



"The Statue of Liberty Enlightening the World." National Park Service, Statue of Liberty National Monument.

(xii) The Statue of Liberty—or, Liberty Enlightening the World?

The Statue of Liberty was conceived in the mind of Edouard de Laboulaye who had been deeply touched by the American Revolution and the biblical principles upon which it was based. How it had contrasted with France's revolution led by atheists 13 years later. The vision was birthed by French sculptor Auguste Bartholdi. Bartholdi writes of the statue, which is officially named, "The Statue of Liberty Enlightening the World":

The statue was born for this place which inspired its conception. May God be pleased to bless my efforts and my work, and to crown it with success, the duration and the moral influence which it ought to have. I shall be happy to have been able to consecrate the best years of my life to being the interpreter of the noble hearts whose dream has been the realization of the monument to the French American Union.¹

A frail young Jewish poet by the name of Emma Lazarus contributed her poem entitled "The New Colossus" which was, years later, to be displayed upon a bronze plaque on the base of "Liberty Enlightening the World." Its beautiful lines grasp each American's heart:

Not like the brazen giant of Greek fame,
with conquering limbs astride from land to land;
Here at our sea-washed, sunset gates shall stand
A mighty woman with a torch, whose flame
Is the imprisoned lightning, and her name
Mother of Exiles. From her beacon-hand
Glows world-wide welcome;
her mild eyes command
The air-bridged harbor that twin cities frame.
"Keep, ancient lands, your storied pomp!"
cries she
With silent lips.
"Give me your tired, your poor,
Your huddled masses yearning to
breathe free,
The wretched refuse of your teeming shore.
Send these, the homeless, tempest-tost to me,
I lift my lamp beside the golden door!"

A six-stanza anonymous poem began like this:

Ah, Madame Liberty, God bless you!
Since all the cash is there at hand,
No longer need it now distress you
The question of a place to stand.

The last stanza reads:

Soon you in your allotted station,
Firm in your tower, strong and tall,
Will give this truth a new illustration,
The People are the all in all.

The inauguration ceremony of "The Statue of Liberty Enlightening the World" was begun with a powerful prayer to Almighty God, by Reverend Richard S. Storrs, D.D., excerpted below:

Almighty God, our Heavenly Father, who art of infinite majesty and mercy, by whose counsel and might the courses of the worlds are wisely ordained and irresistibly established, yet who takest thought of the children of men, and to whom our homage in all our works is justly due: We bless and praise Thee for the knowledge and understanding which Thou bestowest upon man, and for the spirit of constancy and courage born within him of Thy inspiration. We glorify Thee for the command which Thou dost give him over treasures of the mine and the strength of the hills, that he may make them the ministers of lessons of a gracious significance; and we humbly and gratefully recognize Thy presence in all which he achieves of beauty and power. The mind to devise and the will to accomplish, both are of Thee. From Thee cometh the artificer's skill; and to Thee the patience of faithful workmen, in whatever dexterous labor of the hands, equally renders laud and praise. It is in Thy favor, and through the operation of the Gospel of Thy grace, that cities stand in quiet prosperity; that peaceful commerce covers the seas; that peoples and nations separated by oceans are not severed in spirit, but continue allied, in common desire and in mutual regard, with happy recollections and with happier hopes . . . We pray that the Liberty which it represents may continue to enlighten with beneficent instruction, and to bless with majestic and wide bene-

diction, the nations which have part in this work of renown; that it may stand a symbol of perpetual concord between them; and that walking in the paths of knowledge and freedom, they may constantly advance in the wisdom of their councils, in magnanimous enterprise, and in the noble and salutary arts which are cherished by peace. . . . We pray for all the nations of the earth; that in equity and charity their sure foundations may be established; that in piety and wisdom they may find a true welfare, in obedience to Thee, glory and praise; and that, in all the enlargements of their power, they may be ever the joyful servants of Him to whose holy dominion and kingdom shall be no end. . . .²

At this auspicious event, Count Ferdinand de Lesseps' speech, given on behalf of the Franco-American Union, is moving and insightful as to the purpose and significance of this statue and her torch:

Citizens of America! I have hastened to accept the gracious invitation accorded me by the government of the Great American Republic, to be present today. It was a generous thought of those who presided at the erection of the Statue of Liberty. She has honored equally those who have conceived this spirit of hospitality and those who took great pleasure in accepting it. "Liberty Enlightening the World!" A grand beacon raised in the midst of the waves at the threshold of a free America! In landing under the rays of her kindly light we know that we have reached the country where the individual initiative is developed in all its power; where progress is religion; where large fortunes become the property of the people, to endow charities, to encourage education, to develop science, and to sow for the future seeds of greater benefit. . . .³

With the richness of this heritage and the Christian values upon which our American "Statue of Liberty Enlightening the World" was birthed, it is astounding, once again, to have viewed the media's centennial celebrations on television and national newspapers, referring to her just simply as "the great lady." The true historical importance and valuable Christian heritage pertaining to one of the greatest symbols of America's liberties and freedoms was covered up and eliminated from commentaries and interpretative

