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Awake for Freedom's Sake

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Leonard E. Read

Awake for Freedom's Sake

by

Leonard E. Read

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1

Awake for Freedom's Sake

Awake and sing, ye that dwell in dust

—Isaiah 26:19

All of us “dwell in dust,” more or less, and the dust is thickest where there is an *unawareness* that we so dwell. To awake means nothing less than a coming to ourselves; it implies a realization of our dustiness. And to sing—according to my interpretation of this Old Testament admonition—is personally to harmonize with intellectual, moral, and spiritual *progression*.

No person has the slightest idea of how many ways people occupy their time, ranging from hobbies to workaday endeavors—all sorts of occupations. Some persons have two or three, others a dozen or more. There may be 300 million for all I know, and no two precisely alike. To spot my place in the sun, to grasp what a tiny bit of human dust I am, requires no more than a realization of how infinitesimal is my know-how relative to the total know-hows, 1/300,000,000th, shall we say. The same can be said of others.

To highlight this seldom recognized fact of life, I need only recall the numerous preoccupations of my earlier years that today are in limbo, beyond my ken. Among them: entomology, mechanical drawing, dry-picking chickens, culinary innovations, chemical productions, building wireless receivers and senders, rigging airplanes, and so on. I no longer possess the numerous know-hows that once were mine; but imagine the countless millions of know-hows experienced by others that are not even remotely mine. Indeed, I dwell in dust!

Were others similarly to assess themselves, what a boon to progress that would be! But assessments, by and large, are just the opposite. Most individuals, once they become proficient in this or that bit of expertise, lose all awareness of their “dustiness”; notions of having arrived possess the mentality. This blinds them to how infinitesimal are their several know-hows.

Progression or advancement never graces anyone who succumbs to the notion that he has arrived—“has it made,” as we say. This mortal moment, if seen aright, is

featured by *growth* in awareness, perception, consciousness, day in and day out. To act otherwise is to write one's own death sentence—life's high purpose abandoned. It is well to remember that "tall oaks from little acorns grow," and that emerging, evolving man spawns from "ye that dwell in dust." Let each of us confess that this is our dwelling. To "awake and sing" is the appropriate ambition!

The dictionary defines success as most people think of it: ". . . the gaining of wealth, fame, rank, etc." Briefly, this is the big-shot syndrome. One of the wealthiest men known to me jumped from an airplane into the Baltic Sea. Another, atop his own tall building, did a leap and went kersplosh onto the pavement. Lord John Maynard Keynes, advocate of spending ourselves rich, gained international fame. And whoever gained more rank than Hitler or Stalin! *To regard wealth, fame, rank as success is a failure in thinking.*

Let me share and comment upon several enlightening observations on success by thoughtful individuals of the past.

The eminently successful man should beware of the tendency of wealth to chill and isolate.

This was written by a very wealthy banker but one not so smitten by his riches as to have lost his power of thinking. Far from being chilled and isolated, he knew that wealth is never an end in itself, but only a possible means to desirable goals. The freedom way of life was respected rather than rejected by this millionaire, for material success did not go to his head. Why? His head was too full of good thoughts!

The simple virtues of willingness, readiness, alertness and courtesy will carry a young man farther than mere smartness.

Smartness, as here used, refers to those who are ". . . conceited and self-assertive; cocky." No awareness of their dustiness, none whatsoever! They "have it made," and thus lack awareness of higher goals to achieve, higher methods of getting there.

A willingness or a yearning to learn—a passionate wanting-to-know-it-ness—is both a simple and a priceless virtue. It is the key to going uphill with ease and joy—singing all the way. Readiness and alertness are companion virtues.

Courtesy is contagious. Practice courtesy and others will graciously share their ideas. Based on my experience, wisdom beyond one's own will show forth from the

unexpected, even “Out of the mouths of babes,” as the Psalmist phrased it. Hail to the simple virtues!

Character is the real foundation of all worthwhile success.

A person with character is a moral being. His or her life is distinguished by a striving for charity, intelligence, justice, love, reverence, humility and integrity. We should bear in mind that freedom is basically a moral problem—moral philosophy being the study of what’s right and wrong. Economics is a branch thereof, being the study of what’s right and wrong in overcoming scarcity. Morality is the foundation, plenitude the possibility. Among a people lacking morality, material shortages are inevitable. Strive for character!

Somebody said it couldn't be done, but he with a chuckle replied that “maybe it couldn't” but he would be one who wouldn't say so till he'd tried.

Here we have a verbal portrait of every true entrepreneur. The individual who sees beyond the what-is into the what-might-be is the one who converts dreams into realities. These are the ones who account for our high standard of living in spite of all the destructive forces presently on the rampage.

Wrote Thomas Macaulay in his *History of England*:

It has often been found that profuse expenditures, heavy taxation, absurd commercial restrictions, corrupt tribunals, disastrous wars, seditions, persecutions, conflagrations, inundations, have not been able to destroy capital so fast as the exertions of private citizens have been able to create it.

Reflect upon the millions of goods and services which we now enjoy that we couldn't imagine as possibilities a few decades ago, things now so commonplace that we take them for granted. Why? Thanks to those who simply have gone ahead and tried what “couldn't be done”—the entrepreneurs!

If a man write a better book, preach a better sermon, or make a better mouse-trap, though he build his house in the woods, the world will make a beaten path to his door.

This is an ingenious way of phrasing the law of attraction. At any given moment there are always those out front with better mouse-traps, tastier cooking, winning golf, lovelier music, or whatever. And we do indeed beat a path to their doors.

How do those of us who are working for a better understanding of the freedom way of life induce others to beat a path to our doors? For unless they are coming to us for ideas, we are of no value in this respect. My experience suggests that we keep these points in mind:

1. The higher grade the objective, the higher grade must the method be.
2. Human liberty correlates with wisdom and understanding—a high-grade objective.
3. The method must be commensurately as high: achieve that *excellence* in understanding and exposition which will cause others to seek our tutorship.

If skilled enough, even though our houses be in the woods, others will come knocking at our doors.¹

How shall we pass swiftly from point to point, and be present always at the focus where the greatest number of vital forces unite in their purest energy? To maintain this ecstasy is success in life.

This was written by a nineteenth-century English stylist, essayist and critic. What an insight! This Englishman was doubtless thinking of all aspects of life—the road to truth in whatever field.

“Vital forces”? Those life energies manifested as bits of expertise and pieces of know-how existing in enormous variety among millions of individuals.

How will they unite in their “purest energy”? Leave them free to flow and these forces join and come into focus in all the goods, services, thoughts by which we “awake and sing,” live and prosper. Briefly, leave all creative activities to the free and unfettered market where the wisdom is. This is the formula for success in life—ecstasy!

¹ For an excellent explanation of how the law of attraction works its wonders, see “Isaiah’s Job” by Albert Jay Nock. Copy on request to FEE.

Step by step, little by little, bit by bit—that is the way to wisdom. Dollars are the sons not of dollars, but of pennies.

This but confirms Isaiah's prescription for clearing the dust. Finite man never attains "the whole truth and nothing but the truth." Man's goal, with the help of others, past and present, is to shake loose his "dustiness" as best he can. This is the noble goal!

In the realm of goods and services, the successful man is he who best serves, rather than exploits, his fellowmen. And what he receives in exchange is incomparably more than he gives.

Broadly speaking, there are two types of social organization: (1) the Command Society and (2) the Free Society. While there is no perfect example of either one, Russia most nearly approximates the former. But even with wall-to-wall socialism there is an enormous leakage of creative human energy. Were there no such leakage, all Russians would perish.

The U.S.A. most nearly approximates the Free Society. However, even here there is exploitation, and it is on the increase. Our problem is to find ways to be done with exploitation—all of it—and replace it with *service*.

Here is a truism: "The science of business is the science of service and he profits most who serves best." Read the next chapter for an explanation of how one receives benefits too numerous to count, in exchange for next to nothing. Incomparably more, indeed!

Our problem? It is to understand and find ways to explain a false correlation which, if not corrected, will take the U.S.A. all the way into the Command Society. Here it is: Most people in their "dustiness" observe a prosperity greater than any other people have ever experienced, occurring simultaneously with increasing governmental intervention. They conclude that the intervention is the cause of their well-being. What a fallacy!

The fact? The present prosperity is nothing more than a thrust from the past. The ways of freedom are in our bloodstream and persist even when not understood—for a time. High time to awake!

Never one thing and seldom one person can make for a success. It takes a number of them merging into a perfect whole.

Be alert to enlightenment from anyone regardless of occupation or fame. The above comments on success reflect an understanding of freedom on the part of a diverse group: two bankers, a mining engineer, an essayist, a poet, a stylist, an author, a mathematician and, last but not least, a motion picture actress of several decades ago. Quite a choir! So, let's all join in the chorus: *Awake and sing for freedom's sake!*

* * *

The following chapters in this, my 22nd book, reflect a continuing aspiration over a period of 40 years to join the chorus for freedom's sake.

Goethe observed that "All truly wise ideas have been thought already thousands of times." I disclaim originality, so why all this writing? It's a response to an urge I love, namely, to uncover the truly wise ideas of great souls past and present and to share my findings with those who do—or potentially may—love freedom.

The next question is, why the repetition in my writings, not only in this but in previous books? It's because freedom is founded on ever so many of these truly wise ideas. As an example, "Men are endowed by their Creator . . ." is quoted over and over again. Its omission from this or that approach to an understanding of freedom would rob the theme of its very essence. Further, repetition of truly wise ideas—all more or less difficult—tends to hammer them into one's head, as the saying goes. The more of such thoughts in the head, the more freedom for me and thee.

There is yet another advantage to writing and forever rewriting the freedom thesis. Each new effort evokes new phrasings, word arrangements somewhat varied, now and then an improvement—the long, long road to clarity. Should you choose to do so, come along with me and join the chorus!

2

Opportunities Unlimited

I have no desire to meditate or philosophize upon the past. I have only one wish; and that is to direct our eyes toward the infinite future.

—C. F. Kettering

A doff of the hat to “Boss Ket,” one of the all-time geniuses. He was surely one of those few, with eyes toward the “infinite future,” who themselves evolve and thus contribute to human evolution.

On the other hand, those who direct their eyes *only* toward the past give no thrust to a forward movement; for the most part they miss life’s golden opportunities that are in infinite supply. There is but one reason to look back; it is to observe errors, that they may be avoided, and to become aware of truths that help to enhance one’s creativity. So, an eye primarily to the future is the path to such genius as is potentially yours or mine or anyone else’s.

Here is Kettering’s positive approach to life: “Nothing ever built arose to touch the skies unless some man dreamed that it should, some man believed that it could, and some man willed that it must.” This is the perfect formula for the restoration of liberty, the *newest*, most rewarding politico-economic blessing in history.

Among the qualities of this creative genius was an ardent curiosity about the mysteries and wonders of Nature—of a Nature that “never went to college,” as Kettering observed. For instance, why is grass green? Find the answer to how photosynthesis works its wonders and a whole new world of wonders opens to mankind. So, that was one of the unlimited opportunities Kettering was still investigating when he died in 1958.

Can the case be made that golden opportunities are in infinite supply? Yes, if the eye be cast aright. Last evening I was studying Professor Bertel Sparks’ remarkable article in a recent *Freeman*, “How Many Servants Can You Afford?” It occurred to me that opportunities and servants are much the same thing, and I reflected

on some of the many servants common today but unthinkable in the time of my grandfather:

- I note these thoughts with a ball point pen. Countless thousands had a hand in creating this instrument—my servants all.
- A telephone at my side makes it possible to talk with individuals in this and other countries in a matter of seconds.
- In the bathroom, a plastic comb, an almost magic razor from England, shaving cream, at the press of a button, a tiled shower with hot and cold running water properly mixed at shower head, after-shave lotion, tissue papers of this and that variety, on and on.
- Corn flakes at breakfast, bacon cured and sliced, delectable tomato juice in a glass jar, lemons from across the nation, roasted coffee from Colombia, an oven and refrigerator run by electricity, the house warmed by gas from Texas.
- At the wheel of my car, a self-starter (Kettering among my servants), automatic steering, air conditioning, and the miracle of self-propulsion.
- At the office, electric typewriters, a machine that turns out sheets of copy clear as the original at the rate of 30 per minute, another machine that collates several items and inserts and stamps and seals the envelopes at 6,000 per hour.
- Off at noon from New York to San Francisco—five hours. And what a meal at seven miles above sea level! Imagine fresh salmon—broiled—flown in from the Pacific Northwest. Those fishermen and the ones who had a hand in making the broiler as well as the jet plane—*all my servants!*

Here we have creativity at the human level by literally millions of people. As no one knows how to make a simple pencil, so no one knows how to make a ball point pen or any one of the many thousands of parts in a jet plane. The person who draws a blueprint or mines ore or operates a machine tool—each with his or her bit of unique expertise—is a part of this flowing process.

An inventor such as Edison or Kettering is a rare genius. He sees the stars, as we say, how the bits of creativity can be brought together to result in power steering, a storage battery, a package of corn flakes, or any one of opportunities unlimited. The inventor is a synthesist. However, his synthesizing presupposes tiny bits of expertise which he does not possess. This glorious tribute we can credit to the

inventor: not only is he your and my servant but he makes the countless millions our servants—unknowingly!

As to servants, Kettering had this to say in a Commencement speech at his Alma Mater on the 25th anniversary of his graduation:

. . . to be a good servant implies two things, willingness to work and willingness to learn, because *no one of us knows very much*. And if, when you pack your bag for this eventful journey, you will pack egotism and selfishness at the bottom of the bag, and if you will lay your servant's uniform on top, the passports will not have to be opened, and they will pass you through the line.

"No one of us knows very much." I'll wager that Kettering never thought of himself as my servant, any more than do the millions who wait upon you and me. Boss Ket's goals were those of perpetual ascendancy—"toward the infinite future." And the goals of the millions are as varied as their number—no two alike. This is the way it should be, each with eyes on his or her own aspirations, not on your or my satisfactions. When each makes the most of selfenlightened self-interest—then each becomes your and my servant—unknowingly.

What a fascinating idea, one that greatly clarifies the case for human liberty. *Opportunities can be servants, and in infinite supply*. Grasp this point and we have the explanation as to why I have far more servants than any King or Queen or millionaire ever had prior to my grandfather's time.

What is the real advantage of this unprecedented wealth? I am relieved of the mundane chores that so preoccupied my grandfather. I am *free* to concentrate on what I most wish to do in life: write and lecture on the freedom philosophy. And this tiny bit—my opportunity—is all I give in exchange for my countless servants—a more pittance. The miracle of freedom!

Among my opportunities are thoughts shared by others on the subject:

Opportunities multiply as they are seized; they die when neglected.

—John Wicker

To improve the golden moment of opportunity and catch the good that is within our reach, is the great art of life.

—Samuel Johnson

Opportunity knocks as often as a man has an ear trained to hear her, an eye trained to see her, a hand trained to grasp her, and a head trained to utilize her.

—*B. C. Forbes*

The reason a lot of people do not recognize opportunity is because it usually goes around wearing overalls looking like hard work.

—*Thomas Alva Edison*

The office of government is not to confer happiness but to give men equal opportunity to work out happiness for themselves.

—*William Ellery Channing*

In this observation by Channing is a clue to the vital distinction between the market economy and the welfare state—rights in the sense of open opportunities rather than handouts.

It should be obvious that the opportunities-servants correlation is a *flowing action*. Our goal? To see how nearly we can come to freeing the trillions of tiny creativities from all inhibitions, restrictions, blockages. The freer, the better!

The enemy blocking our goal is out-of-bounds government. True, many individuals who are more or less creative demand that governments bestow special privileges upon them. But their shameful demands would little perturb us were our governments properly limited. Proper limitation means curbing all dictocratic, authoritarian action. This is a goal we approach only as more of us understand and insist that government mind its own business: invoking a common justice, keeping the peace, maintaining a fair field and no favoritism. Our goal of highest statesmanship has its origin in a highly moral citizenship, which is the personal responsibility of each of us.

Why is grass green? Leave us free and someone with eyes toward the infinite future will find the answer, just as in the past man discovered how to harness a mysterious energy: electricity. However, let us not say, “Give us freedom and the heavens will open unto us.” Freedom is not a gift but a blessing that is *earned* by learning and doing. In such freedom, we serve one another—often unknowingly!

3

An American Mirage

It is only an error in judgment to make a mistake, but it shows infirmity of character to adhere to it when discovered.

—Christian N. Bovee

Everyone's life is marred by numerous mistakes; to err in judgment is a trait common to all of us. Who among us has not failed in some enterprise or other? But if our shortcomings are acknowledged we can learn from them! Reflect on these two bits of wisdom:

We learn wisdom from failure much more than from success; we often discover what will do, by finding out what will not do; and probably he who never made a mistake *never* made a *discovery*.

—Samuel Smiles

Exemption from mistake is not the privilege of mortals: but when our mistakes are involuntary, *we owe each other every candid consideration*; and the man who, on discovering his errors, acknowledges and corrects them, is scarcely less entitled to our esteem than if he had not erred.

