the government is going to be turned back into the hands of those who have permitted the special interests to despoil the people. If any reader of The Commoner is in doubt as to the result of such an experiment, if the people are so thoughtless as to make it, he will find a case in point in the 44th and 54th verses of the XII chapter of Matthew:

"Then he saith, I will return into my house from whence I came out; and when he is come, he findeth it empty, swept, and garnished.

"Then goeth he, and taketh with himself seven other spirits more wicked than himself, and they enter in and dwell there: and the last state of that man is worse than the first. Even so shall it be also unto this wicked generation."

W. J. BRYAN.