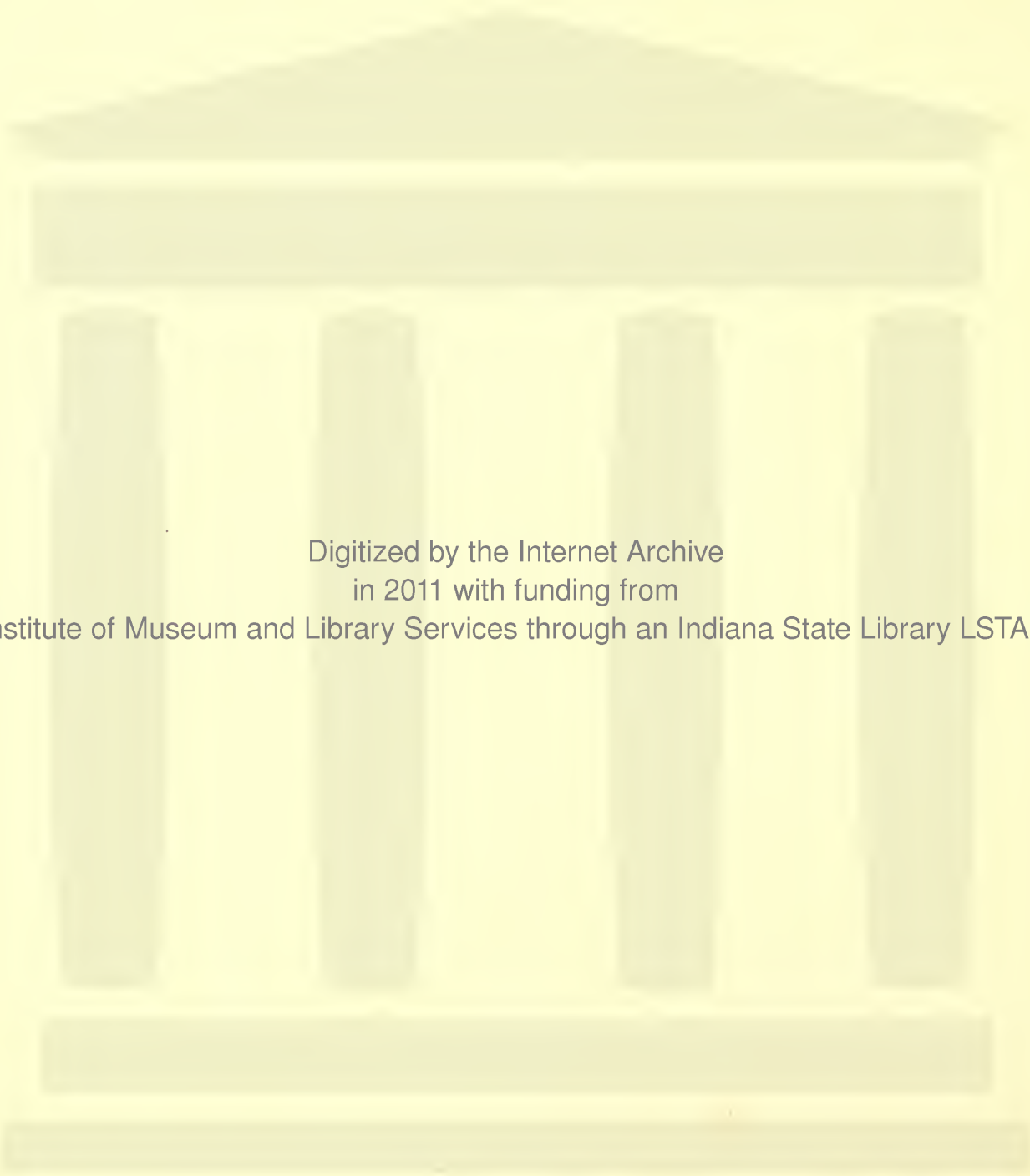


# Our Leader



# Our Leader.

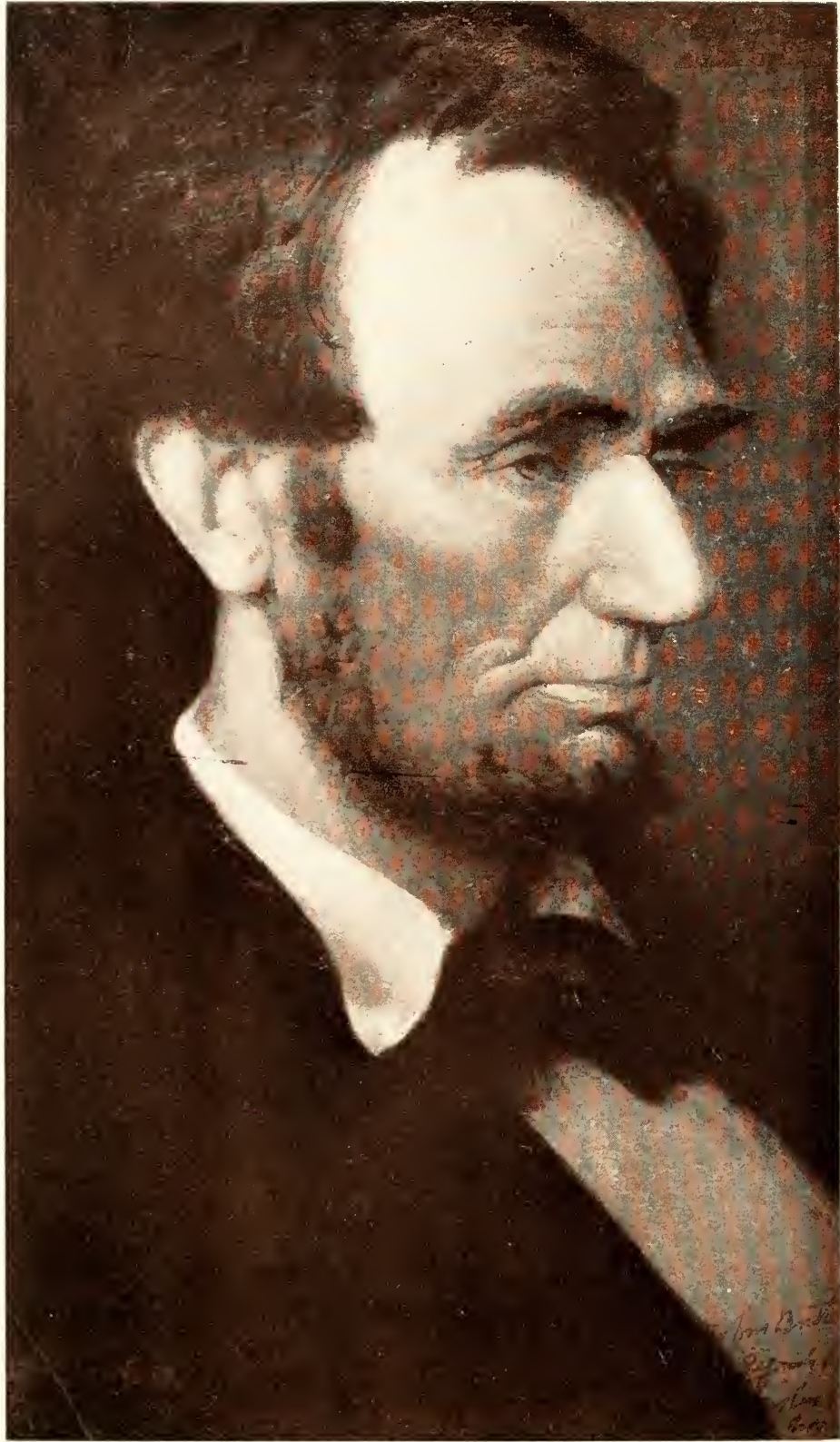
Read at the Lincoln Memorial Meeting of the Church of the Covenant,  
Washington, D. C., Sunday, February 7, and also at the Lincoln  
Centennial Banquet in Springfield, Illinois, February 12, 1909.



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TO THE MEMORY OF

MY GRANDFATHER

CHARLES HENRY MARSHALL

Who Died in 1865.

Ever a steadfast supporter and faithful  
follower of

OUR LEADER

His heart too was pierced by the fatal bullet  
and he did not long survive.

Every Fourth of July our young orators all proclaim this to be "the land of the free and the home of the brave!" Well, now, when you orators get that off next year, and, may be, this very year, how would you like some old grizzled farmer to get up in the grove and deny it? How would you like that? But suppose Kansas comes in as a slave State, and all the "border ruffians" have barbecues about it, and free-State men come trailing back to the dishonoured North, like whipped dogs with their tails between their legs, it is—ain't it?—evident that this is no more the "land of the free"; and if we let it go so, we won't dare to say "home of the brave" out loud.

