Once to Every Man and Nation

James Russell Lowell, 1845

1. Once to every man and nation, comes the moment
   to decide, In the strife of truth with falsehood,
   for the good or evil side; Some great cause, some
   great decision, offering each the bloom or blight,

2. Then to side with truth is noble, when we share her
   wretched crust, Ere her cause bring fame and profit,
   with the cross that turns not back; New occasions
   brave man chooses while the coward stands aside,

3. By the light of burning martyrs, Christ, Thy bleeding
   feet we track, Toiling up new Calv'ries ever
   teach new duties, time makes ancient good uncouth,
   sways the future, and behind the dim unknown,

4. Though the cause of evil prospers, yet the truth a-
   lone is strong; Though her portion be the scaffold,
   and up on the throne be wrong; Yet that scaffold
   public

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Stand-eth God within the shadow, keeping watch a-

And the choice goes by for-ev-er, ’twixt that darkness
Till the multitude make virtue of the faith they
They must upward still and onward, who would keep a-

and that light.

had denied.

-breast of truth.

bove His own.