

to the absolute extent we can. Our partisanship should stop at the shores, as it historically has.

I know in an election year it is going to be difficult for us to discipline ourselves in that way, but we have to do so because of the stakes involved.

I find after 1 year of the liberation of the Iraqi people, great cause for hope.

We should not minimize the difficulties that lie ahead. I think we need to be extraordinarily candid about the problems we will continue to confront. But at the end of the day, if we persevere as we know we can, if we have the same resolve and strength of character our young men and women do who are there fighting right now—and you only have to talk to a few to be imbued with their spirit—then I have no doubt the United States will stay strong, our great ally Great Britain will do the same, as well as other members of the coalition that have assisted us so strongly; and in persevering and staying the course, we will be able, No. 1, to turn over political control of Iraq on June 30 to the Iraqi Governing Council and, No. 2, we will be able to stay for as long as it takes to help secure that country.

Just as we have had the opportunity to govern ourselves, the Iraqi people will have the same opportunity. That will, in turn, show others in the region how they too can govern themselves democratically, they can live in an environment of freedom, and that is infectious and probably would do more than any other single thing to ensure that region of the world can enjoy peace, and that peace can even come to the troubled relationship between the Palestinians and Israelis. It is something to be hoped for. It all depends on our ability right now to persevere, stay the course, and to maintain the hope and optimism we had when we began this operation.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. BYRD. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. CORNYN). Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. BYRD. Mr. President, what is the order before the Senate?

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senate is on the motion to recommit S. 1637.

Mr. BYRD. I ask unanimous consent that I may speak out of order.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

THE EASTER PROMISE

Mr. BYRD. Mr. President, the Senate will soon enter a period of recess prior to the Easter holidays. I am a bit like Samuel Adams, I believe it was, who said that he could listen to anyone speak of his religion. I am that way. I

can listen to a Methodist, to a Baptist, a Presbyterian, Seventh-Day Adventist, a Jewish rabbi, a Catholic priest. I have no problem in listening and paying rapt attention to anyone speak of his or her religion.

My own religion is the Christian religion. I grew up in a Christian home. I was raised by an aunt and uncle who took me after my mother died during the influenza epidemic in 1918. I was a bit less than 1 year old at that time, my mother having died on Armistice Day 1918. I was brought to West Virginia and grew up in the coal camps of southern West Virginia.

At this point I should say that the woman who raised me was a very religious woman. She did not go around wearing religion on her sleeve or claiming to be better than anybody else; she simply was a kindly lady who believed in religion, the old-time religion. She practiced it and many times I used to hear her pray after the old kerosene lamp was out and the rooms were dark. I heard her praying on her knees. I could say that my uncle, Titus Dalton Byrd, was also a God-fearing man who died when he was 82 years of age, a coal miner. He never owed any man a penny when he passed away from this Earthly life. I never heard him utter the Lord's name in vain in all the years that I lived with him. So that is the way it was. They were poor folks.

I recently heard someone say—I believe one of the Democratic Presidential candidates—that he was the first in his family to attend college, or some such thing. Well, I am the first in my family to have gone to second grade in school. About the only books that were in my home when I grew up as a child were a Montgomery Ward catalog, perhaps a Sears Roebuck catalog, and the Holy Bible, King James Version. The man who raised me could read the Bible. I do not know how he learned to read, but nevertheless there was a Bible in that home, and here is the Bible on my desk at this moment.

Now, why do I have this Bible here? Well, Easter is coming on and I am going to read from chapter 20 of the book of Saint John. I will not make any comment on the Scriptures, except to read very briefly from them. I do not claim to be a minister. I am not a minister, but I am fortunate enough to have the gift of being able to read, and as we approach Easter, I think it appropriate to read into the RECORD the following excerpts from the book of Saint John, chapter 20:

The first day of the week cometh Mary Magdalene early, when it was yet dark, unto the sepulchre, and seeth the stone taken away from the sepulchre.

Then she runneth, and cometh to Simon Peter, and to the other disciple, whom Jesus loved, and saith unto them, They have taken away the Lord out of the sepulchre, and we know not where they have laid him.

Peter therefore went forth, and that other disciple, and came to the sepulchre.

So they ran both together: and the other disciple did outrun Peter, and came first to the sepulchre.

And he stooping down, and looking in, saw the linen clothes lying; yet went he not in.

Then cometh Simon Peter following him, and went into the sepulchre, and seeth the linen clothes lie,

And the napkin, that was about his head, not lying with the linen clothes, but wrapped together in a place by itself.