—J. Pye Smith

My countless mistakes have led to a discovery far more important than first meets the eye. Not wishing to adhere to the mistakes—an “infirmity of character”—and believing with Smith that “we owe each other every candid consideration” are good reasons for sharing the discovery. It has to do with a mirage.

A mirage, as the term is commonly used, is an optical illusion: a thirsty man “sees” an oasis in the desert where there is only sand. However, the dictionary tells us that the word “is often used figuratively of something that falsely appears to be real”—the sense in which it is here used.

What, then, is the mirage to which I allude? Here it is: *that which gives socialism the appearance of working is the freedom socialism has not yet destroyed*. It is a

kind of optical illusion which imputes workability to socialism; we are “seeing” something that isn’t there!

History is replete with instances of mankind seeing things that aren’t there. Progress springs from seeing, as nearly as possible, things as they really are. Generations of men and women saw the sun appear in the morning and disappear at night. This led to the notion that the sun revolves around the earth—which is why we still speak of the “sunrise” and the “sunset.” An astronomical mirage! Then came Copernicus and Galileo. The discovery? ’Tis the earth that rotates as it orbits the sun!

There was a time when the earth was believed to be flat. An earthly mirage! The discovery? The earth is a spheroid!

With respect to human relationships, many unenlightened tribes “thought” that the way to prosperity was to raid each other and take home the loot, this being the “economic” genesis of socialism: from each according to his ability to raid and to each according to his need. What a mirage! The discovery? Let each produce, compete, and exchange: private ownership and the free market!

Those in the early stages of economic sophistication tend to believe that the production of goods and services is composed solely of adventures in the material realm. No more to it than the production of widgets and gadgets. Another mirage! The discovery? Everything by which we live—from simple pencils to jet planes—has its origin in the spiritual before showing forth in the material, that is, spiritual in the sense that ideas, discoveries, inventions, insights, intuitive flashes are all of a spiritual nature.

That dinner plate of yours is inconceivable had not some cave dweller eons ago discovered how to harness fire. The car you drive or the plane on which you fly would be out of the question had not someone a millennium ago invented the concept of zero. All modern chemistry, physics, and the like would be impossible were we to rely on Roman numerals. These spiritual forces—think-of-thats—since the dawn of human consciousness, number in the trillions times trillions! Recognizing the spiritual is an absolute necessity if we are to understand the present-day American mirage.

Admittedly, the above is sketchy but may be enough to suggest a truth, namely, that all mirages are due to mistaken correlations. An example that highlights such errors: Marat, member of the French Chamber of Deputies, observing a rapid rise in prices during the French Revolutionary period, recommended to his fellow

Deputies, “Shoot the shopkeepers!” He mistakenly correlated rising prices with business avarice, not with overextended government of which he was a leader. What would have been the proper action had he not been a victim of this error, as common today as then? Apologize for his wrong correlation, resign from his dictatorial post, and find a job, maybe as a clerk in a shop serving customers! In this case, he would have seen the error of shooting shopkeepers.

To repeat: That which gives socialism the *appearance* of working is the freedom socialism has not yet destroyed. The source of this error? The masses observe two opposite politico-economic practices developing *simultaneously*: Socialism advancing as never before in American history, and a plethora of goods and services no other people on earth have ever experienced. Therefore, goes the “reasoning,” socialism must be the cause of the existing prosperity! Politicians, most of whom unknowingly espouse socialistic doctrine, claim the credit; and the masses, who are just as thoughtless in these matters, believe them. What a mistaken correlation—a mirage if there ever was one!

Those who ascribe workability to socialism are “seeing” something that isn’t there. It has no workability—none whatsoever! Socialism—state interventionism—is founded on coercion; it is “do as we say, or else!” Who are these we’s? They are those elected or appointed to political office who naively believe that all of us would be more creative were we to imitate their feeble minds. But try to name one among millions of officeholders who can force you or me to have even one improved idea, or command us to invent a life-saving drug, or discover any new thing. These poor souls deserve our sympathy for not knowing that they know not.

Only freedom is workable. It accounts for all the prosperity there is. This claim, however, is difficult to communicate and, thus, will be accepted only by those few who begin to comprehend how trillions of vastly varying bits of expertise, *when free to flow*, configurate into the goods and services by which we live and prosper.

An interesting aside: We rarely, if ever, observe anyone deserting the freedom philosophy. Why? One cannot desert something never possessed! Those fortunate enough to have really understood the free market, private property, limited government philosophy, with its moral and spiritual antecedents, could not, short of a psychiatric flip, desert such a blessing any more than desert life itself—life and freedom being two parts of the same equation.

Why then, in the absence of a general understanding of freedom, does freedom persist in performing miracles? The urge for freedom is a built-in habit of Americans more than of any other people; Professor W. A. Paton sheds light on why this continues to work its wonders:

Competition, it must be insisted, is not a cruel or baneful influence; it is rigorous, but neither unfair nor destructive. Competition should not be equated with misrepresentation, fraud, or any form of predatory conduct. The essence of competition is pressure on the producer to reduce costs and improve products to attract and keep customers. . . . Here is the feature of the market which provides protection for the interests of the customers. Competition represents the pressure needed to keep all producers *disciplined and on their toes*.

Away with the mirage. How? Limit public officials to keeping the peace, to restraining all actions destructive of human creativity, and to invoking a common justice. Then and only then will freedom abound to the benefit of one and all alike.

“It is only an error in judgment to make a mistake, but it shows infirmity of character to adhere to it when discovered.”

4

Eruptions of Truth

*No government ought to exist for the purpose
of checking the prosperity of its people or to
allow such a principle in its policy.*

—Edmund Burke

Burke's judgment—wise in my view—is assuredly at odds with most of the governments that have prevailed throughout history. What I wish to demonstrate is that those governments which “ought not to exist” spawn sub-governments which also should not exist. They are a bane to justice and human welfare!

To set the stage for this thesis, let's note from history certain exceptional eruptions of truth—moves toward freedom. While none might be described as a state of perfection, each was attended by a prosperity previously unknown.

The first—about 5,000 years ago—was achieved by the Sumerians in the land that is now Iraq. Wrote Samuel Noah Kramer:

Its climate is extremely dry, and its soil, left to itself, is arid, wind-swept and unproductive . . . it had no trees for timber. Here, then, was a region with “the hand of God against it,” an unpromising land seemingly doomed to poverty and desolation. But the people who inhabited it . . . were endowed with an unusually creative intellect and a venturesome spirit . . . they turned Sumer into a veritable Garden of Eden and developed what was probably the first civilization in the history of man.¹

Sumerian civilization passed from memory and was unknown until modern times. About a century ago some archeologists began excavating in the Middle East seeking more knowledge of Assyria and Babylonia. They had no inkling of an earlier civilization, Sumer. Excavating deeper than originally intended, they came upon

¹ See *The Sumerians: Their History, Culture, and Character* by Samuel Noah Kramer (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1963).

fantastic surprises: beautiful buildings, artistic sculptures, and other works of art and, above all, clay tablets, prisms, cylinders, cones by the thousands, all done in cuneiform signs, setting forth their freedom philosophy, religion, and so on.

The chapter headings of another of Kramer's books affords a list of the blessings of freedom that bloomed in this first civilization in Sumer:²

The First Schools

The First Bicameral Congress

The First Historian

The First Case of Tax Reduction

The First "Moses"

The First Legal Precedent The First Pharmacopoeia The First "Farmer's Almanac"

The First Moral Ideals

The First Proverbs and Sayings

The First Biblical Parallels

The First "Noah"

The First Tale of Resurrection

The First Love Story

The First Literary Catalogue

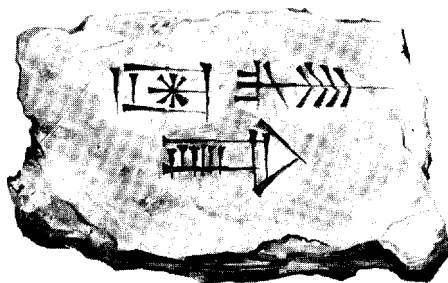
Man's First Golden Age

Why dwell on this ancient civilization at such length? Because it was freedom-oriented. Kramer was a leader in transcribing these cuneiforms into English; and it was his conclusion that:

The Sumerian was deeply conscious of his personal rights and resented any encroachment on them, whether by his king, his superior, or his equal. No wonder that the Sumerians were the first to compile law codes, to put everything down in "black and white" in order to avoid misunderstanding, misrepresentation, and arbitrariness [limited government].

² See *From the Tablets of Sumer* by Samuel Noah Kramer (Indian Hills, Colorado: The Falcon's Wing Press, 1956).

Today, some of the world's best museums have rooms filled with these cones, cylinders and the like—particularly the Louvre in Paris. While inspecting these years ago, I came upon “The Cones of Urukagina”—two of them—and among the inscriptions were these cuneiforms:



Meaning? “*Freedom from Taxes.*” Four centuries after this first civilization got under way, the city-state of Lagash had become a total bureaucracy—all parasites and no hosts. Urukagina succeeded in becoming King and he restored freedom, but in ten years he was overthrown—Lagash back into the same old mess! However, for a spell, we have one of the historical exceptions.

A second exception occurred in Athens, described by Edith Hamilton:

... the shadow of “effortless barbarism” was dark upon the face of the earth. In that black and fierce world a little centre of white-hot spiritual energy was at work. A new civilization had arisen in Athens, unlike all that had gone before.

Admittedly, it was not like ancient Sumer, but Athens was featured by an unparalleled freedom for that day and age. And Athens flourished for a time.

Move on to medieval times: Venice in the heyday of Marco Polo (1250–1325). Here was freedom to produce and to exchange with others thousands of miles away. Visit Venice today and have a look at St. Mark's Church, aglitter with the wealth accumulated during Marco Polo's time. Exceptional? Observe Venice and all of Italy today. In the same old mess again!

Take note of the French Physiocrats. These people were free traders; their motto was *laissez-faire*, that is, a fair field and no favoritism. In 1774 the new king, Louis XVI, appointed one of the leaders from this group—Turgot—as controller-general and minister of finance. What a scholar and opponent of runaway government! Most of the ideas and reforms he *courageously* advocated were consistent with the

private ownership, free market, limited government way of life. A ramrod-straight Frenchman!

True, prosperity did not attend the efforts of the Physiocrats and for the simple reason that their freedom ideas were not put into effect. Why the failure? The opposition became so bitter and strong that the king, a political weakling, dismissed Turgot after two years in office.

Why, then, bring the Physiocrats into focus? One of the most remarkable events in all history flowered from their ideas and political exemplarity. Adam Smith had spent much time with these freedom thinkers, who thus contributed to the inspiration underlying *The Wealth of Nations*. This, in turn, led to the overthrow of mercantilism and brought in its stead the wonderful industrial revolution: the repeal of restrictive laws, the redirection of production to serve the masses of consumers, and an observance of that absolute principle: freedom in transactions. England, the freest nation on earth, enjoyed a prosperity never before experienced. Again, an exceptional instance of freedom in practice. Have a look at England today: the welfare state and the planned economy on the rampage—the people driven back into poverty!

And, finally, for the greatest exception of all time: the U.S.A.—for a time! And do not overlook the role of the Physiocrats and Smith as related to the American miracle. It was the simultaneous appearance of *The Wealth of Nations* and the Declaration of Independence, along with the Constitution and the Bill of Rights that put government in its proper place and left Americans free to act creatively as they pleased. The result: by far the greatest flourishing of creative energy ever known, and a prosperity beyond the dreams of all who had gone before.

The U.S.A. another exception? Yes, for we are witnessing the same kind of fall that England has experienced, except our fall is from a higher level. Another reason why we are still so prosperous is an enormous momentum from the past. The ways of freedom are still in our blood; they continue to serve even when not understood. Thank heaven, we still have time to bring about a reversal.

“Government” has been used since time immemorial and is plastered to the vocabularies of this and other countries. Talk about the tyranny of words! We’re stuck with this notion of government in this sense: “*to exercise authority over; direct; control; rule; manage.*”

What is the thoughtful procedure for such a reversal? It is merely to think of our governmental agencies—tens of thousands—as they ought to be thought of:

not “for the purpose of checking prosperity,” but rather to invoke a common justice and to keep the peace. Let them protect all creative actions against infringements by anyone. No life should be arbitrarily directed, controlled, ruled, managed; for no one—nor any combination of persons—has a moral right to exercise authority over any honest and peaceful action. Briefly, use the government to protect and defend, rather than plunder, peaceful persons.

Finally, to sub-governments. When governments exist as now—when we allow them to dictate our way of life—sub-governments are a natural and destructive consequence. A primitive political darkness besets mankind whenever and wherever the light of liberty is not seen.

Labor unions in today’s U.S.A. definitely qualify as sub-governments. Their power to control the positions of most officeholders—Federal, state and local—is obvious. Further, they have an enormous say as to whether this or that legislation shall be approved or rejected, and who shall or shall not hold political office.

Observe, also, the extent to which these sub-governments go beyond the political realm. They have a monopoly of millions of jobs in various industries. For instance, they coercively control wages—minimum and maximum—the hours their millions of members may work. So great is their power that many owners of businesses agree to their demands rather than face failure. Sub-governments, indeed!

True, the owners of countless business firms are the victims of a sub-government. Yet, many of them and their organizations are no less sub-governments than labor unions. Recall how the National Association of Manufacturers and the Chamber of Commerce of the United States, in the early days of the New Deal, sponsored the so-called National Industrial Recovery Act, a system of strangling controls. I was on the staff of the National Chamber at that time, and I remember it well.

Take note of the many chambers of commerce and trade associations that have the power to exact special privileges for their members. Those who indulge in this kind of action—“gains” at the expense of others—are sub-governments. Logically, they cannot censure labor unions. Nor can those who engage in collusion—with much success—to obtain tariffs, embargoes, quotas and numerous other restraints to free pricing and open competition.

The group that obtains a Gateway Arch for its city, or the thousands upon thousands of other groups which acquire “pyramids” for themselves at the expense of others, are sub-governments.

Again, here’s a man of such influence that he can, by a mere phone call to Washington, the state capital, the county seat, or the town hall, twist some political action to suit his whim and fancy. His number is legion—more than anyone will ever know. Each is a sub-government.

Perhaps the above is sufficient to suggest the fact that sub-governments multiply rapidly, with only an infinitesimal minority of the victims sensing anything wrong in this utterly destructive type of action.

The reasons are at least two-fold:

1. The victims have taken no note—are completely unaware—of the *exceptional* instances during the past 5,000 years of how freedom works its wonders—its blessings bestowed on everyone.
2. They’re stuck with “government” in its tyrannical meaning, believing that its function is “to govern, direct, manage.” Not the slightest idea of what is meant by limited government.

My respects, then, to our teachers: the Sumerians, the citizens of Athens in bygone days, the Venetians of Marco Polo’s time, the Physiocrats, Adam Smith and, above all, our Founding Fathers. Why not share their wonderful lessons with those who care to listen!

5

War and Peace

*Peace is the happy, natural state of man; war,
his corruption, his disgrace.*

—Edward Thomson

January 24 marks an important anniversary in my life. It was on that date in 1918 that the *S. S. Tuscania* shoved away from the docks in Hoboken, N.J. never to return. This Cunard liner, with 2,500 American troops aboard—including me—was torpedoed and sunk in the Irish Sea 13 days later.

I thank Heaven for my survival and for the countless blessings that have followed in these passing years. Not the least of them is a growing understanding of war and its causes and an awakening to how peace can prevail between nations and among men. Another blessing in these days of a growing authoritarianism is the privilege of still being able to share these findings with anyone who cares to listen—freedom of speech and press. I’ve also taken the liberty here of borrowing Tolstoy’s title, but believe he would approve.

The background: John and I were roommates in Big Rapids, Michigan, students at Ferris Institute. The fife and drum corps, with flags waving, stimulated our “patriotism.” Two months before high school graduation—April 7, 1917—the U.S.A. declared war, to “Save the world for democracy.” This mission obviously needed our help. So, we promptly hopped a freight train for the nearest Naval Recruiting Station in Grand Rapids. Both of us were rejected, and went back to finish school; but our desire to “Save the world for democracy” was undiminished.

We found jobs in Lansing that summer and fall. One day, while walking by the local Recruiting Office, we noted a sign to attract enlistments: “Join the Aviation Section of the Signal Corps and go to France at once.” Of course, we applied. I was accepted, John rejected—and dejected. In a little over two months I was aboard the *Tuscania*.

Some of the *Tuscania*’s survivors were taken on Torpedo Destroyers to Liverpool but 500 of us were debarked at Larne, Ireland. Telegraphic services were out of

order, so word of our rescue was delayed. We were listed in hometown newspapers as nonsurvivors. John, on reading of the loss of his friend, went immediately to Canada, joined the Canadian Infantry and was in the frontline trenches in two weeks. Six months later I had a letter from him saying he was in a hospital. Over the top for the first time, he received 12 shrapnel wounds, half of them still open. That was the last I heard from John! Bless his wonderful soul and to hell with war!

It is one thing to despise the hell of war and quite another to understand and explain the blessings of peace. But I will try.

When Edward Thomson declared that “Peace is the happy, natural state of man,” he assuredly meant the what-ought-to-be—man’s Manifest Destiny. “War his corruption, his disgrace” has characterized far too much of human history, and still does.

