

# TODAY AND TOMORROW

An Oration

by  
D. Keith Tonkel



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The author, with this oration, won first in Mississippi State contest and second in National Collegiate Contests, 1957.

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To our generation: The youth of today—the world of tomorrow.

In the summer of 1945, a bomb fell on Hiroshima. In a matter of minutes, what once had been a thriving, modern city was a vast ocean of flames. One bomb more. One city less.

A few years later, the first H-bomb was exploded. The H-bomb was a weapon so powerful that it used the multi-million degree heat of the atomic bomb as a fuse to set off its explosive energy.

And now the mind of science considers the cobalt bomb—an instrument of destruction that is absolutely beyond the comprehension of the human mind. The cobalt bomb is at least twenty times more powerful than its “little brother called hydrogen.”

These are the forces which have helped mold our lives. These are the elements that have nourished our minds and bodies. Today we stand on the threshold of tomorrow in a world of suspicion and fear. I speak for my generation—the youth of today’s America. The time has come when we can no longer sit back and quietly observe that the only defense for many young people today comes from the law courts of the land. This generation is inherently good—not evil. For America’s sake we must be made more conscious of this basic goodness. We need to accentuate the positive and deactivate the negative. We can remain silent no longer; we must speak out. No longer will we be downtrodden.

There is still hope for the future. As long as man lives, there will be hope. When the prophets of doom and destruction have had their say, and the world is still here, it is the youth of today who will be seeking to guide the ship of mankind into the untroubled waters of peace, security, and brotherhood....

We, the youth of today, are not—nor do we claim to be—perfect. We are far from it. But one thing is sure. We are working for understanding and tolerance to live in a world which is not founded on ivory towers or sunken in the muck and mire of Mr. and Mrs. I. Criticize, Americans.

Like every generation that has gone before us, we pray that we might share a different world. We want to know a world that is conceived in liberty and dedicated—no, determined—in the proposition that all men are created equal.

**--- END OF FREE PREVIEW ---**