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The Grounds of Democratic Hope

Elector's Speech, 1909, Delivered by
JOSIAH WILLIAM BAILEY

In the Electoral College, Senate Chamber, Raleigh,
N. C., January 11, 1909.

We stand in the shadow of a great defeat; and seeing that it is the fourth in unbroken succession, it becomes us here as representatives of a great and historic party, whose records abound with the evidences of illustrious service to our Republic and to civilization, a party which to-day commands the suffrages of 6,500,000 American citizens, and whose destiny no man dare measure;—it becomes us to look about us, to reckon with our peculiar situation, to take counsel concerning the condition of our country with a view to proposing a program in keeping with our record of service; and so, if possible, to reasonably answer the cry articulated in millions of Democratic hearts throughout the Republic—"Watchman, what of the night?"

That we can reasonably give back to them the answer, "Be of good cheer, the morning cometh," I have in the high hopes of my own heart the best assurance, and these hopes have I set out to communicate to you.

We stand, I say, in the shadow of a great defeat—of four of them in unbroken succession. But we stand, and as we stand our hearts bear witness that never in the history of our country was there so much for good Democrats to fight for; never had we a higher call to battle than now, and never were we more ready to greet the call to battle with a cheer. So far from being broken, or overwhelmed, our party is more numerous, more united, more determined, and more devoted to its standards than at any time in its eventful history and its causes were never so dear to the hearts of the people or so necessary to the welfare of our Republic.

Good causes never die. Right and justice are immortal. It is ordained in the destiny of our race that these shall be attained unto in the rule of the people. And therefore is it true that Democracy is immortal.

The history of progress is a record of defeats. A thousand battles go against the standards of Right: but every defeat marks a step in the long, triumphant forward march of civilization. Joseph is sold into Egypt, but he rises at length to save his father's house. Socrates drinks the hemlock, but his philosophy guides the ages; Jesus is nailed to the cross, but the instrument of his death is now the life of the race. Carlyle hits the idea in one of his great paragraphs. Says he: "Upwards of a century must elapse, and still the bleeding fight of freedom be fought, who so is noblest perishing in the van; and the Moloch of Iniquity must have his sacrifices and the Michael of Justice his martyrs." But our American poet has put it in more popular phrase:

"Truth forever on the scaffold,
Wrong forever on the throne;
But that scaffold sways the future,
And behind the dim unknown,
Standeth God within the shadow,
Keeping watch above His own."
King John gave the Magna
Char'ta from the throne; but the

barons at its foot compelled him. Charles II. gave the great reforms of modern England, but the ghost of Cromwell guided his pen.

In such terms, sirs, I interpret our present condition. We have been defeated, but our faith in our cause abides, and our cause rides on in triumph. We are cast down, but not forsaken, and we know that so long as we cleave to our cause, we shall have naught to fear. We would serve our Republic in triumph, but biding that hour, we know that we have served it more worthily and more efficiently in defeat than our triumphant opponents have served it in victory; and we are not the men to refuse to serve so long as that can be said—no matter who gets into the places of honor, reward and power.

I have just made a bold statement, namely, that the Democratic Party has served our Republic more worthily and more effectually in defeat than the Republicans have served it in victory. Let me either make it good or withdraw it. What is the record of the Democratic Party?

Do your minds revert to those early days when our party swathed the new-born Republic in its swaddling clothes—those great principles which are its armor to-day;—when it rocked the new Republic in the Cradle of Liberty under Jefferson and Madison, Jackson and Monroe? They were great days, and are not to be forgotten. But they were the days of victory; and great as were our party's achievements then, I venture to show that the achievements of the Democratic Party these fifty years of defeat have been no less great.

Review for a moment these fifty years since the great war. What are the outstanding achievements of this great period in our history?

First of them all is Restoration of the South—within herself and in her relation to the Republic. And who restored the South? Did the carpet-bagger; did the fire-eater; did the Forakers and the Lodge Bills, did Stevens and Reconstruction? Did the Republican Party? Why, sirs, it has not yet so much as gotten itself "restored" in the South! It has remained for the belated Mr. Taft to discover that such an achievement was on foot; and he has set himself about it with all the ardor of a sole discoverer! There is but one answer to these questions—the Democratic Party restored the South to herself and to the Republic. It was the Democratic Party that drove the despoilers from this temple and rebuilt the fallen State. And yet, we are told that the Democratic Party is not constructive. I answer that this one particular reconstruction is the greatest achievement of any party in any time and an evidence of statesmanship beyond all doubting. And how signally did the Republicans fall at it!

Again, what is the policy throughout our Republic to-day with regard to the negro citizen?

