

Dr. Cheever says:

Had the state done its duty in his (the murderer's) education, he never would have been a murderer.

Blackstone says:

Life is the immediate gift of God to man, which neither can he resign nor can it be taken from him, unless by command of Him who gave it.

He also goes on to say that in Great Britain there is an average of three innocent men hanged every year. Channing says:

When I reflect how much of the responsibility for crime rests on the state, how many of the offences which are most severely punished are to be traced to neglected education, to early squalid want, to temptations and exposures which society might do much to relieve, I feel that the spirit of mercy should temper legislation, that we should not sever ourselves so widely from our fallen brethren; that we should recognize in them the countenance and claims of humanity; that we should strive to win them back to God.

I am sure my hon. friend will agree with what Benjamin Franklin says, namely:

Laws which inflict death for murder are, in my opinion, as un-Christian as those which justify revenge; for the obligations of Christianity upon individuals, to promote repentance, to forgive injuries, and to discharge the duties of universal benevolence are equally binding upon the state

John Quincy Adams says:

Gladly will I co-operate with any society whose object should be to promote the abolition of every form by which the life of man can be voluntarily taken by his fellow man. I do heartily wish and pray the success of your efforts to promote the abolition of capital punishment.

Father Matthew and Victor Hugo tell the same story. Robert Burns says:

Man's inhumanity to man makes countless thousands mourn.

William Shakespeare on one occasion out of curiosity visited one of these murder trials, and he says:

The jury, passing on the prisoner's life,  
May, in the sworn twelve, have a thief or  
two,

Guiltier than him they try.

Cicero says:

Away with the executioner and execution, and the very name of its engine. Even the mere mention of them is unworthy of a Roman citizen and a freeman.

Some of my hon. friends who, when I first introduced my Bill a few years ago, thought I was in error, have since changed their minds. I would be pleased if all those who formerly opposed it would change their minds. One of them, I think my hon.

[Mr. Bickerdike.]

friend from Frontenac (Mr. Edwards) was very strong on the Old Testament rule of Moses that there should be a life for a life, an eye for an eye, a tooth for a tooth. I think we have passed that stage. It is true that Moses did shed the blood of his enemies; but we have in place of him One, the Lord, who shed His blood for His enemies. To me there is quite a difference. My hon. friend claimed that the Scriptures say 'a life for a life.' I claim—and I challenge successful contradiction—that there is not a word in the Scriptures from Genesis to Revelations that commands capital punishment or even commends it. Example is surely better than precept; and I would ask, what about Cain, Moses himself, David, and twenty or thirty others mentioned in the Old Testament who committed murder and not one of whom was hanged? The man who will send a soul into eternity, whether he be a murderer or the state's hangman, does not believe in eternity. If he believed in eternity, he would not, he could not, commit such an act. My right hon. friend the leader of the Opposition says that this man was guilty of being in bad company—

Sir WILFRID LAURIER: No, I said he was guilty of murder. But I did not say he should be hanged.

Mr. BICKERDIKE: Was it not a case for reprieve?

Sir WILFRID LAURIER: Possibly.

Mr. BICKERDIKE: The right hon. gentleman knows it was; he would never have thought of hanging such a man. There was nothing against this man but that he was in bad company. He was in bad company, and probably was a thief; I think there is no question that he stole the money. But was that a reason why he should be hanged? The man did not commit the murder, and yet he was hanged as a murderer. We call ourselves a Christian nation, and we bow our heads in prayer. Yet we hanged that man though he was innocent of the crime for which he was condemned.

The Minister of Trade and Commerce (Sir George Foster), when I introduced this Bill last year, had something to say about it. I am sorry the hon. gentleman is not here. He said:

And the time may come when it will be unnecessary to have such extreme punishment, as capital punishment is, and administered as it has been for the deterrence of great criminals.

The hon. gentleman thought we were doing better. I claim that we are not doing better. The ink was hardly dry on the