

Americanizing Confessions of Faith in Citizenship

[In collecting a few outstanding expressions of devotion to the ideals that are distinct gems in the American creed of patriotic devotion, we have had in mind the busy man, who has little time to read long documents to find the kernel of thought that will aid him, in a measure, to live his citizenship. These little chapters, containing essential thoughts of devotion and dedication to American ideals, are from the lips of men and women who have LIVED their citizenship. These excerpts from their speeches and writings are of especial value to the newer and older citizens who feel the urge to live their citizenship according to that American standard of thought that made us a nation, when men from many countries, together, laid the foundation and wrought the marvelous national structure we know as America.

—The Editor]

THE AMERICAN'S DECLARATION OF INDEPENDENCE

By Thomas Jefferson

WE HOLD these truths to be self-evident:
That all men are created equal;
That they are endowed by their Creator with certain inalienable rights;
That among these are life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness;
That to secure these rights, governments are instituted among men, deriving their just powers from the consent of the governed.

THE AMERICAN CREED

By William Tyler Page

"I BELIEVE in the United States of America as a Government of the people, by the people, for the people, whose just powers are derived from the consent of the governed; a democracy in a republic; a sovereign nation of many sovereign states; a perfect union, one and inseparable; established upon those principles of freedom, equality, justice and humanity for which American patriots sacrificed their lives and fortunes.

"I, therefore, believe it is my duty to my country to love it; to support its Constitution; to obey its laws; to respect its Flag, and to defend it against all enemies."

THE MEANING OF THE AMERICAN FLAG

By Woodrow Wilson

OUR FLAG means universal education—light for every mind, knowledge for every child. We must have but one flag. We must also have but one language. This must be the language of the Declaration of Independence.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

"I PLEDGE ALLEGIANCE to the Flag of the United States of America and to the Republic for which it stands, one nation indivisible, with liberty and justice for all."

JUST A PLAIN AMERICAN

Anon.

Just today we chanced to meet—
Down upon the crowded street;
And I wondered whence he came,
What was once his nation's name.

So I asked him, "Tell me true,
Are you a Pole or Russian Jew,
English, Scotch, Italian, Russian,
Belgian, Spanish, Swiss, Moravian,
Dutch or Greek or Scandinavian?"

Then he raised his head on high,
As he gave me this reply:
"What I was is naught to me,
In this land of liberty,
In my soul, as man to man,
I am just a plain American!"

AMERICA IS YOU AND I

"AMERICA is not the magic scenery
Washed by sunrise and sunset sea.
No, nor yet the prairies dark with herds,
Or land lakes of the Western grain, nor yet
Wonder cities white towered, nor the peaks
Bursting with metals, nor the smoky mills,
But AMERICA, is you, and you, and I."

ABRAHAM LINCOLN'S GETTYSBURG ADDRESS

FOURSCORE and seven years ago our fathers brought forth on 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 battlefield 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 poor 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 honored 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, for the people, shall not perish from the earth.