Is it the Republican Party's policy—whatever that may be—whether social equality, the exaltation of ignorance over intelligence, or whatsoever shape it may take—running the gaunt of folly with blunder? Is it the Republican Party's policy in Springfield, Ill., the home of its founder Lincoln? It is the Republican Party's policy in Philadelphia or Boston?

The world knows the answer. The Democratic Party is the only party in our history that has had a positive and unvarying policy on the race problem in its political aspects, and today it looks abroad and perceives that wherever that problem has become intense there the Democratic Party's policy has been adopted—regardless altogether of sectional lines. So we have given to the Republic not only a restored South, but also the one policy of safety in respect to the race question.

These two achievements outrank at every point any others since the great war. But I have not done—by no means.

Of late the Republican Party has boasted of the single gold standard and our national financial policy. Need I remind them that when their leader, McKinley was preaching bimetallicism, our leader, Cleveland, was holding the tiller of the ship of State true to that gold standard, and we Democrats can now honor his memory for the unswerving courage with which, single-handed and alone, with no party to support him, he fought this memorable battle?

Again, what is the other outstanding feature of American political history since the great war? It is the controlling of the public service corporations in the interest of the people and the warfare on monopolies. And who brought this great cause to the front? Who urged it on? Who forced it upon a reluctant Republican Congress? There is but one answer. Not the Republicans, for when they were themselves owned and controlled by these same institutions, when they had not one notable man who would lift his voice against them, the great voice of Bryan was heard in our land and millions rallied to his standard. Who seriously thinks that without him this cause could have come forward, who dreams that but for him and his militant hosts President Roosevelt could have hammered the Republican Congress into even the slight degree of support that it has given this great cause?

And, as if to give the Democratic Party the completest possible approval, at the present hour the Republican Party is trying to get the consent of its owners, the protected interests, to enact a tariff for revenue only!

I assert that I have spoke only the words of soberness and truth. Let me review the record. Since the great war our Republic has made five great political advances:

- (1) The Restoration of the South.
- (2) The forming of a race policy.
- (3) The fixing of the gold standard.
- (4) The controlling of the public service corporations.
- (5) The reforming of the tariff (now proposed).

And in every one of them the Democratic Party has had an incomparably larger part than the Republican Party. I challenge any man in any party or in any land, to show an equally brilliant and beneficent record of construc-

tive statesmanship by an opposition party.

And so, sirs in the light of triumphs like these we can face defeat with stout hearts, and we can go onward with these trophies in our hands indifferent to the minor and insignificant rewards of mere office. If they taunt us with our exile, let us answer them with these immortal triumphs. And if our own hearts seem to fail us, or our fellows would faint in the long, long battle, let us cheer them with these great rewards of the struggle. We are more than conquerors! Our party is superior to defeat, because its cause knows no defeat!

For my part, I rejoice in the fact that the Democratic Party is different from any other in American history in that it can withstand defeat. It has seen perhaps an hundred political parties rise and fall. Its oldest rival is only half a century old, its youngest is dying of old age in its thirteenth year. But the Democratic Party goes serenely on. It is the only party in America whose life is contemporaneous with that of the Republic it was ordained to protect and nourish. It sprang from the same great brain that the Declaration of Independence sprang from. It was founded by him who laid the enduring foundations of our Republic—Thomas Jefferson. It has withstood all the vicissitudes of our national fortune. It has endured defeats that would have scattered any other political party to the four winds; it has administered upon victories that would have intoxicated a less substantial organization. In victory and defeat, in peace and war, in prosperity and adversity, it has maintained its onward course; and to-day it stands forth more united, more numerous, more assured of its mission and more militant than at any hour since the great days when Andrew Jackson led it.

We can account for a fact like this in no ordinary philosophy. But we must account for it. Wherein is the element of persistence so forceful in the Democratic Party? How do we account for its survival? How do we explain its life in view of the passing of so many of its rivals? There is but one explanation. The Democratic Party is not an idea or opportunist party; it is not a party of expediency; nor is it a party of leaders or organization. Its foundations lie deeper. The Democratic Party lives in great and immortal principles and it draws its life anew year by year from the hearts of the people. Its causes may vary, its leaders may change, but its foundation—Equal Rights to all Special Privileges to none—will endure when the idea and opportunist parties, as abolition or green-backs, or full dinner pails, are known no more in the earth forever. So long as men shall seek freedom; so long as equality shall move the hearts of men; so long as liberty is the lode-star of mankind; so long as the dream of self-government leads on the race; so long as God means that men shall learn to govern themselves, each in the interest of all and all in the interest of each, so long may we fight on, assured of the truth of the words of the great Vance—"Democracy is immortal and cannot die!"

