

# DUTY & SELF CONTROL

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When you take power, you also assume responsibility.

No man can get power without at the same time acquiring the duty of being held to a rigid accountability for his use of that power. I wish to see the people in absolute control, but when you, the people, assume that control remember that you cannot shirk the responsibility that comes with it. The sovereign in any country, and in any land, must be held accountable for the way in which he uses the vast power that is his, and in our case the sovereign is the people. The idea each of us must have first and foremost, all you individually and severally, and you collectively in company with us as fellow laborers, is duty. That is the important word for us, because the thought it symbolizes is the important thought for us to have ever in our hearts, in our minds. The man who is in danger of oppression from the sovereign can afford to think of his rights, first and foremost, but the man who is really sovereign, or the entity which is really sovereign, must think of its duties first.

When Abraham Lincoln was the head of our people he thought of what? Of his rights? No. He thought of his duties. If he had been thinking of his rights we would not to-day be appealing to his memory. We appeal to his memory because he served duty, because he thought always of his duty to his fellow men. He was a great man, but the people should be greater than any one man, and the people cannot be greater unless the people think of duty more than of right, just as the individual man who rises has to think first of duty and then of his rights. They must think of rights as developed in duty rather than of only their individual rights. Unless the people, unless the sovereign, develop the capacity to think, each one, of what is due from him to his fellows and not of what is due from his fellow to him, unless they develop that capacity, this country, based as it is on popular government, cannot achieve the place that it must and will achieve. I appeal to the memory of men who fought in the Civil War; the soldiers who followed Grant and Sherman. When you went into battle you were not thinking of your rights, you were thinking of your duties, of your duty to the flag, your duty to the country, your duty to the men and women you had left behind, who would rather that you gave that duty even at the cost of life than that you shirked your duty and saved your life. That is what you thought of, and if you had not thought of that you would not have been worth your salt as soldiers. If you had not put duty first and foremost we would not now have had a great united country; the slaves would not now be free.

We have nominally attained, and in certain communities have really attained genuine popular rule, genuine self-government. Now, think what this word means; self-government. It does not mean the absence of government. There must be government or we will have purely anarchy, pure destruction. It means literally self-government. It means that there must be just as much government as before only that it shall be applied by every one. We teach a boy that government means to control himself, and he is able to escape the need of parental control just so far as he develops that power of self-control. There are some boys you can trust, and who are able to shift for themselves just because they are able to control themselves. So it is with our citizenship. Now and then we hear the appeal to give such and such a nation self-government. I have had some worthy friends in Boston appeal to me to give self-government to a number of individuals who regard themselves overdressed when they wear breech-clouts. You cannot give self-government to anybody. He has got to earn it for himself.

You can give him the chance to obtain self-government, but he himself out of his own heart must do the governing. He must govern himself. That is what it means. That is what self-government means. And now, as our people assume control more and more of the machinery of government, as their part in the government occasionally or rapidly becomes more direct, as their representatives become more intelligently their representatives it behooves them to remember that only the exceptional people have ever succeeded in the experiment of self-government, because its needs, its interest, and its successful working imply the existence within the heart of the average citizen of certain very high qualities. There must be control. There must be mastery, somewhere, and if there is no self-control and self-mastery, the control and the mastery will ultimately be imposed from without.