The Reads have quite a war record. My great-great-great-grandfather and my great-great-grandfather were in the Revolutionary War, my grandfather in the Civil War, I in World War I, my two sons in World War II. It has taken this background and all these years for me to see the light.

What I see is that the cause of war is authoritarianism; the blessings of peace, on the other hand, flow exclusively from the freedom of everyone to act creatively as he or she pleases. There is a single word around which the issues of war and peace revolve: *Creation!* War thwarts it; peace makes way for it.

Who are those who thwart Creation at the human level? They are the millions wielding political power who do not understand the destructive nature of that power. As a consequence, they function primarily as wreckers of civilization. These runners-of-our lives subscribe to the crude and primitive definition of government: “*to exercise authority over; direct; control; rule; manage*”—bureaucratic despotism!

But are those now in office the sole authoritarians? Why are they there? Is it not because countless millions seek special privileges which the powermongers promise and provide? Those with a lust for power dream of schemes that appeal to blocs of voters with a lust for confiscated wealth. Who then are the generators of war? The political despots obviously, but also their partners in evil. *To the extent that anyone seeks, encourages, supports special privilege, to that extent is he a party to a mass assault on human life.*

Admittedly, this conclusion would shock these millions of partners. Unquestionably, most of them participate innocently in their wholesale

depredations. For instance, do the businessmen who demand restrictions of competition think of themselves as partners in evil? Or labor union leaders? Or proponents of government monuments? Or farmers who demand subsidy? Or other “welfare” recipients? Not one in a thousand! Theirs is a naivete founded on politico-economic errors of the primitive past, an unawareness of new truths revealed.

What *has* been revealed is the formula for “Peace on earth, good will toward men.” Those who really understand this formula, and so order their lives, are not here to run our lives but rather to lay the foundation for life. Founded on what? A revolutionary concept, the very essence of Americanism:

. . . That all men are . . . endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty and the Pursuit of Happiness.

Until 1776, men had been killing each other by the millions over the age-old question as to which form of authoritarianism should preside as sovereign over man. The argument had not been between freedom on the one hand and authoritarianism on the other. This revolutionary concept was at once spiritual, political and economic. It was spiritual in that the writers of the Declaration proclaimed the Creator as sovereign; political in that it unseated government as sovereign; and economic in this sense: If one has a right to his life, it logically follows that he has a right to sustain his life, the sustenance of life being the fruits of one’s own labor.

The Declaration, the Constitution and the Bill of Rights more severely limited government than ever before in history and that limitation accounts for the American miracle. We have experienced the greatest outburst of creative energy ever known—Creation at the human level!

When government is limited to invoking a common justice—permitting anyone to do anything and everything that’s peaceful—men are free to try. This makes possible Creation at the human level. Its essence: freedom to pursue one’s own uniqueness, be it inventing or learning or whatever; freedom to bargain for wage or price; freedom to produce and to trade voluntarily with others in this *or any other country*.

Those who accept the sovereignty of the Creator—Infinite Wisdom—are never know-it-all’s. As Edison phrased it, “No one knows more than one-millionth of one

percent of anything.” Where then lies the wisdom that accounts for the American miracle? Definitely not among the despots who would run our lives! Coercion, a physical force, can only stifle, restrain, inhibit, prohibit, penalize. Never has it been, nor can it be, creative. This is why government should be strictly limited to defending life and livelihood.

The wisdom that accounts for our unprecedented welfare may be found in the free and unfettered market. It is a configuration of tiny bits of expertise, a coming-together so fantastic that it must be taken more in faith than clear understanding. It is to be found in a totality of free-flowing coordination. Paraphrasing Edison, it comes from millions of individuals, each with his one-millionth of one per cent of *something*. Trillions of little think-of-thats coming together when *free to flow*!¹ Why has this been such a secret? It’s like trying to explain Creation!

Reflect on the trillions of cells that compose this most remarkable form of life—the human being. The cell has no awareness of the phenomenon of which it is an indispensable part. Yet, no cells, no man. This is somewhat analogous to the problem at issue here.

Consciousness is the reality. Begin with the oyster—none whatsoever! Move up the scale through higher levels of consciousness to the chimpanzee and then to the ultimate earthly level: Man. But man possesses only *finite* consciousness, no more than a drop in the bucket compared to *Infinite Consciousness*—Creation. Further, man’s perception is but an infinitesimal fraction of Infinite Wisdom; and your wisdom and mine are but infinitesimal fractions of earthly wisdom. Here is the truth we need to grasp: The wisdom that can potentially grace mankind is the result of untold minuscule enlightenments *freely flowing* into an overall enlightenment. In other words, freedom and creation at the human level!

As noted, until 1776 men had been killing each other by the millions. But to our disgrace, we have been doing much the same since—the Reads included. In view of the U.S.A.’s glorious achievements, why this corruption? Where lies the error? My answer: Authoritarianism where freedom should reign, resulting in *war instead of peace*!

While our Declaration, Constitution and Bill of Rights were superior politico-economic documents, they were not perfect. Perfection is not within the grasp of man.

¹ See “I, Pencil.” Copy on request to FEE.

The most flagrant error was a failure to do away with slavery. Slavery is as anti-freedom as any evil of man. Why did our Founding Fathers allow this error? It was their overriding desire to bring into the Union the states that allowed slavery. Political expediency, the result of which was *The Civil War!*

The Constitution contains several anti-freedom propositions, each founded on the false assumption that elected officials have the wisdom to run our lives. This reflects, in turn, an *unawareness* of the wisdom in the free and unfettered market.

- *To regulate Commerce.* This explains the early tariffs, quotas, embargoes—denials of freedom to trade, presumably to protect our infant industries against the European giants! But observe how this error has been magnified during the past four or five decades. Today there are so many regulations that no one knows what they are. And many a business is in bankruptcy because of these regulators.

- *To coin Money, regulate the value thereof.* The chickens of this error are coming home to roost. The money supply in the late thirties was about \$35 billion. Today? Over \$300 billion! If it continues to escalate at the same rate, the dollar will soon be useless as a medium of exchange. The sole remedy? Divest government of this power, and leave money to the free market where the wisdom is.²

- *To establish Post Offices and Post Roads.* Government mail delivery deteriorates day by day; yet postal rates mount, as does the Department's annual deficit. Until the recent oil crisis, brought on by the political interventionists, every four pounds of oil was delivered from the Persian Gulf to our eastern seaboard—half way around the world—for less money than government will deliver a one-ounce letter across the street in your home town! The remedy? No more approval by Congress to “finance” Post Office deficits, and repeal the law prohibiting first-class delivery by free market enterprisers. Result? Government will be out of the mail business overnight.³ As to post Roads, they, too, should be left to the market.⁴

² For further explanations, see the following: “Not Worth a Continental” by Peletiah Webster: *What Has Government Done To Our Money?* by Murray Rothbard; a chapter in my book, *The Love of Liberty* entitled “These Things Called Money.” All available from FEE.

³ See “Mr. Kappel’s Dilemma,” *The Freeman*, June 1967.

⁴ For a splendid and convincing explanation of this point, see “When Men Are Free to Try” by John C. Sparks, *The Freeman*, February, 1977.

- *To promote the Progress of Science and the Useful Arts.* Alexander the Great's artist, on the completion of a painting, would put it on public display, stand behind and listen to comments by passers-by. On one occasion, a shoemaker criticized the shoes. The artist complimented him. Whereupon the shoemaker began a criticism of the whole portrait. Shouted the artist, "Shoemaker, stick to your last."

Let us say to government officials, "Stick to your business of keeping the peace." They are no more capable of promoting the progress of science, art, education or whatever than I am of promoting the skills of portrait painters or the talents of a Bach or Beethoven, an Einstein or Edison!

Nothing better demonstrates this error than government "education." Coercive? Indeed: compulsory attendance, government dictated curricula, and the forcible collection of taxes to pay the bills. "Education" today is a national disaster. Coercion should no more be applied to education than to religion. What to do? Leave education to the market where the wisdom is!⁵

Finally, why all the wars? It is because political appointees are our international emissaries. With few exceptions since the U.S.A.'s founding, these bureaucrats haven't had the slightest idea of how the free market, private ownership, limited government way of life, with its moral and spiritual antecedents, works its wonders. Not only do they believe they are wise but they are unaware of the remarkable wisdom that blooms from the free and unfettered market. And this know-it-allness is, of course, but the product of earlier errors, some of them noted above. Wars are caused by assigning international tasks to wielders of power.

What is the formula that will assure peace on earth, good will toward men? Freedom to produce and exchange with anyone, anywhere. *Free traders are the only ambassadors of good will!* With the exception of the Civil War—that pitiful error founded on a horrible evil—note how peaceful are the relationships between the residents of our fifty states. Why? Our Republic is the largest free trade area on this earth. Indeed, unless one observes road signs, there are no observable border lines except on maps. No ports of entry, no gendarmes, no passports, no visas. And instead of wars between our states there is peace, and for one reason: *Freedom!*

I, a New Yorker, trade as freely with an Oregonian as with a local shopkeeper. When I exchange 30 cents for a can of beans, it is because the grocer values the 30

⁵ For an explanation of these ideas on education, see chapters 15, 16, 17 in my book, *Anything That's Peaceful*, pp. 180–221.

cents more than the beans. He says, "Thank you!" I value the beans more than the 30 cents and I say, "Thank you!" Why this peace and good will? Enhanced value on the part of each! 'Tis the free and unfettered market at work.

To extend this peace and good will on an international scale requires only that all who freely choose to do so, as freely exchange with Frenchmen, Japanese, Argentineans or whoever as I do with the local shopkeeper or with Oregonians. The obstacle? All of them have trade barriers excluding such free exchange.

What to do? Remove our own barriers—all of them. What will be the result if we set such an example? In no time at all foreign producers will enter the U.S. A. with their goods and services. Observing the efficacy of free entry and free exchange, they'll soon follow suit by removing their own barriers. *Ambassadors of good will* crossing borders of nations as freely, peacefully and unconsciously as we cross our state borders. Someone has to initiate what's right. Why not Americans—right now!

Away with wars and their ignoble causes! "Peace is the happy, natural state of man." And the key to peace is freedom.

6

Kakistocracy

*A government . . . for the benefit of knaves at
the cost of fools.* —James Russell Lowell

Kakistocracy is a word so seldom used that one might assume the designated condition never existed. Its definition is included in only a few of the larger dictionaries: “A government by the worst men.” One of them adds: “. . . opposed to aristocracy.” And that calls to mind Jefferson’s view: “There is a natural aristocracy among men; the grounds of this are virtues and talents.”

I like Lowell’s definition of kakistocracy. What it boils down to is a government by the worst of men, for the benefit of rogues, paid for by simpletons! Is our once-upon-a-time Republic falling into this nonsense? My purpose is to highlight our kakistocratic tendencies and to offer a few thoughts as to how they can be halted and reversed.

A communist society, to my way of thinking, qualifies as a kakistocracy. Its coercive theme, “from each according to his ability, to each according to his need,” strikingly parallels a form of government in which knavery exploits ignorance. This observation requires a bit of explanation.

Regardless of the descriptive term—communism, socialism, the welfare state, or the planned economy—the redistributionist philosophy in practice presupposes the existence of three classifications of individuals, the typical specimens being: (1) the person with ability, that is, the one from whom honestly earned property is taken, (2) the person with “need,” that is, the one to whom someone else’s property is given, and (3) the person in command of the instruments of coercion, that is, the authoritarian.

The first typical specimen: Those whose property is coercively taken evince neither knavery nor foolishness unless they are “taken in” and thus become a party to coercive statism. Those who are “taken in” appear to be on the increase; behold the well-to-do and business “leaders” who petition government for countless special

privileges. In these instances, we witness our “best educated” citizens exhibiting both knavery and foolishness.

An important aside as related to the above and the two following categories: Let us never refer to any individual as a knave or fool. This is inferiority showing through in ourselves. Everyone errs, more or less. Hang labels only on notions which appear to be knavish or foolish.

The second typical specimen: Perhaps it is foolishness more than knavery that prompts the innocents to accept something for nothing. As they permit government to assume the responsibility for their security and welfare, they relieve themselves of self-responsibility, the removal of which depersonalizes the individual and thus destroys him. Coercion is destructive, never creative!

The third typical specimen: The coercionist who forcibly takes from some and gives to others. Such a dictator exemplifies both knavery and foolishness. That he sees some benefit to himself in this action is self-evident for, if he saw no benefit, he would not act in this manner. Nor need the benefit he foolishly sees be entirely material; he can be and often is motivated by the thirst for power or popular acclaim or a mixed-up sense of social justice. To feather one’s own nest, that is, to gain self-satisfaction at the expense of others, regardless of the motivation, is knavery, pure and simple.

Foolishness shows forth in the coercionist in that he *unintelligently* interprets his own interest. He fails to see that he cannot develop, emerge, improve himself while he is riding herd over others. The coercionist who has you on your back, holding you down, is just as permanently fastened on top of you as you are under him. In that sense, the slave owner is enslaved, as is the slave.

It is not necessary to outline in detail how far down the Marxist road we Americans have descended. A reading of the ten points of the *Communist Manifesto* should convince anyone that we are headed into a kakistocracy.¹

To my way of thinking, nothing better symbolizes—highlights—this degeneracy than state lottery tickets. When governments go so far beyond their legitimate role that gambling is resorted to as a means of financing, de-magoguery approaches its worst stage—kakistocracy, no less!

¹ For a listing of the ten points, see “The Communist Idea.” Copy on request to FEE.

New Hampshire was the first to authorize a state lottery some 15 years ago. Since then, a dozen other states have done likewise and it is reported that another dozen are more than likely to follow suit. Equally disconcerting is the number of churches that resort to gambling to finance “good causes.” They call it “Bingo.”

One of the most pernicious notions men hold is that, “The end justifies the means.” For example, Father Joseph, a devout Capuchin monk and chief adviser to Cardinal Richelieu, believed that the political ascendancy of France was the way to bring God to humanity. His belief was put into practice. Result? Millions of people in Central Europe were slaughtered.²

Now to some reflections on gambling. If individuals wish to risk their savings or bread-and-butter money betting with each other as in crap shooting, poker, or any other games of chance, that’s their own business—so long as it’s peaceful, involving no one else without his consent. Each winner or loser is fully entitled to the consequences of his choice. Bear in mind that this is back-and-forth gambling: one’s loss is another’s gain. No other—church or government—is *siphoning off* any fraction of the amount gambled.

Here at issue is the siphoning-off type of gambling, be it church Bingo, race tracks, professional gambling houses, or state lottery tickets. In all of these, there is a percentage taken by the operators, the take having various labels: “kitty” or “house take” or “pinch.” If one engages in this sort of gambling long enough, assuming no more income from any source, the operator will siphon off all of one’s dollars. The “kitty” eventually gets all! This is a fact rarely grasped by those who play this game. Now and then they observe a whopper win that eggs them on.

For clarity’s sake, visualize a pool, the water being siphoned off, none poured in. Sooner or later, a dry pool! How avoid? Pour in new water! Analogous is to pour new income dollars—the old are gone—into the gambling pools.

What is the percentage siphoned off by the various types of “kitty” gambling? In roulette, assuming no cheating by the operator, it’s 6 per cent. I have observed the take as high as 80 per cent in adjustable slot machines, often called “one-armed bandits.” However, no one can give accurate percentages of the take in this kind of gambling; they’re in constant flux.

² For a detailed account of this disaster, see *Grey Eminence* by Aldous Huxley (New York: Harper & Bros., 1941).

When churches promote Bingo to aid “good causes,” that’s their business, not mine. Why not oppose? *There’s no coercion!* Bingo to your heart’s content, if you so choose.

While we are not compelled to buy state lottery tickets, the funds siphoned off by this popular scheme are used to finance overextended governments, all overextensions being *coercive*—no exception. Offer me a barrel stuffed with lottery tickets for free and my response would be, “Thank you, *no!* I am opposed to, not in favor of, kakistocracy!”

Observe the lottery hawkers on the streets of Paris or Rio or Montevideo or cities in other countries where the free market, private ownership, limited government way of life is giving way to socialism. Who are the buyers? The wealthy? The middle class? Indeed not! Anyone sensible enough to have accumulated substantial savings isn’t likely to be taken in, to any serious extent, by the “kitty” or “house-take” type of gambling.

The buyers of lottery tickets are the poorest people—frantically trying to escape from their poverty by “hitting the jackpot.” And, why not? Many of their spiritual “priests” have advocated the practice, and their secular “priest”—government—has done likewise.

Poverty, of course, is a relative condition. Many people in the U.S.A. think of themselves as poor only because they compare themselves to those who are better off—the millions of affluent Americans. The fact is that our “poor” are extremely wealthy compared to most of the people who inhabit this earth. Anyway, they gamble. Again, why not? Our welfare state offers something for nothing, assuring them food, shelter, and clothing should they plead distress, and the cause of their distress matters not; it could be gambling or whatever!

Is there a cure for this devastating trend? You bet there is! Observe that I am willing to gamble on this. But the remedy is not to be found by merely spuming lottery tickets. The knaves have countless other ways of “financing” kakistocracy, inflation being one.