*Speech, May 19, 1856.*



## Our Leader.

1809.

FEBRUARY 12TH.

1909.

Fair stretched the land, East, West, from sea to sea;  
North, South from Lakes to Gulf; we called it free  
And, proudly in our ballads, oft had sung  
Of how our freedom we had bravely wrung  
From tyrant King; fair were its prospects too  
And bright; not could the wealth the Indies knew,  
Even when fabled Kublai Khan was there,  
Nor yet Pactolus' golden tide, compare  
With boundless stream that, ever constant, poured  
Into the lap of industry its hoard  
Of treasure; as though forest, mine and field  
Each with the other vied the greatest wealth to yield.

God-fearing too, the people of this land  
Their churches grandly reared on every hand  
And worshipped Him who taught us when we pray,  
*Thy Kingdom come upon this earth, to say.*

To its fair shores there came, across the sea,  
The weary peasant, yearning to be free  
From serfdom's toil; and there he sought, and found,  
The right to till, and call his own, the ground  
And fruits it yielded to his care. There came,  
Besides, the patriot burning with the shame

The battle of freedom is to be fought out on principle. Slavery is a violation of the eternal right. We have temporized with it from the necessities of our condition; but as sure as God reigns and school children read, that black foul lie can never be consecrated into God's Hallowed truth!

Can we as Christian men, and strong and free ourselves, wield the sledge or hold the iron which is to manacle anew an already oppressed race? "Woe unto them," it is written, "that decree unrighteous decrees and that write grievousness which they have prescribed." Can we afford to sin any more deeply against human liberty?

*Speech, May 19, 1856.*

Of thought, in his own land not merit told  
 But only rank, and noble birth, and gold ;  
 While, in the young republic of the West,  
 He hoped, and found, true merit was the test.

Surely than this no land more blessed could be !  
 Surely in land like this all must be free !  
 Not so ; in market place men bought and sold  
 Their fellow-men, and bartered souls for gold.  
 It matters not how blessed, how good, how fair  
 Be land or people, if the curse is there  
 Of slavery, it will cast its blight  
 O'er all that elsewhere would be bright.

Not over all the land this curse had spread,  
 Nor yet throughout the land was conscience dead ;  
 But still to blame is every one who tries  
 Not to strike evil dead, but compromise  
 With it ; so, not upon a few, but all,  
 The blame and burden of that curse must fall.

Too late 'tis now to try to cast the blame  
 On either side ; no longer fan that flame  
 Or further fuel feed ; but let it die,  
 And with it all the animosity  
 That once so hotly burned. Is not this true—  
 One did but what the other let it do ;  
 Till, past all bounds, the evil grew so much  
 It held the country in its death-like clutch ?

How loose that clutch ? How could the tide be stemmed,  
 By which, not stemmed, the land were overwhelmed ?  
 Many were they who worked—yea fought and died—  
 To loose those bonds and check that rising tide.

Our political problem now is, "Can we as a nation continue together permanently—for ever—half slave, and half free?" The problem is too mighty for me. May God in his mercy superintend the solution.

*From Letter, August 15, 1855.*

If we could first know where we are, and whither we are tending, we could better judge what to do, and how to do it. We are now far into the fifth year since a policy was initiated with the avowed object and confident promise of putting an end to slavery agitation. Under the operation of that policy, that agitation has not only not ceased, but has constantly augmented. In my opinion it will not cease until a crisis shall have been reached and passed. "A house divided against itself cannot stand." I believe this government cannot endure permanently, half slave and half free. I do not expect the Union to be dissolved,—I do not expect the house to fall; but I do expect it will cease to be divided. It will become all one thing, or all the other. Either the opponents of slavery will arrest the further spread of it, and place it where the public mind shall rest in the belief that it is in the course of ultimate extinction; or its advocates will push it forward till it shall become alike lawful in all the States, old as well as new, North as well as South.