Then went in also that other disciple, which came first to the sepulchre, and he saw, and believed.

For as yet they knew not the scripture, that he must rise again from the dead.

Then the disciples went away again unto their own home.

But Mary stood without at the sepulchre weeping: and as she wept, she stooped down, and looked into the sepulchre,

And seeth two angels in white sitting, the one at the head, and the other at the feet, where the body of Jesus had lain.

And they say unto her, Woman, why weepest thou? She saith unto them, Because they have taken away my Lord, and I know not where they have laid him.

And when she had thus said, she turned herself back, and saw Jesus standing, and knew not that it was Jesus.

Jesus saith unto her, Woman, why weepest thou? whom seekest thou? She, supposing him to be the gardener, saith unto him, Sir, if thou have borne him hence, tell me where thou hast laid him, and I will take him away.

Jesus saith unto her, Mary. She turned herself, and saith unto him, Rabboni; which is to say, Master.

Jesus saith unto her, Touch me not; for I am not yet ascended to my Father: but go to my brethren, and say unto them, I ascend unto my Father, and your Father; and to my God, and your God.

Easter Sunday, Mr. President, is the holiest day on the Christian calendar. On that first Easter Sunday, so long ago, a momentous gift was given to the world. It was a promise of life everlasting, of immortality.

For God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son,

That whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.

It is easy to overlook the magnitude of this great but invisible gift amid all the brightly colored cellophane and foil-covered chocolates, amid the soft nests of translucent plastic grass nestled around sugary jelly beans and luminous dyed eggs. The talents of advertising agencies and merchandisers effect a powerful sleight of hand, drawing our focus away from the moving story of Easter with the dazzle of sugary commercial products that have been divorced from their historical and religious meaning.

It is difficult to ponder the end of life and death while surrounded by a quickening Earth under a warm Sun. These lovely spring days are each a small gift, too. In West Virginia, the trees are just in bud, allowing the warmth of the Sun to reach all the way into the shadiest hollows. In Washington, the 92nd annual Cherry Blossom Festival is underway, as the cherry trees along the tidal basin and the Jefferson Memorial create a lovely vista of blossoms.

Loveliest of trees, the cherry now
Is hung with bloom along the bough,
And stands about the woodland ride
Wearing white for Easter.

So said Alfred Edward Housman, who was a Shropshire lad.

But the promise of rebirth and gift of new life everlasting are the great prize, hard won from the tragedy of betrayal and a torturous, protracted death.

Over the span of a week, from His entry into Jerusalem on Palm Sunday, and the final miracle of the resurrection and ascension on Easter Sunday, an epic unfolds. Christ's pain and suffering, so nobly borne, gave no hint of the miracle to come.

On this Easter Sunday, I offer my hopes to our men and women serving in Iraq and Afghanistan and all the dangerous places in the world. Our hearts, our hopes, and our thoughts are with you, and may the Lord protect you and give you the strength to see you through these difficult times.

As William Cowper wrote:

It is the Lord who rises with feeling in his wings. When comforts are declining, he grants the soul again a season of clear shining to cheer it after rain.

I would like to think as we used to back in my younger days of the words spoken by William Jennings Bryan. The words that come from his proof of immortality:

If the Father deigns to touch with divine power the cold and pulseless heart of the buried acorn and to make it burst forth from its prison walls, will He leave neglected in the earth the soul of man, made in the image of his Creator?

If he stoops to give to the rosebush, whose withered blossoms float upon the autumn breeze, the sweet assurance of another springtime, will He refuse the words of hope of the sons of men when the frosts of winter come?

If matter, mute and inanimate, though changed by the forces of nature into a multitude of forms, can never die, will the imperial spirit of man suffer annihilation when it has paid a brief visit like a royal guest to this tenement of clay?

No, I am sure that He who, notwithstanding His apparent prodigality, created nothing without a purpose, and wasted not a single atom in all His creation, has made provision for a future life in which man's universal longing for immortality will find his realization.

I am as sure that we live again as I am sure that we live today.

I also enjoy reading from William Jennings Bryan's "The Prince of Peace," reading what he said about the grain of wheat.

He said:

In Cairo I secured a few grains of wheat that had slumbered for more than thirty centuries in an Egyptian tomb. As I looked at them, this thought came into my mind: If one of those grains had been planted on the banks of the Nile the year after it grew, and all of its lineal descendants had been planted and replanted from that time until now, its progeny would today be sufficiently numerous to feed the teeming millions of the world. An unbroken chain of life connects the earliest grains of wheat with the grains that we sow and reap. There is in the grain of wheat an invisible something which has the power to discard the body that we see, and from earth and air fashion a new body so much like the old one that we can not tell the one from the other. If this invisible germ of life in the grain of wheat can thus pass

unimpaired through three thousand resurrections, I shall not doubt that my soul has power to clothe itself with a body suited to its new existence when this earthly frame has crumbled into dust.