What then? The rebirth of a natural aristocracy—virtues and talents—is the answer. To repeat what I have written many times, the foolish and knavish notions in the minds of the millions are no more numerous today than in America’s heyday; they are only more obvious.

When a society is graced with a first-rate aristocracy—men of virtues and talents serving as exemplary models—foolish and knavish notions are held in abeyance. Why? People fear appearing as fools or knaves before those held in high esteem. Not many would steal if aware that Christ were viewing the act!

But note what's going on. There are only a few with aristocratic potentialities. Today, most of them, be they business or labor “leaders,” clergymen, “educators,” or whoever, have slumped. True, they remain standard setters but their standards are shameful, founded on expediency, acclaim, special privilege, and the like, rather than on high principles and righteousness. Result? Foolish and knavish notions are no longer held in abeyance, for nothing is standing against them. They show forth in profusion as does fungus on a heap of muck!

Is the rebirth of an aristocracy likely? In my opinion, it is certain, for such is ordained in the Cosmic Plan. The only question: When? No one can answer, for no person knows what is going to happen in the next minute, fortunetellers, soothsayers, prognosticators to the contrary notwithstanding.

The one question that makes sense: When and to what extent will you or I strive for this required exemplarity—becoming an aristocrat? This, and this alone, is all any person can do toward ridding the world of kakistocracy.

And why not strive for this role? Seeking for righteousness, learning to understand and explain why freedom works its wonders is a joyous adventure. Besides, it's what we're here for. So why not enjoy ourselves by trying to outdo each other in lending a hand to the Cosmic Plan! Freedom of all people to act creatively as they please is the formula for Heaven on Earth. We are betting our lives on this!

7

On Subsidies and Regulations

*It is hardly lack of due process for the
government to regulate that which it
subsidizes.*

—United States
Supreme Court
“Wickard vs. Filburn”

Here is a truism, an old folk saying: “He who pays the fiddler calls the tune.” This certainly applies to the relationship between government and the citizens. When government subsidizes—pays—it regulates; it calls the tune which determines the extent of our enslavement. For it is an observed fact that the road to the Command Society is paved with dictatorial regulations: enslavement edicts.

Is “enslavement” too harsh a term? That great British thinker, Herbert Spencer, wrote in 1884 an unusual but a thoughtful and realistic definition of slavery:

What is essential to the idea of a slave? We primarily think of him as one who is owned by another. . . . That which fundamentally distinguishes the slave is that he labours under *coercion* to satisfy another’s desires. . . . What . . . leads us to qualify our conception of the slavery as more or less severe? Evidently the greater or smaller extent to which effort is *compulsorily* expended for the benefit of another instead of for self-benefit.¹

Based on the authority of the Supreme Court of the United States, and deductive reasoning as well, it should be obvious that all who ask for subsidies are inviting regulations that lessen self-benefits. Such persons are asking for slavery—no less!

The same can be said of those who ask government for a monopolistic position in the market—seeking to gain by the coercive elimination of would-be

¹ This is extracted from the chapter, “The Coming Slavery,” in Herbert Spencer’s *The Man Versus The State* (Caldwell, Idaho: The Caxton Printers, Ltd., 1946), pp. 41–42.

competitors. When successful in such depredations, they gain by denying others the opportunity to gain. Their gain is someone else's loss, and if that isn't a form of subsidy-slavery, pray tell, what is!

Reflect upon the countless subsidies being sought, not merely by the socialists but by those who call themselves "free enterprisers." Each subsidy, when granted, gives birth to not one but to numerous regulations. The number of governments in the U.S.A. approximates 100,000. Consider the many regulations spawning from each of these, and the total is staggering. All regulations that limit creative action—most of them do—explain our country's rapid decline into the Command Society—enslavement. Along with the enslavement occurs the deadening of private ownership, a fundamental feature of the free society.

The government type of enslavement is the satanic offspring of at least three hallucinations:

1. *I am wise!* With few exceptions, those wielding power over others are corrupted. Authority of this nature tends to intoxicate them; they see others as fallible, but never themselves.

2. *I am it!* Government controls what it subsidizes. Elected and appointed holders of government office develop the mentality of *L'Etat c'est moi*, I am the state. They come to believe that the funds they use to subsidize are the government's own money, and they are the government, and thus they are it!

3. *I am omniscient!* This is the little-god syndrome: "Be like me, do as I say, obey my edicts, and thou shalt be graced with the good life." The truth? Not a one of them is any more competent to direct our mortal moments than to direct our spirits in the Hereafter! This is to say that they can no more effectively direct creativity at the earthly level than they can direct Creation. Managing the creative lives of others is beyond any man's competence. But these wiseacres don't even know this—a hallucination, indeed!

I repeat, private ownership is a fundamental feature of the free society. The alternative is government ownership of nearly everything, as in Russia or Red China. And that's a far cry from the free society!

Merely holding title to a piece of property does not mean ownership if control is absent. *One does not own that which he does not control.* In Mussolini's Italy titles to enterprises were retained, but that fascist regime controlled wages, prices,

hours worked, what goods and services could be produced, to whom sold, and so on. Titles without control are utterly meaningless.

This is a point never to forget: *The millions of regulations in today's U.S.A. are controls!* Thus, to the extent that regulations exist, to that extent has government ownership replaced private ownership.

No one can or ever will list and explain all the controls now in force. Even finding out what they are would take several lifetimes. Thus, a sampling must suffice. First, a few comments on education. Government control of schooling—a grave error held over from our country's early days—unquestionably accounts for the plethora of regulations in every other walk of life. Youngsters brought up in the atmosphere of government schooling are in danger of remaining addicted to that regulated life. With an exception now and then, Amiel's observation is realistic:

Scratch the green rind of a sapling, or wantonly twist it in the soil, and a scarred or crooked oak will tell of the act for centuries to come. So it is with the teachings of youth, which make impressions on the mind and heart that are to last forever.

It is not necessary to examine government “education,” past and present. Merely have a look at government control of private education at the present time. At this point, I asked the prime mover of the most private of all private schools known to me about government regulations imposed on his school.² He listed a few of the numerous controls he has to cope with.

Is he really an owner? As an illustration of control hear this: The Chairman, Department of Accreditation, State of Kansas wrote, “*You exceed all of our standards, but you do not meet them.*” Thus, my friend's school is not accredited even though its standards exceed requirements. Why? Simply because they do not square with the lower standards set by the government! This is not the pursuit of excellence or of learning, but of coerced mediocrity.

Graduates of my friend's school cannot enter a government university in Kansas without an examination. But any graduate of a government high school is automatically admitted to any government university in that state.

² For an explanation of his school, see *How to Start Your Own School* by Robert Love. First published, 1973; now in paperback from Green Hill Publishers, Box 738, Ottawa, Illinois 61350.

Here is another example of the degraded level of government “education.” The New York State Board of Regents prepares standard examinations in the social sciences (and various other disciplines) to be administered to all students taking the course in public schools throughout the State. A former colleague of mine once took one of these exams in two different ways. First, he tried truthfully to answer all questions as he thought they should be answered. An official grader for the Regents Examinations awarded him the score of 52 on the test. Then my associate took the same examination the second time, giving the answers he thought the State wanted. The same official grader awarded him the grade of 92!

I am convinced that government “education,” founded on coercive regulations, is more the cause of controls over all creative activity than anything else. Controls proliferate in nearly every enterprise and occupation, and there isn’t a better illustration of this than medical practice. When doctors obey all laws—Federal, state, and local—they must spend more time filling out forms than treating patients! *Many of them are quitting.*

Of course, numerous doctors—as well as people in other fields—ignore the controls and, by so doing, become, lawbreakers. Such disrespect for laws which interfere with trade and promote class warfare carries over into disrespect for all laws—including those essential to keeping the peace and invoking a common justice. Further, these same people spend more time scheming how to course around regulations than they spend discovering how to produce better goods and services at lower prices. *Many of them are failing.*

So, what shall we do about government “education,” the take-off point for our descent into the Command Society? My answer: Let’s have a vigorous and spirited competition in demonstrating the wonderful superiority of private education. One of these days one of us will find an explanation so clear and dramatic that the right will arise to displace the wrong. Let me share two thoughts which I find inspiring:

I am convinced that the freedom-of-choice principle is so woven into human existence that any effort to curtail it is an attempt to curtail life itself. To lose our freedom to choose is to lose our humanity.

—Professor Bertel Sparks

I am an American because I believe that the destiny of America is to be the abiding place of liberty and free institutions, and that its own practice and enjoyment of these blessings shall be to the world a beacon light which shall radiate its influence by peaceful means to the uttermost part of the world, to the uplifting of all humanity.

—*J. Reuben Clark, Jr.*

The procedure is simple enough: Uplift ourselves in understanding and explaining the blessings of freedom to choose and, by so doing, we will uplift humanity!

8

Attuned to Freedom

*Were the eye not attuned to the Sun, the Sun
could not be seen by it.* —Goethe

An eye to the Sun, had Goethe. What an instructive and stimulating simile by this wise man! How it encourages reflection and stimulates thinking! Goethe uses the Sun to symbolize both the seen and the unseen; only our expanded awareness makes the difference. To the individual who has no eye to see the Sun, that star does not exist. Similarly, nothing is real for you or me or anyone if the eye be not attuned to it—even freedom is nonexistent!

The Sun is an excellent symbol, for without it there would be no life of any kind. It is the single star in the solar system around which our earth and other heavenly bodies rotate. It is *the* source of all physical energy, the enormity of which is incomprehensible. For instance, enough solar energy reaches our planet in 40 minutes to supply all the energy mankind consumes in a whole year. While Goethe was unaware of this recently discovered fact, he had an eye for the future. Small wonder that he used the Sun to symbolize the heavenly!

But what of the eye not attuned to the heavenly virtues such as integrity, humility, charity, justice, love, reverence for life, individual liberty, and the like? All eyes not so attuned see neither the Sun nor the heavenly virtues. Overcoming this blindness—really seeing—is our earthly and, may I add, our heavenly purpose.

Now to an observation by another wise man, the renowned biochemist and biologist, Roger J. Williams:

If people were different from each other only in trifling ways—fingerprints, length of noses, the texture of their hair, the exact shape of their eye lenses—they might insist on wearing their own spectacles and on a few other minor rights. But the rights that Patrick Henry and others were ready to die for were of a very different kind and would never have been thought of if the individuals concerned had not possessed the *enormously significant biological individuality* which we now know about. This inborn individuality was and is the mainspring of our love of liberty.¹

No doubt about it, biological individuality—variation—is the mainspring of our love of liberty. However, the spring isn't as strong as it might be. And I suspect the weakness may stem from lack of awareness. The eyes of many persons are insensitive to freedom and, thus, this wondrous achievement has no reality for them; it doesn't even exist! So, let us try to open those eyes.

Further, let us not deal harshly with their blindness, for that would reveal a myopic weakness in those of us whose eyes *are* attuned to freedom. And I confess such nearsightedness at times. It isn't easy to be patient with those who fail to see what we see. Overcoming this psychic blindness in ourselves may be the first step in attuning another's eye to freedom. So, let us strive for patience, bearing in mind the *infinity* of things and ideas for which no living person has ever had eyes.

A striking example of these variations comes to mind. I had quoted most favorably a brilliant zoologist, and assumed that he might be pleased to have a copy of my new book. His acknowledgement was in a sentence or two, no more than a shrug of the shoulders, as we say—obviously, not pleased.

Nevertheless, when his next book was released, I entered it with enthusiasm and was rewarded by enlightenments such as these:

- . . . man is an integral, small, but significant part of a universe that is creative at all levels.
- Minds are self-creative. They are not born, they are made.
- . . . when we express ourselves creatively, in whatever field, we best fulfill our nature.
- And potentialities mean not just skills, but the full range of the capacities for sensing, wondering, learning, understanding, loving, and aspiring. In this light, the ultimate goal of the educational system is to shift to the individual the burden of pursuing his own education.
- The only equality lies in the right, if any, for equal opportunity to develop freely his own worth.

¹ For an easy-to-read yet scholarly explanation of our fantastic variations, see *You Are Extraordinary* by Roger J. Williams. Obtainable from FEE in cloth or paperback.

- . . . recognition that *no one else is like oneself* gives at once a *unique* value to the individual and at the same time *demands that every individual recognize the uniqueness of others*.
- . . . the greater the minds the greater the difference.
- These (Leonardo da Vinci and others) are uncommon giants. . . who grew out of the so-called common stock of a multitude of uncommon individuals of lesser stature.

Never have I felt myself more on the same wave length than with this great zoologist. And then, later in the same book, this one:

- Now all is changing, thanks to antibodies, antibiotics, the surgeon's knife and *the welfare state*.

Little wonder that he shrugged me off when I sent him my book—I being attuned to freedom, he to socialism. However, we should look for truths from whatever source, so why not be grateful for those found in the writings of one who gives thanks for the welfare state! He at least acknowledges that “no one else is like oneself,” and asks “that every individual recognize the uniqueness of others.” This is to say that the eyes of no two persons are attuned the same. Each is unique, indeed.

No two of us are identical, not even “identical twins.” Interestingly, no individual is the same as he was a moment ago. For instance, in a span of five years one's octillion atoms flow away as a new octillion replaces them. Imagine: In every second of one's life, over 6,000,000,000,000,000,000 atoms (6 quintillion) come and go! Thus, I am a different person than I was at the beginning of this sentence. My eye is attuned differently—hopefully attuned to more—than a moment ago. This goes for everyone, and should help us to “recognize the uniqueness of others.”

All things in the Cosmic Scheme are in flux—be they atoms, or galaxies, or man's earthly life. The action flows. This is why, as Roger Williams says, our “inborn individuality was and is the mainspring of our love of liberty.” Inborn? Yes, in people like Williams and, relatively speaking, in a few others. But mass perception of this truth is not a requirement. Were everyone like you or me or anyone else in their attunements, all would perish. The requirement is that those of us who love liberty make that mainspring stronger—discover how better to explain our love.

Who among us knows precisely how to make this explanation? To my knowledge, no one! Conceded, there are thousands of us who see the light and

love what we see. But how describe it? 'Tis comparable to explaining sunlight or Creation! However, thank Heaven, we can cast our eyes aright, keep attuned to freedom, and perhaps improve our explanations of creation at the human level. A few thoughts that come to mind:

- Individuality is an undeniable fact of life, that is, everyone is different. But we can enjoy the fruits of these trillions of differences only as they are free to flow. This fact, and this alone, is all the light I need to love liberty.
- Never lend support or give encouragement to any—not one—man-concocted restraint against the release of creative energy.
- Keep an eye on highly energetic individuals. If they employ their energy to run their own lives, to brighten their own light—learning—they will be our benefactors. Failing this, they will use their energy to run our lives, make us carbon copies of themselves—malefactors.
- Let your light shine before men, that they may see your good works—*Matthew 5:16*
- Lead Kindly Light, amid the encircling gloom. Lead Thou me on!—*Cardinal Newman*

May our eyes be more and more attuned to freedom: the private ownership, free market, limited government way of life—the flowing and the good life!

9

Weeding One's Garden

*Doth not the common experience make this
common unto us that the fattest ground
bringeth forth nothing but weeds, if it not be
well tilled?*
—John Lyly

The soils of the earth produce ever so many weeds, ranging from beggarweeds to smartweeds. And the souls of men—the minds that think and will—are no less plagued with errors galore, mental weeds that range us from the beggar to the smart aleck. Common? We all err—no living exception!

Unquestionably, “the fattest ground bringeth forth nothing but weeds, if it not be *well tilled*.” And the fattest prosperity brings nothing but fallacies, if the minds of men are not well-disciplined. As Horace, the Roman of 2,000 years ago, observed, “adversity has the effect of eliciting talents which in prosperous circumstances would have lain dormant.”

The growing adversity in the world today, here and elsewhere, is eliciting talents by which we learn to better cultivate the fertile soil of freedom. My thesis is that such cultivation of truth begins with the discovery and elimination of our countless errors—weeding one's garden—a strictly personal adventure. Everett Dean Martin offers excellent counsel:

The man who strives to educate himself—and no one else can educate him—must win a certain victory over his own nature. He must learn to smile at his dear idols, analyze his every prejudice, scrap if necessary his fondest and most consoling belief, question his presuppositions, and take his chances with the truth.

I well recall a day when my garden was choked with weeds. Shortly after FEE was founded in 1946, I was asked to lecture at a luncheon club in Los Angeles. Having been General Manager of the L. A. Chamber of Commerce, I had many friends in the area and was pleased to have several of them invited as guests for the occasion. At the end of my lecture, I was shocked by a battery of questions from

members of the club obviously more sympathetic toward socialism than toward my views. These questions were new to me at the time, and I was stumped for answers—much embarrassed before my friends.