So much for the past, and so much for defeat. Our hearts now turn to the present, the future and victory. We have every reason to believe in the destiny of the Democratic Party, and every obligation in a time like

this to give of our best—thought and devotion—to it.

We understand why the Democratic Party was kept out of power the first thirty years following the great war. It was the logical consequence of that war and the assassination of Lincoln. But these forces have now for years been far spent. How shall we account, then, for our unbroken series of defeats since 1896? It would be no mystery if our policies had been rejected, but they have been largely adopted, as I have shown. I think I can account for this political paradox of the progress of a party's cause notwithstanding the party's defeat.

The body politic in our Republic has undergone a great transformation within the last thirty years, and as a consequence, we have had a new and difficult factor to deal with. Under the fostering care of the Republican Party politics has become a commercial asset, as a consequence in every campaign of late, we have heard nothing of the great principles of popular government but much of full dinner pails, empty dinner pails, panics and prosperity, wages and prices. The increased sensitiveness of the business element to the possible effects of political change—being no other than that same dread of change which is the foundation of thrones—has been the determining factor in American politics these last twenty years. Mark Hanna was the prophet of this order. It was he who raised the triumphant war-cry of the full dinner pail, and by so doing crushed in defeat that Knight Errant of mankind, who spoke not of things so sordid, but rather of the Crown of Thorns, the Cross of Gold and the Cause of Mankind.

This transformation accounts for the extensive political confusion of the last sixteen years. It has required so long for the new factor in politics to work out its effects. It first frightened the people with the dread of change. It then misled the people—those who conceived of politics as a means of privilege deceiving the people into thinking that the people's interest was identical with the interests of the privileged. But it remained for the recent campaign to clear the air; and the clearing away of this confusion is worth all it has cost. And as we stand to-day, the Republican Party in victory but pledged to and owned by these privileged interests, and the Democratic Party defeated, but purged of all taint of control by the classes in the interest of privilege, I say that the defeated are rather to be congratulated than the victorious.

The Democratic Party never was and never will be inimical to business interests. Because it refused to sink our Republic to the interests of the privileged, because it declined to make politics a business asset, because it spurned those who would make merchandise of patriotism, because it was true to mankind rather than to any interests whatever, because it held fast to great principles rather than to

time-serving policies, the privileged classes spread abroad the lie that it was dangerous, a menace, etc., and a fearing people believed it. But they will not always be deceived. When it is asked, What shall the Democrats do now? I answer, Let them abide their time against the hour when the Republican Party proceeds to make good with the people and the privileged. Each has its promises. It has given hostages to each. With one or the other it must break faith, and in either alternative it will be impaled unto its utter undoing. And in the meantime, it will dawn upon the commercial classes in America that only that party may be trusted which guides the Ship of State by the Pole Star of Equal Rights to all, Special Privileges to none.

The last campaign will be notable in our American history because it has defined the issue about which vaguely now for years past and very clearly now for years to come the battle for the life of the American Republic must be fought. It is just a year since President Roosevelt in a message to Congress declared that the predatory classes are in conspiracy to own, control, and use this Republic for their own peculiar enrichment—regardless of rights, regardless of justice and regardless of laws. Who knows so well as he that they have taken charge of his party—that their hope is in his party? To whom did they contribute in 1904 and 1908? And who was apologizing for their contributions just three months ago?

This is the issue: and the line of battle will be drawn about the tariff, about the financial system, about public service corporations, about monopolies, and fundamentally, about the control of our finances, the control of prices, the control of taxes and the control of our political parties. It is the struggle for the people against the privileged—the predatory. The predatory are already in control. By means of the tariff the taxing power of our Republic is farmed out to them as surely as was that of Rome in the days of Matthew the Publican.

The Democratic Party comes on the scene in this hour like a ship cleared for action. Defeat and high endeavor have cleansed her for those who would have used her. She is the mighty free instrument ready and fit for the strong arm of the awakened giant. He will arouse, and he will strike, never fear. For the people will not suffer their government to be taken from them.

To such an end, has our party been kept; to fit it for such a mission has it been sent into the wilderness. Thank God it returns cleansed—"Fair as the moon, bright as the sun, and more terrible than an army with banners!"

We have but to hold our organization to this high course, maintaining in its individual leadership, locally as well as nationally men who are worthy of our cause and whose ability and character command the confidence of the people, and triumph is assured.

Continued on page 3.

Sweet Potato Slips

It matters not where you live, you can raise Sweet Potatoes from my famous slips.

Yours truly,

JOHN A. YOUNG,

Greensboro, N. C.