*From Speech on Nomination to Senate, June 17, 1858.*

Honor to all our brave we gladly pay,  
 But more than all to him, who on this day  
 Was born a century ago, and who,  
 As leader unsurpassed, his people through  
 The darksome valley of the shades of death  
 Led back to light and life; and then, himself,  
 Fell at the foot of altar he had reared  
 To Freedom's God; dead—but his name revered,  
 And loved forever, as the most sublime  
 Of patriot martyrs on the roll of time.

Dark were the clouds that o'er the country hung,  
 Wild were the threats that 'cross the line were flung.  
 Men trembled, women wept, all were dismayed;  
 And *Peace, in our time, oh Lord*, some prayed,  
 Hoping, in compromise, to find a way  
 To limit, not to end, the plague; to stay  
 Its further progress; as though slaves could be  
 In part of land, while elsewhere all were free.

Oh for a leader! others prayed. God heard  
 And answered; from the West a voice that stirred  
 The hearts of all was heard throughout the length  
 And breadth of this whole land. Its tones of strength  
 Proclaimed the voice of leader when he bade  
 Them heed these words that could not be gainsayed:

**Not half for slave, and other half for free,  
 Can this, nor yet can any other, country be;  
 No house divided 'gainst itself can stand—**  
 If true of house, how much more true of land—  
 Yet hope and courage he instilled in all  
 When he assured them that it need not fall.

You will find that all the arguments in favor of kingcraft were of this class; they always bestrode the necks of the people—not that they wanted to do it, but because the people were better off for being ridden. That is their argument; and this argument of the Judge is the same old serpent, that says, “You work, and I eat; you toil, and I will enjoy the fruits of it.” Turn in whatever way you will,—whether it come from the mouth of a king, an excuse for enslaving the people of his country, or from the mouth of men of one race as a reason for enslaving the men of another race,—it is all the same old serpent.

*Reply to Douglas on the Nebraska Bill, July 10, 1858.*

Our cause, then, must be intrusted to, and conducted by, its own undoubted friends—those whose hands are free, whose hearts are in the work, who do care for the result. \* \* \* The result is not doubtful. We shall not fail. If we stand firm, we shall not fail. Wise counsels may accelerate or mistakes delay it; but sooner or later the victory is sure to come.

*Senate Nomination Speech, June 17, 1858.*

We are not enemies, but friends. We must not be enemies. Though passion may have strained, it must not break our bonds of affection. The mystic chords of memory, stretching from every battle-field and patriot grave to every living heart and hearthstone all over this broad land, will yet swell the chorus of the Union when again touched, as surely they will be, by the better angels of our nature.

*From the First Inaugural Address.*

In withering tones he spoke of slaving toil  
That tilled, while others ate, the fruit of soil:

**Not by the sweat of other's brow shalt earn thy bread,  
But by thine own, the Holy Writ hath said.**

Truth! And the people—sick of lies—replied  
“Our Leader!”—and he led them 'till he died.  
And still he leads us, for the truth ne'er dies,  
“Our Leader still!” Each honest heart replies.

Behold his portrait! gaze upon his face!  
Seek not therein to find soft shades of grace;  
In rugged lines which in that face appear  
Sorrow there is and care, but not one trace of fear;  
And back of all—and in that eye, indeed—  
What wealth and depth of character we read!  
Look where we will, not elsewhere shall we find  
Such courage, strength and truth with tenderness combined.

His was the vision that so plainly saw  
Not only what all others saw—the flaw—  
But also that the flaw would surely spread  
Until the whole fair fabric would be dead,  
Unless the fearful, ugly thing were cut;  
—Nor cared how deep in flesh the knife were put,  
Tho' even close to heart of that which he most loved,  
If but the wicked spot could be removed—  
But oh, to him how deep the pain, that he  
The one to wield that almost fatal knife must be.

His was the patience, that with faith combined,  
Enabled him in darkest hour to find  
Hope for the future, and that all would see  
At last the country—reunited—free.  
His was the genius that knew when to act  
And how—yet so combined with skill and tact,

My friends: No one not in my situation can appreciate my feeling of sadness at this parting. To this place, and the kindness of these people, I owe everything. Here I have lived a quarter of a century, and have passed from a young to an old man. Here my children have been born, and one is buried. I now leave, not knowing when or whether ever I may return, with a task before me greater than that which rested upon Washington. Without the assistance of that Divine Being who ever attended him I cannot succeed. With that assistance I cannot fail. Trusting in Him, who can go with me and remain with you, and be everywhere for good, let us confidently hope that all will yet be well. To His care commending you, as I hope in your prayers you will commend me, I bid you an affectionate farewell.