Then and there, I resolved to learn to recognize these tricky questions—these weeds in my garden—and how to eradicate them. Thus began a series of suggested answers, by myself and by others, to the most common *Cliches of Socialism*, culminating in a little book of 76 short chapters that has been helpful to many a workman in his garden of freedom.¹

Here are a few examples of those tricky, mischievous notions—cliches—that ought to be weeded from one's garden of freedom:

- “The more complex the society, the more government control we need.”
- “If we had no social security, many people would go hungry.”
- “The right to strike is conceded but. . . .”
- “The size of the national debt doesn't matter because we owe it to ourselves.”
- “The free market ignores the poor.”
- “Human rights are more important than property rights.”
- “We're paying for it, so we might as well get our share.”
- “Customers ought to be protected by price controls.”
- “The welfare state is the best protection against communism.”
- “Big business and big labor require big government.”
- “I prefer security to freedom.”
- “Private business should welcome government competition.”
- “If government doesn't relieve distress, who will?”
- “Labor is not a commodity.”
- “Rent control protects tenants.”
- “Under public ownership, we, the people, own it.”

Why does our book list only 76 weeds? Because we do not see all the weeds there are. The ways to be wrong are infinite. There'll never be such a thing as a perfectly clean garden.

¹ Available from FEE.

As Cervantes wrote, “The road is always better than the inn.” The inn is a stopping place, life’s purpose abandoned. Why is the road better? We thereby move toward our goals, weeding along the way, tilling our souls as best we can, now and forever. There have never been any clean gardens nor will there ever be. It is a matter of progression or ascendancy. Everett Dean Martin’s formula is good enough for me.

The man who strives to educate himself-and no one else can educate him—I am the only person who can educate me, education being a taking-from, never an injection-into process. My formal education ended with high school. Not knowing much and knowing it, I have for the past 60 years selected my own tutors, Dr. Everett Dean Martin being one of many, past and present. Saint Matthew set forth the only valid educational process many centuries ago:

Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you. For everyone that asketh receiveth; and he that seeketh findeth; and to him that knocketh it shall be opened.

. . . must win a certain victory over his own nature—What is man’s natural state, his nature? Is it not his vanity, his unawareness of how little he knows? How seek a victory over this vaingloriousness? Acknowledge, as did Socrates, “I know nothing but I know I know nothing.” That’s the first step. The second comes naturally: seeking to know more! Therein lies indeed “a certain victory.”

He must learn to smile at his dear idols—An idol is “the object of ardent or excessive devotion or admiration.” Perhaps we all succumb to some extent, idolizing certain persons ranging from little political gods to those endowed with fame, wealth, power, charisma. Such idolatry, as distinguished from an esteem of virtues, is degrading both to the idolater and the idol. We should, indeed, smile at our “dear idols,” particularly if one of them happens to be the person seen in the mirror.

. . . analyze his every prejudice—Prejudice is a judgment or opinion formed before the facts are known—usually unfavorable. Such narrow-mindedness or short-sightedness accounts for the millions admiring the weeds of socialism and blind to the flowers in the garden of freedom. Analysis—an *unprejudiced* study of the records—lights the way to truth.

. . . scrap if necessary his fondest and most consoling belief—What we believe depends pretty much on what we are, that is, on what we can understand. Comprehension in the wisest amongst us, relative to Infinite Consciousness—Creation—is infinitesimal. This accounts for ever so many fond and consoling beliefs that are obstacles to human evolution: life's purpose. The challenge, then, is to scrap every belief which stands in the way of our creative growth, emergence, ascendance. In other words, we grow in wisdom as we find sound ideas to displace fallacies.

. . . question his presuppositions—To presuppose is to take something for granted; to view a subject or problem in a narrow, biased, dogmatic, intolerant fashion; to jump to a conclusion. The very words should alert us against this common human frailty, this noxious weed that chokes many a garden before its fruits can be harvested.

. . . and take his chances with the truth—Chance is an opportunity: as you'll have a *chance* to go. Where? Toward whatever truth one can grasp and bring into his possession. But many a weed stands between a gardener and a bountiful harvest of truth. The flowering of truth depends upon freedom if it is to grow and mature. And the game is to overcome the obstacles, the weeds of intervention and control.

Weed your garden and you encourage me to weed mine!

10

Dear Me:

The highest reach of human science is the scientific recognition of human ignorance.

—Sir William Hamilton

In all of my 79 years, this is the first time I have ever written a letter to me! There are two reasons for the delay:

1. Not until now have I *fully* appreciated the harm done by most of the letter-writing indulged in by freedom devotees. Reference is to the plethora of condemnatory letters they write to the millions of persons who take socialistic positions, ranging from editors to politicians; from small fry way on up to Presidents of the U.S.A. It is the straighten-them-out approach which begins by classifying the recipient as *Dummkopf!*

2. Previously, I have never *fully* realized that the sole contribution anyone can make to the evolution and welfare—perfection—of others is such perfection as he or she may personally achieve. In light of all contrary notions, this appears as a new thought. New? On hearing of my “discovery,” an associate called attention to Saint Matthew’s wisdom, taken from Christ’s *Sermon on the Mount*, spoken quite some time ago.

For the sake of personal enlightenment, the following is an analysis and commentary on that Saint’s wisdom. He learned from one; hopefully, I can learn from him.

Pass no judgments and you will not be judged. For as you judge so will you yourselves be judged, and whatever measure you deal out to others will be dealt back to you.

Judge only actions, thoughts, ideas but not the authors thereof. If they take positions contrary to your own, call them not fools, nor indeed think of them as

such. To do so is to invite similar appraisals of you. 'Tis the law of action and reaction at work. The practice of name-calling is foolish, for it leads only to a population of fools.

Why do you look at the speck of sawdust in your brother's eye, with never a thought for the great plank in your own?

What an instructive hyperbole: sawdust in your brother's eye, the great plank in your own! What is that speck we see in our brother's eye? It is that infinitesimal bit of knowhow we may possess that our brother does not. And the great plank in our own? Trillions of know-hows we do not possess but don't know we don't!

Wrote a sage: "To be ignorant of one's ignorance is the malady of ignorance."

Do not throw your pearls to the pigs; they will trample on them, and turn and tear you to pieces.

Again, a hyperbole or striking metaphor, seemingly harsh, but is it really?

The Perfect Exemplar was crucified for openly presenting his Pearls of Wisdom. However, it is not necessary to go back 20 centuries for a demonstration of this truth. Try presenting the Pearls of Freedom in today's Russia or Red China. They'll trample on your ideas and tear you to pieces!

Can this seemingly harsh metaphor be rephrased to serve as good counsel in today's U.S.A.? In my judgment, it would read: *Do not try to reform the opponents of freedom. They will trample on your ideas and do all in their power to belittle you.* For confirmation, hear these few who have reflected on reforming others:

Every reform, however necessary, will by weak minds be carried to an excess which will itself need reforming.

—Coleridge

An indefinable something is to be done, in a way nobody knows how, at a time nobody knows when; they will accomplish nobody knows what.

—Thomas B. Reed

It is a general error to suppose the loudest complainers for the public to be the most anxious for its welfare.

—Burke

Be not angry that you cannot make others as you wish them to be, since you cannot make yourself as you wish to be.

—Thomas a Kempis

Reform only yourself; for in doing that you do everything.

—Montaigne

Always treat others as you would like them to treat you.

I do not wish others to reform me, so I shall not try to reform them.

I do not want others to belittle me, so I shall not belittle them.

I wish to act creatively as I please, so I shall concede that privilege to everyone.

I welcome the open competition of the market, through which the goods and services of others are available in exchange for mine.

I hope that others will achieve an understanding that will cause me to seek their tutorship, therefore, I shall try to upgrade myself to the point where some will seek mine.

Righteousness—integrity—is the quality I most admire to others, so righteousness must come first among my goals.

I appreciate others *sharing* their thoughts with me, so I shall share with them.

Briefly, I must never do unto others that which I would not have them do unto me—life's *Golden Rule*!

Enter by the narrow gate. The road that leads to perdition is wide with plenty of room, but the road that leads to life is small and narrow.

Wrote Aristotle: “One may go wrong in many different ways, but right only in one.” The ways to go wrong are a millionfold—as numerous as are all the errors of mankind. Plenty of room, indeed! But the way to go right is, we might say, singlefold, a “small and narrow” road, a truth now and then come upon by one devotedly seeking what’s right—like finding a needle in a haystack.

Terence, born a slave two hundred years before the Sermon on the Mount, brought up and educated by a Roman Senator, became a writer of comedy. A priceless line, “Nowadays the reward is for those who make right appear wrong.” His “nowadays” strikingly resemble our own. For instance, camouflaged thievery—the coercive taking of the fruits of your and my labor to feather the nests of others—is made to appear right and, thus, honesty must be wrong. Countless examples nowadays might be cited.

Terence lived in a devolutionary period as we do. But courage! Evolutionary periods follow, especially when enough of us get on that small and narrow road that leads to life.

The man who heeds these words and acts upon them . . . has the sense to build his house on rock. The rain came down, the floods rose, the wind blew, and beat upon that house; but it did not fall, because its foundations were on rock. But what of the man who hears but does not heed these words? He built his house on sand. The rain came down, the floods rose, the wind blew, and beat upon the house; down it fell with a great crash.

Millions of us *hear* these words, can repeat them verbatim, but we *heed* them not. Why this delinquency? We haven’t done our homework, that is, taken the time to analyze and grasp this wisdom. Short of understanding in depth, we are all words and no deeds. “Religious babblers” may not be too severe a term—our houses built more on sand than rock! This Letter to Me is an attempt to be graced by Divine Wisdom so that I might distinguish rock from sand!

True, if only you and I build our houses on rock, while the others build on sand, the wind, flood and rain that destroys the others might also bring down ours in the general crash. History is filled with these disasters—freedom squelched—all because these truths have not been heeded and acted upon. As another disciple—Saint John—stated later: *“The truth will make you free!”*

In a world where too many houses are built on sand, what then are we to do? Where lies our salvation? First, it is to recognize, “come hell or high water,” that there’s more to our lives than this earthly moment, namely, the immortality of the one great reality: consciousness. It lives on forever. Build our houses on that rock now with the eye on eternity!

Second, be not too distraught by what goes on around us. We can help our brothers here and now. Wrote Gerald Heard, “Growth when denied is more dangerous than apathy.” Forget those who are “not interested, indifferent, listless.” While their unconcern is to be lamented, they are at the zero level and matter little if at all.

There are those, on the other hand, who possess the possibilities for growth in awareness, perception, consciousness. To deny this, not to strive for growth, is to desert our brothers; it is to rob humanity of a potential benefactor—a worker in freedom’s vineyard.

I must keep these thoughts in mind:

- No one will learn from me unless he or she is seeking my tutorship.
- No one who really counts will seek my tutorship unless I am growing.
- Growth in consciousness is what energizes the magnetism that attracts seekers.

May I, then, grow in truth for my sake, for the sake of others, for freedom’s sake!

Reformers: Victims of Vanity?

*Reform only yourself, for in doing that you
have done everything.* —Montaigne

For the past 28 years we have conducted several hundred Seminars here at FEE and around this and other nations. In each of these, I always do the concluding lecture on methodology. Assuming the participants favor the private ownership, free market, limited government way of life, what are the appropriate steps for such an achievement?

Recently, a participant came to me afterward, making a confession, admittedly unusual: “That’s the best lecture I have ever heard. *It hurts, but it’s true!*” What was it that hurt? It was my unorthodox contention that ours is a learning rather than a selling or a reforming-of-others problem. My proposed remedy was contrary to what he had been doing. He had, until then, been devoting his energies to the reforming of others rather than to the reform of self—as have countless thousands who despise socialism, that is, the planned economy and the welfare state. He believed, for the first time, that he had been wasting his energies, doubtless doing more harm than good. Is it too harsh a judgment to claim that he *had been* a victim of vanity?

Vanity? As related to the freedom philosophy, it is an over-assessment of one’s own understanding. It is the fiction that all would be quite satisfactory were others as well versed as the would-be reformer. Wrote Adam Smith, “Vanity is the foundation of the most ridiculous and contemptible vices—the vices of affectation and common lying.” True, most are innocent affectations, but innocent or intentional does not alter their damage. The sad fact is that none of us has more than scratched the surface in understanding and explaining how freedom works its wonders.

In order that a blessed humility may replace a devilish vanity, let’s have a brief look at the source of our actions: *the brain*.

“The human brain, like the rest of the nervous system, contains its full quota of nerve cells at birth—trillions of them! Many of these are present in the embryonic, neuro-blastic form. The primitive *neuroblast* (undeveloped cell) is not functionally alive. It must develop into a *neuron* and this development proceeds well into middle life and still further in the more gifted and mentally active individuals.

“The normal human brain always contains a greater source of neuroblasts than can possibly develop into neurons during the span of life, and the potentialities of the human cortex *are never fully realized*. There is a surplus and, depending upon physical factors, education, environment and *conscious effort*, more or less of the initial store of neuroblasts will develop into mature, functioning neurons.

“The development of the more plastic and newer tissue of the brain depends to a large extent upon *the conscious efforts made by the individual*. There is every reason to assume that development of cortical functions is promoted by mental activity and that *continued mental activity is an important factor in the retention of cortical plasticity into late life*.

“Goethe, Voltaire, Kant [and others] are among the numerous examples of men whose creative mental activities extended into the years associated with physical decline.

“There also seem sufficient grounds for the assumption that *habitual disuse* of these highest centers *results in atrophy* or at least brings about a certain mental decline, and *examples bearing out this contention are only too numerous*.”¹

If the above be a realistic analysis, and I believe it is, then the genesis of all human action relates to the stagnation or development of the human cortex. To have but the dimmest idea of how the neuroblasts are or are not converted into functioning neurons will give us brilliant instructions as to what we should and should not do. At the very least, we will be able to grasp the vice of vanity and the virtue of humility and what’s required to abandon the former and move toward the latter. Also, we will be moved to relegate reform *exclusively* to the reform of self. Leave others to their own reform!

¹ The above five paragraphs (italics mine) were written by a famous lady who specialized in physiology and medical research. See *Fearfully and Wonderfully Made* by Renee von Eulenberg-Wiener (New York: Macmillan Company, 1938), p. 310.

Victims of vanity! For an instructive example, reflect on the “teachers” in the U.S.A. The vast majority of them are devoted to reforming pupils, rarely doubting their own wisdom. How would they perform were they to become aware of their own shortcomings? A few ideas that support the learning thesis:

The highest function of the teacher consists not so much in imparting knowledge as in stimulating the pupil in its love and pursuit. To know how to suggest is the art of teaching.

—*Amiel*

The teacher who is attempting to teach without inspiring the pupil with a desire to learn is hammering on cold iron.

—*Horace Mann*

The best teacher is the one who suggests rather than dogmatizes, and inspires his listener with the wish to teach himself.

—*Bulwer-Lytton*

To waken interest and kindle enthusiasm is the sure way to teach easily and successfully.

—*Tryon Edwards*

A tutor should not be continually thundering instruction into the ears of his pupil, as if he were pouring it through a funnel, but induce him to think, to distinguish, and to find out things for himself; sometimes opening the way, at other times leaving it for him to open; and so accommodate the precepts to the capacity of his pupil.

—*Montaigne*

It would be a great advantage to some school-masters if they would steal two hours a day from their pupils, and give their own minds the benefit of the robbery.

—*Boyse*

These reflections on “teachers” apply equally to those persons in other occupations—business, religion, or whatever—who dogmatize or, better yet, try to “bring others up to their level” of understanding. This tactic has at least two flaws: (1) trying to insinuate one’s notions into the consciousness of others revolts them, and (2) the level projected is far below what’s desirable. *We cannot reform others!*

Who then can you or I reform? Only the first person singular, the one seen in the mirror, the sole individual on earth over whom one has any creative control! Converting one’s own neuroblasts into functioning neurons is a challenging and

an interesting possibility. *But that I can do this to another's brain is obviously impossible!*

I should never have as an aim or ambition the bringing of another to my level of understanding. That would put the initiative for the other's improvement—the development of his neurons—in my hands rather than in his.

The neurons of a person's brain are developed, if at all, *by conscious effort on the part of that person*. When someone, in his vanity, proposes to develop your neurons, we may properly refer to the process as “brainwashing.”

Brainwashing presupposes brainwashers and the brainwashed—the pied pipers and their following. The former exist by the millions and only because many more millions wish it that way. The latter want their thinking done for them, and this the pied pipers eloquently promise to do.

Neither those who promise to lead nor those who promise to follow exert conscious effort to realize their cortical potentialities; they're not even aware of the mental activity that could be theirs. As a consequence, the “habitual disuse of these highest centers results in atrophy or at least brings about a certain mental decline.” These, then, are the victims of vanity—the “leaders” and the led!

“Continual mental activity,” we are told, “is an important factor in the retention of cortical plasticity into late life.” Of the very few—an infinitesimal minority—who experience this development, does it follow that they understand and believe in the freedom philosophy? Rarely! Mrs. Eulenburg-Wiener, as quoted above, mentioned Goethe, Voltaire, and Kant, believers in liberty. However, she included several Fabian socialists. Had she grasped the freedom thesis herself? Anyway, hers was a brilliant explanation of what accounts for the more gifted individuals among us.

Should we be distressed by the fact that only a very few among gifted individuals grasp the blessings of freedom? Of course not! Merely acknowledge the countless specializations for which you and I have not the slightest competency or even desire. To understand freedom, even partially, is as rare a talent as graces the minds of human beings. This, as with any other specialization, is to be expected—in tune with reality.

