

He was a warm advocate of equal rights to all, and his influence in shaping the legislation of the country to this end was sensibly felt in the troublesome times immediately following the war. The following extract from one of his speeches is illustrative of the man as well as the period when it was delivered. In 1868, in a case pending before the Federal court at Louisville, where the validity of an act of the Kentucky Legislature was questioned on the ground that it was in violation of the Fourteenth Amendment to the National Constitution, he said :

“If I stood here the advocate of the negro, I might insist that the wealth and comforts of the State have to a large extent been created by his labor ; and may I not say his unrequited labor ? For, as a rule, labor brings to the laborer means of his own ; but the negro, after generations of toil, stands before us to-day as empty as the sluggard—poor to almost nakedness, and practically friendless—without land, without money to buy tools to work with, without a shelter he can call his own, without education, his ambition, spirit, and hope even, fettered by the memories and effects of slavery. I could plead for him that he is a human being with God-given feelings and capacities ; I could show how he is despised by the thoughtless and oppressed by the lawless ; and I could invoke for him from this court the protection of a just and impartial administration of the law, before which the rich and the poor, the white and the black, stand equal. But this is a controversy between white men. I stand here the advocate of justice and the Constitution. Where justice reigns under the Constitution, oppression is now unknown to any class or color. I would not have violated that equality in the social compact which the Constitution proclaims and seeks to guard. I would strike down the hand that would tear the now perfect bandage from the eyes of Justice. To-day the right of equal protection belongs to all, without distinction of race or color. It is now the office of the courts to enforce an equal law, and justice is too sacred to be confused by the illusions of color or awed by the frowns of prejudice.”

The following is an extract from an address made at the decoration of soldiers' graves at Cave Hill Cemetery, Louisville, May 30, 1875. Dr. J. J. Speed said these words were worthy to be printed on silk :

“The men who sleep beneath this sod and whose memories we this day celebrate died in open war ; no private feud or personal feeling impelled them to the death-struggle. At the call of their country