*Farewell Address at Springfield, Illinois, February 11, 1861.*

Fondly do we hope—ferverently do we pray—that this mighty scourge of war may speedily pass away. Yet, if God wills that it continue until all the wealth piled by the bondman's two hundred and fifty years of unrequited toil shall be sunk, and until every drop of blood drawn with the lash shall be paid by another drawn with the sword, as was said three thousands years ago, so still it must be said, "The judgments of the Lord are true and righteous altogether."

With malice towards none; with charity for all; with firmness in the right, as God gives us to see the right, let us strive on to finish the work we are in; to bind up the nation's wounds; to care for him who shall have borne the battle, and for his widow, and his orphan—to do all which may achieve and cherish a just and lasting peace among ourselves, and with all nations.

*From the Second Inaugural Address.*



And that strange matchless humor he was known  
 To use so well in manner all his own—  
 That, through a crisis, such as ne'er before  
 Had ever threatened State in peace or war,  
 He guided it, and shaped its course so well,  
 That it was saved at last ; and, when he fell,  
 Pierced by a bullet from assassin hand,  
 Not one part only, but the whole wide land,  
 Cursed the foul deed, and grieved to lose the one  
 Who more than all to heal its wounds had done.

His faith was that which bade him call upon  
 The Being most Divine—the God of Washington—  
 He knew that with that aid he would not fail  
 And that without it he could not prevail.

Yes he, when nearly all was nearly o'er,  
 And looking back on four long years of war,  
 Could calmly say, as on the Holy Book  
 His oath of office once again he took :

**Yea, though we fondly hope and fervently do pray  
 That speedily the scourge of war may pass away,  
 Yet if God wills not so, and it shall never stop  
 Until the sword repays the lash for every drop,  
 Of blood ; and all the wealth be sunk that from the soil  
 Has been piled up by bondman's unrequited toil ;  
 That still the everlasting judgments of the Lord  
 Through all the long resounding ages of the world,  
 Whether three thousand years ago, or whether  
 Rendered today, are true and righteous altogether.**

And yet those words were spoken, as we will recall,  
 Towards none with malice, and with charity for all.

He came to earth and here his task fulfilled ;  
 He nobly did the work his Master willed  
 Him here to do ; and when he died 'twas known  
 Earth's noblest spirit back to Heaven had flown.

Fourscore and seven years ago our fathers brought forth upon this continent a new nation, conceived in liberty, and dedicated to the proposition that all men are created equal.

Now we are engaged in a great civil war, testing whether that nation, or any nation so conceived and so dedicated, can long endure. We are met on a great battle-field of that war. We have come to dedicate a portion of that field as a final resting-place for those who here gave their lives that that nation might live. It is altogether fitting and proper that we should do this.

But in a larger sense we cannot dedicate, we cannot consecrate, we cannot hallow this ground. The brave men, living and dead, who struggled here, have consecrated it far above our power to add or detract. The world will little note nor long remember what we say here, but it can never forget what they did here. It is for us, the living, rather, to be dedicated here to the unfinished work which they who fought here have thus far so nobly advanced. It is rather for us to be here dedicated to the great task remaining before us; that from these honoured dead we take increased devotion to that cause for which they gave the last full measure of devotion; that we here highly resolve that these dead shall not have died in vain; that this nation, under God, shall have a new birth of freedom; and that government of the people, by the people, and for the people, shall not perish from the earth.

*The Gettysburg Address, November 12, 1863.*

Though storied urn, nor animated bust,  
 The fleeting breath has ne'er recalled; though dust,  
 When silent, honor's voice cannot provoke,  
 Nor yet can soothing flattery invoke  
 The dull, cold ear of death; still can we not  
 Erect some monument upon some spot  
 That in the hearts of all, Our Leader great  
 Will honor, and his fame perpetuate?

Standing on field once shaken by the tread  
 Of armies, and by patriot blood made red,  
 He uttered to the throng assembled there  
 Those words, with which none others can compare,  
 Save those that came from voice divine. He said,  
 While dedicating to the noble dead  
 The spot whereon they died: **It is too late**  
     **For us to hallow, or to consecrate**  
     **This field; that has been done; It is for us—**  
     **The living—to be dedicated here, and thus**  
     **To make the high resolve that those who gave**  
     **Devotion's fullest measure here to save**  
     **The Nation's life shall not in vain have died.**  
 May not that thought to him be now applied?

