
Enthusiasm

by Eugene V. Debs

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Enthusiasm is the locomotive that draws along the highway of progress the great idea of civilization. Without enthusiasm the world would today be in the midnight of the dark ages. No great reform is brought about without enthusiasm. No organization of great bodies is possible without enthusiasm. In the world's work the enthusiast will be found in the forefront. For him no night is too dark, no day too long; sickness and disaster stay him for a short time only; he presses to his goal through all opposition, and death is his only conqueror.

It was enthusiasm that carried the teachings of the lowly Nazarene from the shores of Jordan to the palace of Constantine. It was enthusiasm that made the barefooted soldiers of Washington the heroes of the revolution. It was enthusiasm that made the captain of artillery at Toulon the hero of Lodi and Austerlitz.¹ It was enthusiasm that gave birth to Newton's immortal work, *Principia*. It was enthusiasm that gave birth to Laplace's Nebular Hypothesis.² It was enthusiasm that made Florence Nightingale the ministering angel. It was enthusiasm that made Abraham Lincoln the grandest among men.

We sometimes laugh at the enthusiast. To use he seems over-earnest; but his mind sees clearly the great object lying way beyond our observation. He never falters in his pursuit, nor stops to explain to others what to him is already known. He is after truth, that suffices him. The world may jeer, it may put obstacles in his way but he rises superior to everything.

It is this spirit of enthusiasm that will finally redeem the world. All the great wrongs we now suffer, the enthusiast will right in the course of time. You can not frighten him, you can not buy him. His mission is to right a wrong and that mission will be accomplished.

¹ Reference is to **Napoleon Bonaparte** (1769-1821).

² **Pierre-Simon Laplace** (1749-1827) was a pioneering French astronomer that postulated about the origination of stars and the universe.

Enthusiasm is more than an unconquerable will, it is a conquering will. It beats down its enemies and carries its friends with it on wings of light. Let a set of men be fired with enthusiasm and to them all things are possible. Organized enthusiasm is simply irresistible. It is an army with banners that have never been lowered to a foe. Charge is the only command enthusiasm knows Retreat is not in its dictionary.

Edited with footnotes by Tim Davenport

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