

Performed by Theodore Roosevelt

Recorded August 1912 Covenant

Political parties exist to secure responsible government and to execute the will of the people. From these great tasks both of the old parties have turned aside. Instead of instruments to promote the general welfare they have become the tools of corrupt interests, which use them impartially to serve their selfish purposes. Behind the ostensible government sits enthroned an invisible government owing no allegiance and acknowledging no responsibility to the people. To destroy this invisible government, to dissolve the unholy alliance between corrupt business and corrupt politics, is the first task of the statesmanship of the day. Unhampered by tradition, uncorrupted by power, undismayed by the magnitude of the task, the new party offers itself as the instrument of the people, to sweep away old abuses, to build a new and nobler government. This declaration is our covenant with the people and we hereby bind the party and its candidates, in state and nation, to the pledges made herein. With all my heart and soul, with every particle of high purpose that is within me, I pledge you my word to do everything I can to put every particle of courage, of common sense, and of strength that I have at your disposal, and to endeavor so far as strength has given me to live up to the obligations you have put upon me, and to endeavor to carry out in the interest of our whole people the policies to which you have today solemnly dedicated yourselves in the name of the millions of men and women for whom you speak.

Surely there never was a fight better worth making than the one in which we are engaged. It little matters what befalls any one of us who for the time being stand in the forefront of the battle. I hope we shall win, and I believe that if we can wake the people to what the fight really means, we shall win. But win or lose, we shall not falter. Whatever fate may at the moment overtake any of us, the movement itself will not stop. Our cause is based on the eternal principles of righteousness; even though we who now lead may for the time fail, in the end the cause itself shall triumph. Six weeks ago, here in Chicago, I spoke to the honest representatives of a convention which was not dominated by honest men. A convention wherein sat, alas, a majority of men who, with sneering indifference to every principle of right, so acted as to bring to a shameful end a party which had been founded over half a century ago by men in whose souls burned the fire of lofty endeavor. Now to you men, who, in your turn, have come together to spend and be spent in the endless crusade against wrong, to you who face the future resolute and confident, to you who strive in a spirit of brotherhood for the betterment of our nation, to you who gird yourselves for this great new fight in the never-ending warfare for the good of human-kind, I say in closing what in that speech I said in closing: we stand at Armageddon, and we battle for the Lord.