If to Our Leader we would now erect  
 A fitting monument, let each select,  
 In his own heart, some high resolve to make,  
 And then fulfil it for that leader's sake;

And, if in such a monument, each one  
 Of us, today, would set a single stone,  
 'Twould higher be, more stately and more grand  
 Than any ever built in any land  
 To any hero; it would nobly rise  
 Until its lofty apex reached the skies,

I remember the accounts, read in my childhood days, of the battlefields and struggles for the liberties of this country and I recollect thinking then, boy even though I was, that there must have been something more than common that those men struggled for. I am exceedingly anxious that that thing—that something even more than national independence; that something that held out a great promise to all the people of the world for all time to come—I am exceedingly anxious that this Union, the Constitution and the liberties of the people shall be perpetuated in accordance with the original idea for what the struggle was made, and I shall be most happy, indeed, if I shall be an humble instrument in the hands of the Almighty, and of this, his most chosen people, for the perpetuating the object of that great struggle.

*From the Trenton Speech of February 21, 1861.*

And to Our Leader would the message bring,  
 That while within our hearts his words still ring,  
**This Nation under God shall have new birth  
 Of freedom; nor shall perish from the earth  
 This Government that of the people, by,  
 And for, the people is; Thus let us try**  
 To prove—nor count the cost of time or pain—  
 The noblest dead shall not have died in vain.  
 Ask ye what that resolve shall be? Look right  
 Or left, for all the fields are harvest white.

Are there no slaves to be set free today,  
 No great remaining tasks to which we may  
 Now dedicate ourselves; may we not help to free  
 This country from those forms of slavery  
 That know no color line—the greed of wealth  
 And lust for power—aggrandisement of self—  
 That hold in thralldom many of our best  
 And steep in envy nearly all the rest?

Are there no other slaves who sorely need  
 Some one to loose their bonds? There are, indeed.  
 Do ye not hear the children's bitter cry  
 As in the mills and mines their tasks they ply?  
 They, who should cheer the household through the day,  
 Are taught to work before they learn to play.  
 Shame on the land of which it may be said  
 That parents eat, while children earn, the bread.

If he were here would not Our Leader be  
 In foremost rank to set the children free,  
 And onward lead us in the great crusade  
 Of right 'gainst wrong which ever should be made?

Can we, while our votes will prevent it, allow slavery to spread into the National Territories, and to overrun us here in these free States? If our sense of duty forbids this, then let us stand by our duty fearlessly and effectively. Let us be diverted by none of those sophistical contrivances wherewith we are so industriously plied and belaboured,—contrivances such as groping for some middle ground between the right and the wrong, vain as the search for a man who should be neither a living man nor a dead man; such as a policy of “don’t care,” on a question about which all true men do care; such as Union appeals beseeching true Union men to yield to disunionists, reversing the Divine rule, and calling not the sinners, but the righteous to repentance; such as invocations to Washington, imploring men to unsay what Washington said, and undo what Washington did.

Neither let us be slandered from our duty by false accusations against us, nor frightened from it by menaces of destruction to the Government, nor of dungeons to ourselves. Let us have faith that right makes might, and in that faith let us to the end dare to do our duty as we understand it.

*Peroration of Cooper Union Address, July 27, 1860.*

Fairer and brighter is this land today  
 Than it has ever been before; and may  
 It ever fairer, better, brighter grow.  
 Surely no land more blest than this, below  
 The dome of Heaven e'er can be. And like  
 Our noble leader let us bravely strike  
 These shackles off; and strike them not alone  
 From others' limbs; but shake them from our own.

Pray what resolves than these more high to make?  
 Then let us make them for Our Leader's sake.  
 What nobler tasks can our devotion claim  
 Than these? Then let us do them in his name.

And in so doing would we not obey  
 The words he seemed to speak but yesterday,  
 So deep he drove them in our hearts, although  
 'Twas nearly half a century ago?

**Nor from our duty let us be deterred  
 By slander, or by false accusing word,  
 Or menace of destruction, dungeon cell,  
 Nor yet aught else, but dare to do it well  
 Unto the end; and have the faith that right  
 Will give us strength, and that the right makes might.**

CHARLES HENRY BUTLER.