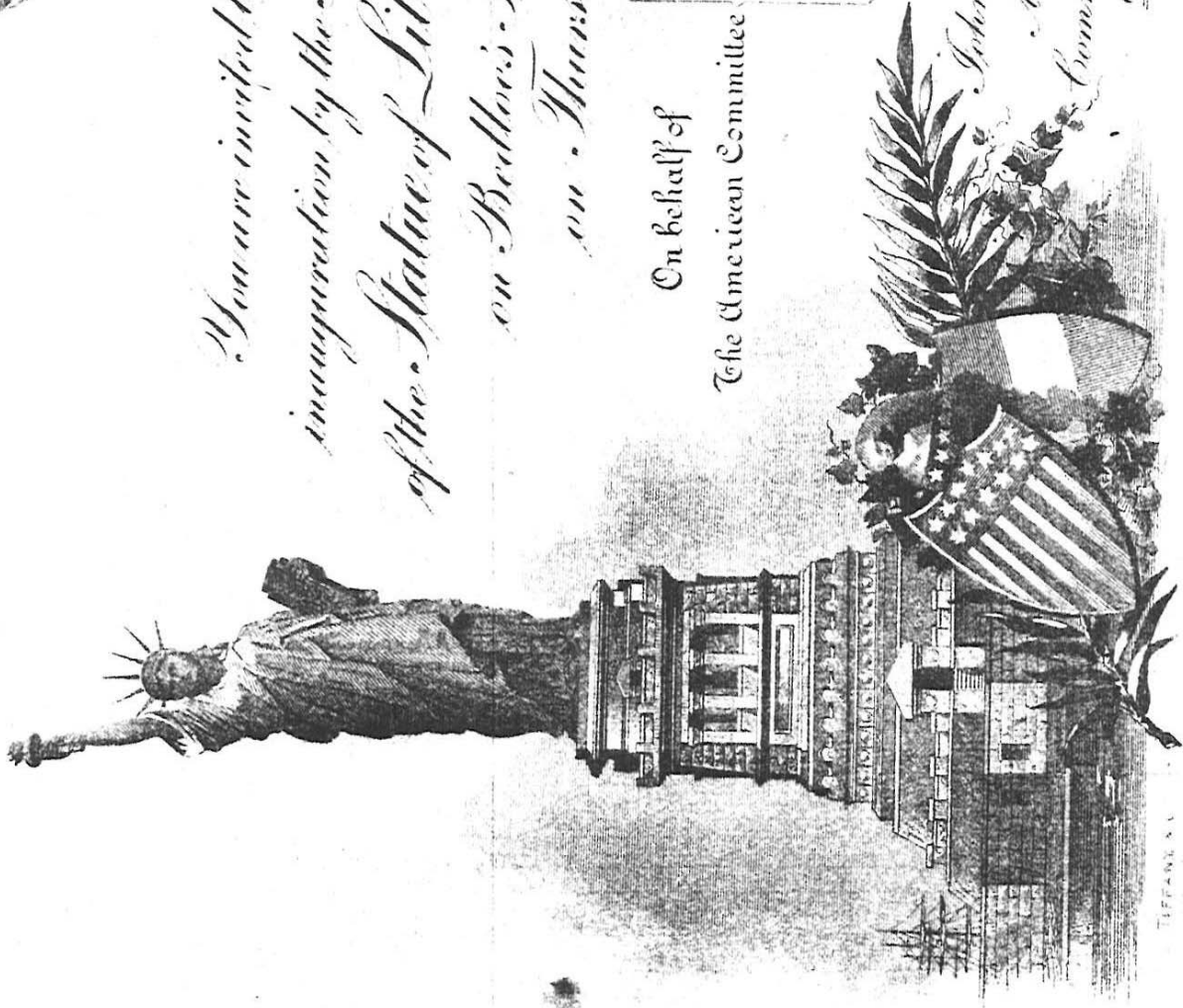
material on the subject.



You are invited to be present on the occasion of the
 inauguration by the President of the United States,
 of the Statue of Liberty Enlightening the World,
 on Bedloe's Island, New York Harbor,
 on Thursday, October 28th, 1886.

On behalf of
 The American Committee

- | | |
|---------------------|--------------------|
| William M. Evarts, | Chairman. |
| Richard Butler, | Secretary. |
| Henry F. Spaulding, | Treasurer; |
| Joseph W. Lowell, | Parke Godwin, |
| James W. Pinchet, | J. Mansford Moore, |
| | Frederic A. Wells. |



John M. Schofield,
 Major-General U.S. Army
 Commanding
 Division of the Atlantic.

INAUGURATION OF
THE STATUE OF
LIBERTY ENLIGHTENING
THE WORLD

BY THE

PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES

ON BEDLOW'S ISLAND, NEW YORK
THURSDAY, OCTOBER 28, 1886

Issued under the Authority of the Committee

NEW YORK
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1887

THE STATUE
OF LIBERTY
ENLIGHTENING
THE WORLD

Frederic Auguste Bartholdi

New York Bound
New York