I thought a couple of these reminiscences from William Jennings Bryan and a few passages of the Scriptures might be appropriate on this April afternoon as we close.

I finally end with the words of Julian S. Cutler, whose poem, "Through the Year," reminds us the Lord is with us in all the seasons of the year and in all the seasons of our lives. And at Easter, we celebrate God's promise that we may be with Him in life everlasting:

God be with you in the Springtime
When the violets unfold,

And the buttercups and cowslips
Fill the fields with yellow gold;
In the time of apple blossoms,
When the happy bluebirds sing,
Filling all the world with gladness—
God be with you in the Spring!

God be with you in the Summer,
When the sweet June roses blow,
When the bobolinks are laughing
And the brooks with music flow;
When the fields are white with daisies
And the days are glad and long—
God be with you in the Summer,
Filling all your world with song.

God be with you in the Autumn,
When the birds and flowers have fled,
And along the woodland pathways
Leaves are falling, gold and red;
When the Summer lies behind you,
In the evening of the year—

God be with you in the Autumn,
Then to fill your heart with cheer.

God be with you in the Winter,
When the snow lied deep and white,
When the sleeping fields are silent
And the stars gleam cold and bright.
When the hand and heart are tired
With life's long and weary quest—
God be with you Erma, in the Winter,
Just to guide you into rest.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Delaware.

ASBESTOS LITIGATION

Mr. CARPER. Mr. President, before Senator BYRD leaves the floor, I wish him a joyous Easter and thank him for reminding us of what Easter is all about.

When Members reflect on the diversity of the religious views of our constituents—some are Protestant, some are Catholic; some folks in West Virginia or Delaware are Jewish, as some here are. We have folks in our States who are Hindu, Muslim, Buddhist. There is a wide diversity of religions in this country. It is a sign of our strength, not a sign of weakness.

We are reminded that one of the reasons we are strong is because we respect the right of everyone to worship God as he or she sees fit, or to not worship at all.

Ironically, whether we happen to be Jewish, Catholic, Protestant, or some other faith, it is interesting how often we agree on a premise, a principle laid out in the New Testament.

I don't think Senator BYRD read it today, but we call it the Golden Rule.

The idea there is to treat other people the way we want to be treated. I am not enough of a religious scholar to know where that scripture appears in the New Testament. It may also appear in the Koran or the Torah or any other religious text of other religions around the world. But my guess is it does say, in so many words, we should treat other people the way we want to be treated.

I want to talk about that principle and how it might apply to what we do in the Senate. I apply it to an issue we may address as soon as we return April 19.

Majority Leader FRIST has said, when we return immediately following the Easter holiday, the first issue of any consequence he would like for us to address deals with asbestos litigation. This is something I have worked on, along with many of my colleagues, for most of the 3 years I have been in the Senate.

My first year in the Senate, about a year or two before the Presiding Officer arrived, I remember visiting Senator BYRD. I asked how this place works and he gave me some pointers. He was a great mentor then and he continues to be a great mentor today.

Among the pieces of advice he gave me: When people want to talk to you, talk to them.

It turns out one of the calls my first year was from a fellow named Frank Macher. He is somebody my wife introduced me to. She worked at DuPont at the time and had dealings with Ford Motor Company. Frank Macher was a fairly senior official at Ford Motor Company. He retired from Ford Motor Company.

I lost track of him for a few years and he called to say he had assumed a new position with a new company. I asked, "Who is that," and he told me he had just become the CEO of a company called Federal-Mogul. I was not familiar with the company. He said I was probably familiar with some of their products. They manufacture or sell and distribute, among other things, Champion spark plugs and a variety of other products used in the automotive industry.

He said: Sometime when I come to Washington in my new role I want to be able to come and see you; it is good to renew a friendship. I said: Come on over.

Lo and behold, a month or so later he came. We had a great meeting. It was a good moment. He headed for home. I said: If you are back this way, let us know.

After 6 months or so, he called me again. I said: How are you doing?

He said: We have a problem.

I asked: What is that?

He said that somewhere along the line, before he became CEO of this company, Federal-Mogul had acquired a subsidiary, I think it was a British subsidiary, for a period of time, not a long period of time but maybe a couple of years.