What then is the appropriate role of the few among us who are believers? It is to give intensive, *conscious* effort to our own improvement, to converting *our* neuroblasts into functioning neurons. Concentrate on cortical growth, and this

alone, which energizes the magnetism that draws others to seek one's tutorship. Keep in mind that only seekers are learners. Our role is to have a freedom enlightenment sufficient to induce seeking.

Finally, *share with others*. Forget about "reforming" them! The more we share, the more we learn. This is in the interest of self *and* freedom!

12

Ayes Versus I's

*Initiative is doing the right thing without
being told.* —Elbert Hubbard

Committee reports—whether in the halls of Congress, state Assemblies, village Boards, chambers of commerce, or whatever—are decided by majority vote. If there be more agreement than disagreement, the chairman announces, “The ayes have it!” That counting noses is an inappropriate means of deciding right from wrong should be obvious to every person who does his own thinking.

Leo Tolstoy, a thinker of monumental integrity, sets the stage for my thesis:

From the day when the first members of councils placed exterior authority higher than interior, that is to say, recognized the decisions of men united in councils [committees] as more sacred than reason and conscience; *on that day began the lies* that caused the loss of millions of human beings and which continue their unhappy work to the present day.¹

So, when trying to decide what's right and wrong, away with Ayes—lies. What then are the I's, for which we should strive? They are two remarkable blessings that bloom from the “more sacred”: reason and conscience; or Integrity and Initiative! It is the attainment of these two rare qualities by a very small minority that explains why we continue to prosper in spite of a rapidly growing socialism. Do not these qualities make for an indomitable vigor that all the dicto-crats in the world cannot down? Of course, if a weakling, I can forsake these I's but, if not, they're mine, as much as my mind. That Integrity and Initiative account for our remaining in a right-side-up position in the face of enormous counterforces is, to me, an important discovery—a secret revealed!

¹ Leo Tolstoy, *The Law of Love and the Law of Violence* (New York: Rudolph Field, 1948), p. 26.

Why was Tolstoy so critical of those who put “exterior authority higher than interior; that is to say, recognized the decisions of men united in councils as more sacred than reason and conscience”? He was calling our attention to the plague of Ayes and the sacredness of Integrity, the quality that blooms from “reason and conscience.”

Integrity—an accurate reflection in word and deed of whatever one’s highest conscience reveals as righteous—a rare achievement? Indeed, it is so rare that the term does not appear in the more than 1,000 headings in the largest of all quotation books. Ralph Waldo Emerson, one of the strongest minds and best phrasers of ideas acknowledges: “I cannot find language of sufficient energy to convey my sense of the *sacredness* of private Integrity.”²

Sacred qualities cannot be taught. At best, they are caught, and then only from the few exemplars who must be sought! It has been my good fortune to have found quite a few exemplars from the past and present, and what a joy to behold! Their highest conscience, and that alone, dictates their behavior, be it the freedom way of life or whatever. They never budge an iota from their righteous guidelines regardless of contrary views, opinions, clamors; standing alone frets them not at all. Ramrod straight, as we say.

Shakespeare wrote, “I speak with a single heart.” *Single*, in this sense, is directly linked with *integer*, meaning, “Whole, entire, not divided.” Contrasted to *single* is *double* which has the same original root as the word “duplicity.” Such phrases as “double dealing” and “double talk” convey this connotation. Individuals blest with integrity “speak with a single heart.” Void of duplicity, they can be trusted by one and all. Those who can be trusted are moral giants, oversouls, and constitute the very backbone of human evolution and of any good society. Hail to the few of this rare quality!

Now to Initiative: This quality—when achieved by those already graced with Integrity—accounts for such well-being as we enjoy in spite of duplicity on the rampage. These I’s persist in working their wonders, all the “hell and high water” notwithstanding. To me, this borders on the miraculous.

But hear this: There’s initiative and initiative, as different as night and day. Countless people exercise initiative ranging all the way from highjacking to

² For a more detailed explanation of this quality, see the chapter, “To Thine Own Self Be True,” in my book, *Who’s Listening?*

embezzlement to obtaining governmental handouts, to coercive control of wages and hours, to tariffs, to getting paid for not farming, to—you name it!

Initiative, on the other hand, is, as Elbert Hubbard suggests, “doing the *right* thing without being told.” My dictionary gives it this definition:

. . . the characteristic of originating new ideas or methods, ability to think and act without being urged; *enterprise*.

Over the years I have known numerous persons possessing Integrity of the highest order but lacking Initiative—none at all. Before they could do anything they had to be told. But if another outlined or suggested a task or tasks, their performances left nothing to be desired. Imagine our sorry plight were there no Initiators. All would perish!

Enterprise must be emphasized to grasp the miracle I am trying to understand—the entrepreneurial spirit, if you please. This kind of innovator endows all of us with countless blessings. Why? He perceives opportunities to employ scarce resources to serve consumers more efficiently and effectively than otherwise would be the case. Initiative is exercised through the market process of *willing exchange* and involves no coercion or violence against others, none whatsoever. This is the night-and-day difference between market-type Initiative and the kind carried out at gunpoint: from outright robbery to governmental edicts by know-it-alls attempting to run our lives by the rule of Ayes.

It is the few, rarely aware of their Integrity and Initiative, whose righteousness—moral and economic—keeps us right-side-up as the Command Society returns to bedevil mankind. These “I’s” have an unbelievable vim and vigor, a strength that even the total state cannot completely destroy.

Have a look at today’s Russia. In all history there’s no better example of totalitarianism. Although millions are slaughtered or starved, many millions live on. Explanation? Up until now I have attributed this to “a leakage of creative human energy.” No Commissars or dictocrats have ever been able to wipe out those attributes, qualities, virtues which compose man’s Manifest Destiny. Creation is a force stronger than the babble and guns of know-it-alls—that is, of know-nothings.

The “leakage of creative human energy” that keeps a society going may be better explained by Integrity and Initiative. These precious qualities, flowering now and then, first in this and then in that rare individual—these qualities *in unison* tap the

wellsprings of creativity. It's not "The Ayes have it" but, rather, "The I's have it." Let integrity and initiative bless you and me, and all creative individuals and their beneficiaries!

13

Heads Up

The idea of freedom must grow weak in the hearts of men before it can be killed at the hands of tyrants. —Thomas H. Hogshead

Remember the last time you turned a somersault, or saw someone else do it? In case you don't remember, it is an acrobatic stunt performed by turning the body one full revolution forward or backward, heels over head. The word is often used figuratively, as here, to mean a complete reversal of opinion. It appears that many of us are now about half way through the performance and are stuck there—heads down, heels in the air! So why not complete the somersault and bring our heads up where they should be! Otherwise—if you'll forgive a pun—we make heels of ourselves.

Pursue this analogy: we have for several decades been headed toward the Command Society and away from the Free and Competitive Society—heads down, heels up. To be stuck in that position is ridiculous.

The question is, what should devotees of human liberty do about this ridiculous situation? How are we to get our heads up and feet on the ground? There are at least three requirements:

1. A vast improvement in analytical thinking so that we may uncover the causes of our predicament.
2. A recognition that the Command Society is led by millions of dictocrats, not one of whom regards himself as a despot or tyrant but, to the contrary, as a savior.
3. A realization that the masses, those who do no politico-economic thinking for themselves, also assess the dictocrats as saviors, not tyrants.

Wrote Lecomte du Noüy, "To participate in the Divine Task, man must place his ideals as high as possible, out of reach if necessary." Human liberty assuredly is a phase of the Divine Task. To place ideals at their appropriate level would seem

to require that we first see through the notions that are ridiculous in order that the ideals may come clearly within our vision.

What is the most ridiculous notion of all that lies at the root of the Command Society—the genesis of Serfdom, Feudalism, Mercantilism, Communism, Socialism, the Welfare State, the Planned Economy? The fallacy is ancient—old as a mankind. 'Tis a primitive or barbaric assessment of self, a lamentable unawareness of how infinitesimal is the wisdom of anyone. Here are several observations on this vanity by thoughtful individuals:

Vanity is the foundation of the most ridiculous and contemptible vices—the vices of affectation and common lying.

—*Adam Smith*

Over-stuffed egos, waddling about in self-appointed importance.

—*E. K. Goldthwaite*

Vanity is the quicksand of reason.

—*George Sand*

. . . vanity keeps us perpetually in motion. What a dust do I raise! says the fly on the coach-wheel! And what a rate do I drive! says the fly upon the horse's back.

—*Jonathan Swift*

Vanity makes men ridiculous, pride odious, and ambition terrible.

—*Bulwer-Lytton*

When a man has no longer any conception of excellence above his own, his voyage is done; he is dead; dead in the trespasses and sins of blear-eyed vanity.

—*Henry Ward Beecher*

If vanity does not entirely overthrow the virtues, at least it makes them all totter.

—*La Rochefoucauld*

Now and then throughout history, even before Socrates, there emerge individuals who recognize this fact, who have an awareness of one of life's most rewarding truths: *the more one knows, the greater looms the unknown!* The more wisdom, the more is one's ignorance recognized. A simple demonstration of this truth, one I like to repeat, was made by the noted mathematician, Warren Weaver:

As science learns one answer, it is characteristically true that it *learns several new questions*. It is as though science were working in a great forest of ignorance within

which . . . things are clear. . . . But, as that circle becomes larger and larger, the circumference of contact with ignorance also gets longer and longer. Science learns more and more. But there is a sense in which it does not gain; for the volume of the *apprehended but not understood* keeps getting larger. We keep, in science, *getting a more and more sophisticated view of our ignorance*.¹

Suppose the millions of politicians and others who are trying to run our lives were to get a more sophisticated view of their ignorance. What a boon to mankind that would be! Is such a change likely? I think not. Why? Falling into vanity is like falling into a deep ditch—once in, rarely out. A sophisticated view of one's ignorance leads to humility. But such humility, as protection against falling into the vanity ditch, may be attainable before the fall, seldom afterward.

Why seldom afterward? Those drugged by vanity, being know-it-alls, have no yearning for learning. And no one learns who is not an avid seeker of truth. Thus, all the reasoning, arguments, pleas, counsel, or damnations directed at the vain are in vain. Might as well try to put out a fire with gasoline, or enlighten that fly on the horse's back. Confrontations have the effect of confirming them in their vainglory!

Conceded, there are many among these self-proclaimed lords whose wisdom in a sense is equal or superior to that of the rest of us. For instance, I have had acquaintances with several once devout Communists who abandoned the Command Society and embraced the Free and Competitive Society—heads up, feet on the ground. These, however, are rare exceptions. The millions of dictocrats, having coercive power at their disposal, are unaware of the ignorance which is common to all mankind. So, they go their merry way—“*saviors*” at our expense!

Have we no way then to put their dictatorial behaviors to naught? Of course! Two achievements are required on our part.

First, never, under any circumstances, call them “fools.” Such a tactic makes fools of ourselves. What then is the first achievement? It is a learning problem on our part, namely, to discover how simply and clearly to explain that all attempts forcibly to control the creative activities of others are *foolish*. People, by and large, even those who are vanity-stricken, do not like to be thought of as authors of foolish actions. If we do our part well enough, they'll put themselves in their proper place.

¹ See “The Raw Material,” *Manas*, February 26, 1975.

Second, follow Lecomte du Noüy's counsel: "To participate in the Divine Task, man must place his ideals as high as possible, out of reach if necessary."

It is impossible to place one's ideals at the level du Noüy had in mind without participating in the Divine Task. Ideal thoughts are accompanied by ideal actions; if the actions aren't ideal, the thoughts are somehow warped. As said earlier, a phase of the Divine Task is human liberty, which I define as: *No man-concocted restraints against the release of creative human energy*. The Free and Competitive Society is precisely the opposite of the Command Society. It includes government under the direction of statesman—invoking a common justice, inhibiting destructive actions, keeping the peace. Period!

The result if we achieve heads up and feet on the ground? The dictocrats will hang their heads, not necessarily in shame but in fear of being shamed. Tyrants cannot kill the idea of freedom if it be strong in the hearts of men. Let's pray and strive for this strength!

14

Too Rare for the Wings of Words?

. . . the genius of man is a continuation of the power that made him and that has not done making him.

—Emerson

Ralph Waldo Emerson—religious, spiritual, humble, and wise relative to the great and near great—added his own comment to the above observation:

I dare not deal with this element in its pure essence. It is too rare for the *wings of words*.

Genius is a superior power of seeing and Emerson was, assuredly, a continuation of the power that made him. He referred to this power—Creation—as “Immense Intelligence.” Rare? Man with his finite mind never has found nor will he ever find words to describe this Immense Intelligence or Infinite Consciousness. There are no wings of words to portray “this element in its pure essence”!

This poses a question relating to human freedom. Freedom is, indeed, a rare social experience, being approximated only a few times in the history of man. Several questions: Is freedom in its pure essence limited to intuitions and insights? Is it too ethereal, in the sense of being “spiritlike; characterized by extreme delicacy,” for this workaday world? Is it too personal to be communicated from the few who partially perceive and believe to the many who do neither? Perhaps these questions have no precise answers but the pros and cons deserve our best thought in order to avoid frustration and head us toward useful effort.

The discouraging aspects of our problems are easily discernible and frightening. To find encouragement, we must look beneath the surface. So, let’s dispose of the negative elements in order that we may better reflect on the positive.

The difficulty, doubtless, begins with a tendency to attempt explanations of the unfathomable in familiar symbols, although there are in fact no wings of words for anything we do not clearly fathom. For instance, after more than four

decades of concentrated thinking and study, I cannot make the case for freedom in terms that really communicate to more than a few people. Nor do I know of anyone who can. But even more distressing is our inability to forestall the contradictions, misunderstandings, antagonisms evoked when we stand foursquare for freedom—freedom with no “buts,” no “leaks,” no exceptions whatsoever. Seemingly, the continuity is lost in our own limited understanding of cause and effect.

It’s a safe guess that less than one per cent of the citizenry are aware of the idea of limited government as set forth by our Founding Fathers, the idea whose practice has accounted for the American miracle. Simple as it is—keeping the peace, restraining destructive actions, invoking a common justice, leaving peaceful persons free to act creatively as they please—this politico-economic doctrine merely amuses, often infuriates, the millions. Arguing that government should be thus limited gets a nearly unanimous adverse reaction. It would be easier to erase the myth of Santa Claus!

Of all the subtle ideas which confront us, which is the most unfathomable? For which concept have we—so far—no wings of words? There is one key idea beyond the imagination of nearly everyone; and of the few who grasp it, the idea is beyond our power of explanation. It is a truth I here repeat for the umpteenth time: *To claim that the wisdom in the market is a million or trillion times greater than exists in any individual now or ever is a gross understatement.* This is an earthly phase of a heavenly truth: Infinite Consciousness—Immense Intelligence—is infinitely greater than any finite consciousness. These parallel truths are obvious only to the few who are in search of wisdom. Neither truth is in the realm of the salable. If in doubt, try peddling either one!

Why cannot more people grasp the fact that there’s no one person—nor even a committee—whose wisdom remotely approaches the wisdom to be found in the free and unfettered market? What is the obstacle to an understanding of this truth, the mental roadblock that the best explanations fail to penetrate? Thomas Alva Edison, an all-time great, revealed what is close to a secret: *“No one knows more than one-millionth of one per cent of anything.”* Wiser than most, he knew this of himself, of you, me, and all others. To know this is the first step in such individual wisdom as graces mankind. But not more than one in thousands has taken this infantile step.

Whoever is unaware of how infinitesimal his wisdom may assess himself as wise, but he is utterly blind to a significant social truth: all of us—no exceptions—are intellectual fledglings! Can we identify those unaware of how little they know? Easily! They're the ones who "think" they can rule our lives better than we can. "Be like me!" they exclaim; "Do as I say!" And they'll seek political office in order to acquire coercive power to sway others their way. It is this blindness that explains our country's plunge into socialism. Worse than "Blind leaders of the blind"? Yes, it's little "Alexander the Greats" *herding* everyone! And there are many millions of them. The catastrophic consequences? John W. Burgess, for years the brilliant Professor of Political Science and Constitutional Law at Columbia University, bequeathed to us this sage observation:

The claim [of the Planners] rests upon the very serious error that world intercourse and world interchange of the elements of civilization require *political* interference and intermeddling. This is not only false, but it is so false as to be highly mischievous and harmful. Outside of this lies the whole free realm of trade, commerce, science, literature, art and social relations, things which bring all parts of the world together in friendly and helpful interchange, while political intermeddling almost always provokes hatred, enmity and war.

Enough of the negative; so let's have a look at the positive—the bright side. Again, here's the key point to these issues: The wisdom in the free and unfettered market is trillions of times greater than that of any individual, be he a Socrates, Edison, or whoever. Is this truth too ethereal, too far into the realm of the unknown for comprehension, too rare for the wings of words? To the masses, yes; to the very few, no. Encouragingly, it's only the few, from one to a dozen or so who have led every good movement in the world's history. And it will ever be thus!

Neither the heavenly truth of Infinite Wisdom nor the earthly truth concerning the wisdom of the market is readily demonstrable, or subject to immediate and certain proof. Each is assimilated primarily as an act of faith. But there are ways of acting in economic affairs which are in harmony with our faith. What behavior should we feature to assure an improved understanding of the enormous wisdom that graces the market?

For the answer, reflect on that feature which largely accounts for the wisdom in the free and unfettered market: *Competition!* Here we have everyone—those who so wish—each with his tiny bit of expertise, trying to out-compete the others. 'Tis a

perpetual game of leapfrog, competitors trying to advance their own interests. The result? Regardless of who's ahead in the millions of competitions, it's the *consumers* whose welfare is advanced day in and day out. William Graham Sumner found wings of words for this miracle of the market:

Every man and woman in society has one big duty. That is, *to take care of his or her own self*. This is a social duty. For, fortunately, the matter stands so that the duty of making the best of one's self is not a separate thing from the duty of filling one's place in society, but the two are one, and the latter is accomplished when the former is done.

Now to the final question. How are we to discover ever-improving wings of words to advance an understanding of our earthly truth? The answer seems more or less obvious: Employ the identical behavior that lies at the root of this truth: *Competition!* The few of us ardently competing in thinking and exposition!

As in the realm of goods and services, there will always be one out front, another later on. As James Russell Lowell observed, "That cause is strong which has, not a multitude, but one strong mind, behind it." The strongest mind, rarely known, is in first place right now but will shortly lose the number one position to another. 'Tis the game of leapfrog—as in the market!

As to leapfrogging, a good percentage of the few who truly believe in the freedom way of life under-assess themselves. "What possibly can I contribute?" is the baneful thought that besets them. Overlooked is the fact that the wings of words are composed of tiny contributions—words and phrasings—one word here another there. Why, better words by you, even one, could change the course of history.

Come, if you please, and join the competition. It's not only fun but the dividends are unbelievably large!

Life's Achievement: Inner or Outer Directed?

Aim at perfection in everything, though in most things it is unattainable. However, they who aim at it, and persevere, will come much nearer to it than those whose laziness and despondency make them give it up as unattainable.
—Lord Chesterfield

Man did not create himself for it is easily demonstrable that man knows next to nothing about himself. But man, can if he so chooses, *make* himself. He has the choice of stagnating at the bone and flesh level or gaining day in and day out in awareness, perception, consciousness. The latter—realizing one's unique aptitudes and potentialities—can be properly classified as *life's achievement*. Ascending to such intellectual, moral, and spiritual heights as may grace our individual beings is what we're here for!

It seems self-evident that man's earthly purpose is to grow, emerge, evolve, *hatch*. Referring to the remark of Heraclitus that we are here as in an egg, C. S. Lewis observed, "You cannot go on being a good egg forever; you must either hatch or rot." Hatching, as the achievement in mind, poses the question: Is the process outer or inner directed?

Only a rough estimate is possible here, but it's my guess that more than 99 per cent of mankind's thinking about the higher values—intellectual, moral, spiritual—has been and is *outer* directed. It has been molded by various outside forces: something-for-nothing schemes, popular political double talk, dictator jargon, mobocracy, nose counting as a means of deciding what is true and righteous, on and on—fickle, ever-changing fops of fashion, thus described by William Ellery Channing:

Without depth of thought, or earnestness of feeling, or strength of purpose, living an unreal life, sacrificing substance to show, substituting the fictitious for the natural, mistaking a crowd for society, finding its chief pleasure in ridicule, and

exhausting its ingenuity in expedients for killing time, fashion is among the last influences under which *a human being who respects himself, or who comprehends the great end of life*, would desire to be placed.

In addition to these fashionable ones are millions of others just as inattentive to “the great end of life.” Instead of following fads, they are *coercively pushed* this way and that by innumerable governments and sub-governments. Mere samples of the regulations foisted on people: what to grow where and when; what wages and prices are permissible; the hours of work; what and with whom one may exchange; the thoughts to be entertained (government dictated curricula); what portion of the fruits of a man’s labor he “owes” to others. There are literally millions of such edicts ranging from how high the fence, to the shape of toilet seats, to how many dogs one may own! Here we have “the blind leaders of the blind,” the pushers and the pushed.

Now to the achievers, those who aim at perfection and persevere. True, they too are pushed—but they *know it*. Taking the only corrective course there is, they use the “push” as a sailor uses the wind—to serve *his* ends—and thus they are *inner* rather than outer directed. Instead of being followers or tag alongs, they’re just the opposite—*seekers*! And they search every nook and cranny for bits of truth. But reflect on this enlightening point by the renowned psychiatrist, Dr. Fritz Kunkel: “. . . truth cannot be taught in words. It must actually *be experienced within our own hearts*.”¹ Seeking for truth is an inside exploration; it is caught, rather than taught.

How is truth caught? What criterion can the achievers use to distinguish truth from falsehood? The best answer known to me: If it’s right in principle, it is truth, and if wrong in principle ’tis false. But how does one tell whether a principle is right or wrong? See if it works, not only in the short run but in the long run! If it’s right in principle, it has to work. Reflect on the following:

- Suppose all were thieves—all parasites and no hosts. Everyone would perish. *Robbery* violates the right to the fruits of one’s own labor and, thus, is wrong in principle—and doesn’t work!

¹ See *In Search of Maturity* by Dr. Fritz Kunkel (New York: Charles Scribner’s Sons, 1934), p. 9.

- Suppose all were liars. Why would all perish? Lying violates truth; *expediency* is wrong in principle—and doesn't work!
- Suppose every citizen were a coercionist, freedom to act creatively completely squelched. None would survive. *Coercion* is wrong in principle—and doesn't work!
- Suppose all were monopolists, every good and service having but a single source, not an iota of competition or exchange of ideas, inventions, discoveries. No survivors! *Monopoly* is wrong in principle—and doesn't work.
- Suppose all were Keynesians. Society would revert to primitive barter, and nearly all would perish. *Keynesism* causes inflation and destroys an honest, workable medium of exchange. It is wrong in principle—and doesn't work!

What then is right in principle? Discover what should be *released* and what *restrained*. Obviously, it is right in principle to restrain every action which hinders the release of creative energy. And, by the same token, it is right in principle to release every action which facilitates creative energy.²

Another renowned psychiatrist, Dr. Carl Jung, sheds light on the distinction between the mill run of humanity and the achievers:

The public in general is possessed of the fundamental error that there are certain answers, "solutions," or attitudes of mind which need only be uttered in order to spread the necessary light. But the best of truths is of no use—as history has shown a thousand times—unless it has become the individual's most personal *inner* experience. . . . Our need is not to know the truth but *to experience it*. . . . Nothing is more fruitless than to speak of how things must and should be and nothing is more important than to find the way which leads to these far-off goals.

The goals of the achievers are indeed far off—into the Infinite! As related to the Infinite, the Bible has, as I believe, the greatest instruction ever conferred upon mankind, "Seek ye first the Kingdom of God [Truth and Righteousness] and these things [wealth, learning, intelligence] shall be added unto you." C. S. Lewis phrased

² For more explanation of the relation between short-run and long-run actions and other aspects of this thesis see "Let's Look to our Principles" in my book, *Comes the Dawn*.

the Truth: “Aim at Heaven and you get earth thrown in. Aim at earth and you will get neither.”

How interesting that two renowned psychiatrists, Kunkel and Jung, emphasize the point that truth, to be one’s own, must be experienced. Truth may be heard countless times but unless absorbed into the tissues, so to speak—digested—it is no more than hearsay, that is, without enlightenment. Anyone who has experienced this fact, and whose ambition is to advance the freedom way of life, would never “spin his wheels” with any selling-the-masses approach! Why? “*The wisdom of experience is incommunicable.*” Isn’t it obvious that experience is not transmissible in the commonly accepted sense?

As Jung observed, “. . . nothing is more important than to find the way to these far-off goals.” What is the most far-off goal at the human level? It is freedom—each individual, without exception, being able to act creatively as he or she pleases, that is, sharing in Creation along the lines of one’s own uniqueness.

Finally, as to those who are inner directed, achievers as related to the free market, private ownership limited government way of life with its moral and spiritual antecedents. What is the foundation of their achievement? Nothing less than *experience!*

While experiences cannot be transmitted in words, each of us thinks of his experiences in words; my experiences are formulated in words that I may not forget and let them pass by profitless. Words are our “capturing devices.” What does an achiever capture by his experiences? He observes countless errors, his own as well as those of others, errors that stifle creativity. And then, being sensitive, he sees instances in which freedom works its miracles. Errors and truth in a magnificent contrast.

From what has been said above it might appear that the achievers are loners—seekers and learners all by themselves—their influence nil. Not so! These individuals are growing and, without question, growth energizes the magnetism that attracts others to similar experiences. “There is not enough darkness in the whole world to put out the light of one wee candle.” No one who is growing can hide his light under a bushel, as the saying goes. Others—those who wish to grow—will find him out. Persons of achievement set the pace for noble experiences in others who will then reflect their own experiences in their own words. All of this is mysterious, at least to me. I know not how it works—only that it does!

There is another encouraging force at work—heavenly, if you will; at least it is beyond the initiation of man. It is one of those infinite phenomena of the Creative Force or evolutionary ascendancy. Dr. Jung wrote a book entitled *Synchronicity*,³ an analysis of these human *creativities* that occur to different people simultaneously. One among countless examples: penicillin was discovered by an American medical student and by another in a foreign country at the same time. This phenomenon is often referred to as “coincidental thinking.” A more accurate term would be “coincidental reception.”

There is evidence galore that an Infinite Consciousness or Intelligence (Something-Beyond-Words) is forever working on the intellectual, moral, and spiritual advancement of we mere mortals. But here’s the problem: whether or not enlightenment occurs depends on one’s receptivity. Thus, the highest art of living is to serve as a relay station of this Radiant Energy—*receive* and *share*, now and always! Why is this encouraging? To the extent that one succeeds, to that extent will he know that many others are simultaneously succeeding, that is, also receiving.

As I see it, receiving and sharing is an obligation we owe our Creator. Further, isn’t it comforting to realize that an ascending humanity is guided by an Immense Intelligence—to use Emerson’s term?

Freedom has been achieved only rarely in history, and for relatively short periods. Careful reflection on the “far off goal” of freedom makes it clear that only the *inner* directed achieve it. It is in the mind and soul of individuals—achievers—an affinity with Divine Providence. So powerful is this achievement, *when in ascendancy*, that all the babble, political double talk, dictatorial jargon, and the like, are rendered impotent. As the energy of the Sun penetrates the stratosphere and ionosphere, regardless of clouds or storms, giving life to all on earth, so is this Radiant Energy invincible—when improving. It is the sole genesis of human evolution—the good life.

“Let there be light and there was light” and, if we live our lives aright, there will be. That’s the Divine promise!

³ *Synchronicity* by Dr. Carl Jung (Princeton University Press, 1973).

16

To Make Good Ideas More Welcome

*Not obtrusive, in order not to be slighted.
Better too niggardly than too free with
yourself. Arrive desired in order to arrive
welcomed.* —Baltasar Gracian

Plymouth Colony operated initially along communalistic lines; the fields were held by the colony, tasks were assigned, and the rewards were parceled out without much regard for the quality and quantity of work performed. The Pilgrims were not ideologues, but their practice did exemplify the Marxian dictum, “from each according to his ability, to each according to his need.” When the disastrous consequences of this policy became evident to all, Governor Bradford announced a new tactic, “that they should set corn every man to his own particular . . . and so assigned to every family a parcel of land, according to the proportion of their number. . . .”

Governor Bradford’s colony made a wonderful about-face: from now on, it would be “to each according to his merit or productivity,” that is, each would have a right to the fruits of his own labor. Private ownership—the foundation of a free society—on a scale previously unknown, that led later not only to prosperity but to a revolutionary concept: that men are endowed by their Creator—not by government—with certain unalienable rights. Results? The American miracle!

Governor Bradford laid the groundwork for a *sound politico-economic ideology*—which today, to our peril, is all but forgotten.

The 17th-century Spanish philosopher, quoted above, emphasized the groundwork for a *sound methodology* which we should heed no less scrupulously than Bradford’s ideology. Right method is an absolute requirement if good ideas are to be welcomed and practiced. This philosopher’s counsel, if heeded and practiced, can pull America out of the mire into which we have fallen.

There are good ideas in countless departments of life. My comments, however, will be confined to good ideas as related to freedom. When good ideas are setting

the pace, freedom prevails. The two go hand-in-hand; they are inseparable. So, if we are to resurrect freedom from her present decline, we—some of us—are challenged by the need to undertake a great deal of learning. A set of ideas—of the quality here at issue—must “*arrive desired in order to arrive welcomed.*”

Let us assume that you are entertaining invited guests. A stranger barges in. Would he be welcome? Probably not, especially if his presence might interfere with the purpose of the gathering.

When freedom ideas—strangers to a vast majority—are not invited, wanted, desired, *they are unwelcome*. They are looked upon unfavorably, even scornfully, by the millions.

The havoc wrought by the invading stranger is self-evident to nearly everyone, but the damage done when good ideas “crash the party” is not so obvious. My concern, however, is not with the millions who aren’t freedom oriented; rather, it is with those who “shudder with horror” at our present slump into socialism, who believe in freedom, but insist on massive reformation by proclaiming good ideas where they are *not desired*.

So, let us further distinguish between what I believe to be the wrong and the right approaches to freedom.

- **WRONG:** A notion entertained by millions that any idea is good which results in freeing them from the responsibility of looking out for themselves. Rightly feeling that they have a right to life and livelihood, they wrongly refuse to extend the same right to others equally.

They sense no wrong in preying on others. It is this upside-down appraisal of good ideas that accounts for the Command Society, be it called serfdom, feudalism, mercantilism, communism, the planned economy, or the welfare state.

- **RIGHT:** A truth perceived by a comparative few, namely, that any idea is good if it results in freeing them to act creatively as they please. No restraint—none whatsoever—against the release of creative human energy! The truly good idea has freedom and selfresponsibility as two parts of the same personal and social equation. *Neither one is possible without the other.* A bit of reflection makes this self-evident.

There are countless thousands in the U.S.A. today who are graced with good ideas—the right ones. Their *ideology* passes muster. But their *methodology* is upside-down, as wrong as it can be. They observe the countless millions whose ideology is upside-down and engage in a methodology to turn them right side up. This is an impossible intellectual gymnastic, however appealing it may seem at first.

Gracián's perceptiveness sheds a helpful light: Good ideas must "*arrive desired in order to arrive welcomed.*"

Assume that some reformer wishes me to become a computer designer, electrician, airline pilot, music composer, or any one of other occupations, no matter how laudable, but that I have no desire to become any one of them. Would his insistence, regardless of how clever, be welcomed? It would not! On the contrary, I would avoid not only *him*—because of an action that is none of his business—but his notions as well. Drawn to him and his views? Hardly!

Forty-five years of trial and error in the freedom cause convinces me that Gracián's counsel is right. Conceded, it is unorthodox to the point of bewildering most freedom devotees. Unless deeply reflected upon, it appears to recommend a do-nothing way of aiding the cause of freedom; it seems to advise: "Hide your light under a bushel." Not so! It is precisely the opposite—life's difficult and rare occupation: emerging or coming to one's self, as Woodrow Wilson once put it.

The idea here at issue was not original with Gracián—far from it! The ancients, at least 2,400 years earlier, received the same warning. Read the book *Isaiah* in the Old Testament for proof of this insight that graced them. Or read a simple and enlightening paraphrasing of it by Albert Jay Nock entitled "Isaiah's Job." The message? The very, very few who really matter in the advancement of good ideas—the Remnant—are put off, will pay no heed to, those who attempt to set them straight. What, then? Let him who would move humanity to a higher level concentrate on the perfection of self. To the extent that he succeeds, The Remnant who desire enlightenment will find him out and *welcome* his good ideas.

As Albert Schweitzer wrote, "Example is not the main thing in influencing others; it is the only thing."

Freedom devotees—those who would become exemplars—are well advised never to be obtrusive. Shoving, pushing, trying to *force* ideas into the minds of others is a tactic that contradicts the very ideology we espouse. All aggressive or selling-the-masses methods belong to the aggressive opposition; such methods are consistent with that ideology, not with ours.

Obtrusiveness repels rather than attracts. It does not enliven desire but stifles or deadens it and, thus, determines what ideas will and will not be welcomed. Freedom requires that we leave the interventionists free to use the hard sell. If we refuse to behave likewise, they'll fall by the ideological wayside. Our role is the exact opposite:

- Quietly to go about improving our understanding of the freedom philosophy, and phrasing more clearly such knowledge as we may gain.
- Quietly to share with those who have found us out and desire an understanding of freedom—the only alternative to the present decline.
- Quietly to acknowledge that learning, contrary to the hard sell, is an intellectual and moral progression. It is rooted in humility, not arrogance. In essence, “I wish to learn,” instead of “I know it all.”

Those who do not desire to know will not learn. Those who desire to know will seek and find sources; and the sources are always seekers! For freedom's sake let us be seekers! It is the only way to make good ideas more welcome.

Evangelism: To Be Sold or Shared?

*We know, and, better yet, we feel inwardly,
that religion is the basis of civil society, and the
source of all good and comfort.*

—Edmund Burke

A good friend believes in the freedom way of life as much as anyone. But he's not sure he agrees with our methods. He used these words from *Mark XVI:15* to make his point:

And he [Jesus] said unto them, Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature.

And our friend adds: "The accent is on *go!*" In a word, sell!

Why be concerned over this difference between selling and sharing as related to Christianity and evangelism? Simply because the *selling* idea is so prevalent among the many Christians who espouse the freedom philosophy. They are turned off by the view that evangelism is a sharing process. As a consequence, many of them turn away from FEE and become exponents of the hard sell—convert the masses, the man in the street, as the saying goes. And in their missionary zeal, they tend to neglect the study as to why freedom works its wonders.

Just about the hardest sell in all history, so far as I know, was undertaken by Medieval "Christians," namely, the Crusades that went on for the better part of two centuries. These were largely attempts to reform heathens, forcing them to "see the light." The result: countless thousands on both sides losing both their souls and their lives! Trying to ram freedom ideas into the heads of nonbelievers also is a crusade doomed to fail. High ideas and ideals are not spread or sold. Rather, they are sought or bought—caught not taught.

Jesus of Nazareth was presented to mankind as the perfect Exemplar. *The law of attraction* accounts for all true Christians—His attraction!

There is nothing in the biblical record to indicate that Jesus ever thrust His views on anyone. He acknowledged the need for receptivity on the part of the unconverted. He sent out the Apostles two by two on a preaching mission and among His instructions we find in Mark VI:11: “And whosoever shall not receive you, nor hear you, when ye depart thence, shake off the dust under your feet for a testimony against them.” Now, as then, if they don’t hear—are not drawn unto you—fret not about it. If you have done your best in the way of understanding and exposition, that’s as far as you or anyone else can go. Discouraging? No, that’s the way it should be.

Human destiny, I fervently believe, presupposes that individuals evolve. Are not the human beings of our day and age of a higher type, or further advanced in awareness, perception, consciousness than Cro-Magnon man of some 35 millennia ago? To argue that evolution has now reached its apogee is to claim that we are perfect exemplars, a far cry from the teachings of Jesus. Am I perfect? Heaven forbid such an egotistical thought! Nor can you or I name one who remotely approaches perfection. My problem is to grow, and growth is achieved only by seeking and sharing such light as may be discerned. How can I do that if I devote my efforts to selling others on being like me? First, it can’t be done and, second, if it could, there would be more loss than gain.

As Burke wrote, “. . . religion is the basis of civil society, and the source of all good and comfort.” And America was founded upon that religious base, the conviction:

. . . that all men are . . . *endowed by their Creator* with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness.

The result of this religious conviction? The Creator replaced government—for the first time in history—as the endower of men’s rights. Truly, this was the basis of the most wonderful society that ever existed; “good and comfort” blest all men as if by magic, with the greatest outburst of creative energy ever known, flowing freely to the citizenry.

Our Founding Fathers, for the most part, believed in sharing rather than selling their views. Their method was quite the same as the Apostles—preaching missions, explaining the freedom thesis as best they could to those who cared to listen. They orated, preached, fielded questions and pamphleteered. Perhaps the outstanding example of their method was *The Federalist* by Alexander Hamilton,

James Madison, and John Jay. A re-reading will assure anyone that these noble persons were sharing evangelists.

Suppose those several leaders in the founding of the United States had been political activists instead of sharing evangelists, angry at the many whose understanding was not up to theirs, trying vainly to inject their ideas into the heads of the several millions who had no interest! They would not be known today as Founding Fathers; indeed, if remembered at all, it would be as “floundering” something-or-other. The words, “Our Fathers’ God to Thee, Author of Liberty,” would never have been written.

As I read these authors of liberty, they reveal a graceful humility. True, compared to a vast majority in their and our time, they had a remarkable knowledge and clarity of expression but no signs of be-like-me-ness. They would, without question, have agreed with Ralph Sockman, “The larger the island of knowledge, the longer the shoreline of wonder.”

The method must fit the mission! If the mission be an improved understanding of freedom and why its wondrous performances, the means employed must be as free from coercive preaching as the free market is free from coercive pricing, production, exchange. The fruit will be determined by the kinds of seeds we plant. Tell ’em off and we’ll be told off. Share and we’ll share alike. Emerson *shared* a truth we should heed: “The end pre-exists in the means.” Therefore, *look to the means!*

To repeat, high level ideas and ideals cannot be imposed on anyone, any transmission that occurs is a taking-from procedure: the law of attraction which, in turn, is governed by one’s personal growth in understanding and exposition.

It is growth, and that alone, which energizes the magnetism that draws others to the knowledge an individual possesses. There is an excellent guideline as to how much one is growing: observe who and how many are seeking ideas on the free market, private ownership, limited government way of life. If none, one stands alone. The remedy? An improvement of the potentially magnetic self!

18

If You Can't Lick 'Em, Jine 'Em

Every man has his devilish moments.

—Lavater

There are those principles and practices which promote freedom and there are ideas and actions which impair it. A letter in my morning mail well illustrates the latter:

I can tell you that unless I can see a real change in the direction of our government, I will probably abandon these endeavors I have supported and join in the race toward collectivism and regulation. For many years I have fought for individual freedom and responsibility. I am tired of struggling against the tide of welfarism. I have supported FEE . . . because I agree with it. Now, though, I have come to suspect that most people don't care about anything other than "How do I get mine without working?" I am considering joining this group, rather than worrying about the correctness of that philosophy. I see no point in being "the last old Roman."

"If you can't lick 'em, jine 'em" was described by Quentin Reynolds in 1941 as "an old political adage." And it's truer today than ever. Take note of the politicians who readily switch from their own convictions to the line of the opposition if the latter appears to be more seductive to voters. Chickenhearted! They stand for nothing but the power of office.

Time after time over the years I have noted leading businessmen as board members of chambers of commerce and other organizations adhering not to conscience but to the line of least resistance, for instance, voting "Aye" on committee reports regardless of principle. The same intellectual sloppiness is observed in ever so many religious, educational, and other organizations. Standing ramrod straight for what one believes to be true and righteous is the admirable exception rather than the rule.

Many years ago I was a guest at a Chamber of Commerce board meeting. They voted "Aye" on three committee reports advocating socialistic measures. When invited to comment at the close of the meeting, I offered this allegory:

Joe Doakes passed away and his spirit floated to the Pearly Gates. Joe knocked and Saint Peter appeared, asking, “What do you want?”

“I would like admittance, Sir.”

Saint Peter looked at his list and replied, “Your name isn’t here.”

“Why not?”

“You stole money from widows and orphans.”

“Why, Mr. Saint Peter, I had the reputation of being an honest man. What do you mean I stole money from-widows and orphans.”

“You were on the Board of that Chamber of Commerce which voted for a government golf course, and that would take money from widows and orphans to subsidize you golfers.”

“Mr. Saint Peter, that wasn’t your humble servant who took that action; it was the Chamber of Commerce.”

Saint Peter took another look at his list and said, “We don’t have chambers of commerce here, only individuals.” Whereupon, Saint Peter pressed a button, a trap door opened, and Joe Doakes went to hell!

This brought a hearty chuckle from the 40 directors, and I believe they got the point, at least momentarily.

The man who wrote the letter quoted above has decided to “jine ’em” since he can’t “lick ’em.” This, in my view, is a wrong assessment of self-interest.

Playing host to parasites is indeed a thankless and discouraging role. It requires thought and effort to be a productive, self-reliant individual; and a part of the cost is to understand and explain and otherwise help to maintain a climate of freedom—an open market economy—in which to operate.

The parasites, in a sense, are a burden—possibly, an enemy—to be overcome. But does one look to the parasites for a solution to this problem? Or is it among the remaining productive members of society that the solution is to be sought?

To enter the ranks of the parasites is to renounce one’s self-respect, to abandon all hope, to cast one’s fate before the mercy of those who remain to serve in an ever-diminishing market. There is little future in such a shift.

Neither you nor I nor anyone else has been commissioned to save the world, the nation, the community, or neighborhood. What, then? Work on that one

individual over whom each of us has some command: one's self. As Socrates said, "Let him who would save the world, first move himself." Attend to the improvement of self, and that's as much of a contribution as anyone can make to the salvation of the human race or any part thereof.

Here are a few thoughts for those who are distraught and inclined to "jine 'em":

And I hold it is not treason
To advance a simple reason
For the sorry lack of progress we decry.
It is this: Instead of working
On himself, each man is shirking
And trying to reform some other guy.

—*Unknown*

May your Lordship not torment yourself: there is a remedy for this deluge of crimes. Let us be, you and me, that which we should be. There will be two less souls to convert. Let each person behave thus: it is the most efficacious of reforms. The trouble is, that no one wants to correct himself and everyone meddles at correcting others: thus everything stays as is.

—*San Pedro of Alcantara*

God save us from the man who wants to save us. Reform only yourself; for in doing that you can do everything.

—*Montaigne*

So, I am not here to "lick 'em" but rather to "lick" my own shortcomings. And, regardless of "the sorry lack of progress we decry," I shall not "jine 'em." Instead, I shall *join* only such truth and righteousness as I can perceive in self and others, remembering always that the right is rare. Hail to the rare! Finding it is life's highest goal.

Thoughts: Fountain of Our Destiny

Thoughts lead on to purposes; purposes go forth in action; actions form habits; habits decide character; and character fixes our destiny.
—Tryon Edwards

Goethe wrote, “All truly wise thoughts have been thought already thousands of times.” This certainly applies to the sequence of forces listed by Edwards and, of course, to all of my comments which follow. But, first, a wise and interesting observation relating to each cause and its consequences as above set forth.

Thought:—Thought is the seed of action; but action is as much its second form as thought is its first. It rises in thought, to the end that it may be uttered and acted. Always in proportion to the depth of its sense does it knock importunately at the gates of the soul, to be spoken, to be done.

—Ralph Waldo Emerson

Purpose:—Thy purpose firm is equal to the deed.—Who does the best his circumstance allows, does well, acts nobly; angels could no more.

—Edward Young

Action:—Action is preceded by thinking. Thinking is to deliberate beforehand over future action and to reflect afterwards upon past action. Thinking and action are inseparable.

—Ludwig von Mises

Habit:—

We first make our habits, and then
our habits make us.

Ill habits gather, by unseen
degrees, as brooks make
rivers, rivers run to seas.

—John Dryden

Character:—To be worth anything, character must be capable of standing firm upon its feet in the world of daily work, temptation, and trial; and able to bear the wear and tear of actual life. Cloistered virtues do not count for much.

—*Samuel Smiles*

Destiny:—He [man] becomes capable of perfecting himself, and he is even the only one capable of doing this. But in order to improve himself he must be free, since his contribution to evolution will depend on the use he makes of his liberty . . . and only a highly evolved man is willing to defend the liberty of others.

—*Lecomte du Noüy*

What a fascinating sequence, beginning with the thoughts and concluding with destiny: “. . . the inevitable or *necessary succession of events*.” The similarity of reasoning among these authors is as if they had been conferring with each other. Doubtless, the scholarly Ludwig von Mises, the latest of the six, had read the others, but where did Dryden, the earliest (1631–1700), get his thoughts? “These thoughts had been thought already a thousand times.” Yes, indeed, all but Lecomte du Noüy’s refinement of “destiny,” set forth in his remarkable book, *Human Destiny*.

Du Noüy’s thesis leads me to several conclusions. If one is to improve he must be free, and any contribution he might make to evolution—humanity’s High Purpose—depends on the use he makes of his liberty. It follows that liberty disappears or prevails according to the prevalence of bad or good thoughts, for these are the genesis of either hell on earth or High Purpose.

History is featured mostly by periods when individuals have not been free to write or speak what they think; but even a serf or slave is at liberty to think whatever he chooses, that is, to himself. Thus, whether we are to have a hell or heaven during our earthly existence, depends on whether our thoughts be hellish or heavenly. Therefore, some thinking on thoughts—evil and virtuous, dumb or intelligent—is in order. The following are thoughts that already have been thought a thousand times.

Many people believe they are thinking when, actually, they are only rearranging their prejudices. No High Purpose is served by these individuals.

Wrote Thomas Alva Edison: “Five per cent of the people think.” Were the percentage that large there would be no need to fret about the rest of his statement: “Ten per cent of the people think they think; and the other eighty-five per cent

would rather die than think.” I might add that potential intellectual alacrity—good thoughts—is deadened by the prevailing lethargy.

Those who think only about the disaster that lies ahead for themselves, and for our country, more than likely will experience personal calamity and dampen the prospects of a return to liberty for the rest of us.

All thoughts which any of us inwardly harbor show forth in outward acts. If they be ignoble, one’s actions will be a reflection thereof; if they be noble, liberty will have another worker in the vineyard.

Good thoughts are the mainspring of human progress. They bring the unseen—the unimaginable—into the realities that bless our lives.

We would do well to jot down all good thoughts the moment they occur. The thoughts we do not seek, that is, the ones that flash mysteriously into mind, are often the wisest. Such insights must be captured at once, for they rarely return to grace the soul.

Liberty is at once the cause and the consequence of good thoughts freely flowing between people in this and other countries; and between those of the past and we of the present.

Good thoughts have never been nor can they be popular. They are always at odds with the notions of the millions who do no thinking for themselves—followers of know-it-alls.

Look not to the thoughts of those who seek only fame, popular acclaim, fortune, votes, power to run our lives. They are the authors of the mess we’re in. Instead, look for good thoughts from those who seek righteousness. And they, as gold mines, are rare and hard to find. But how rewarding when discovered!

Those graced with thoughts of sufficient excellence do not argue. Instead, they cope with bad thoughts by stating the truth as they see it. This rare behavior arouses neither anger nor resentment. This leaves the bad thinkers with nothing to scratch against—leaves them in their own mire.

Extend sympathy, not censure, to those who are unhappy when alone with their own thoughts—and especially to those alone without thoughts of their own.

Learning without thought is a waste of time, but even worse is thought without learning.

Daniel Webster, when asked what was the greatest thought that ever entered his mind, replied, “My accountability to Almighty God.” Seek approval from God, not men.

The joyful life depends upon the quality of one’s thoughts. Liberty is advanced only by those who are happy; never by angry people.

Wrote one friend, “You caused me to think—I think!”

We can be likened to Human Radios. The thoughts we receive depend upon how weak or powerful our individual amplifiers and tuners.

War plagues a people infected with bad thoughts. Peace is the reward of good thoughts in ascendency.

As we lock our doors against possible intruders, so should we lock our minds against bad thoughts. This leaves the mind free to welcome and develop the good thoughts upon which our destiny depends.

When liberty gives way to political tyranny inflation ensues and the cost of goods and services increases. However, kind words and good thoughts are valuable as ever. Indeed, they and they alone can bring about a rebirth of liberty.

No one, not even the most powerful of dictocrats, has ever been able to put a tax or tariff on good thoughts.

How mysteriously works the mind. Write out a thought and another will follow, on and on. The mind is a well of thoughts; it has no bottom. Forever draw on this well—and be well!

The miracle of the market had its inception 200 years ago. No person is capable of calculating even remotely, how far the standard of living has advanced. The problem now? Raising our standard of thinking higher than ever known before!

The art of thinking; the more one thinks the more is thinking a habit. It is not education if it does not create this habit.

Finally, good thoughts *will* prevail. How do I know? I have *faith* that they will. As Goethe wrote, “Miracle is the darling child of faith,” meaning that faith tops the list of good thoughts. Liberty—freedom of everyone to act creatively as he pleases—is assuredly our Destiny!

20

Evolve for Your Own Sake

... and only a highly evolved man is willing to defend the liberty of others.

—Lecomte Du Noüy

To forever evolve in awareness, perception, consciousness—every day of our mortal life: that is what we’re here for. However, most of us lack the self-discipline to recognize and make the most of our opportunities to grow. As Albert Wiggam observed, “Evolution is a stern taskmaster that knows no compromise and grants no reprieve.” It’s a case of perpetually striving for what’s right, lest one die on the vine—life’s high purpose abandoned.

Why “evolve for your own sake”? For the reason that such striving is the apogee of enlightened self-interest! Why? *Only a highly evolved man is willing to defend the liberty of others.* Unless we defend the liberty of others, they won’t have it; and if others are unfree there will be no liberty for you or me. And without liberty we cannot evolve toward life’s high purpose.

As a starter, we must recognize, and try to avoid or overcome, obstacles in the way of our evolving. So I turn for counsel to one of the best—Edmund Burke. Men, he insists, are qualified for civil liberty in exact proportion to their disposition:

- to put chains upon their appetites,
- as their love of justice is above their rapacity,
- as their soundness and sobriety is above their vanity and presumption,
- as they are disposed to listen to the counsels of the wise and good, in preference to the flattery of knaves.

He concludes:

- Society cannot exist unless a controlling power upon the will and appetite is placed somewhere; and the less there is within, the more there must be of

it without. It is ordained in the eternal constitution of things, that men of intemperate habits cannot be free. *Their passions forge their fetters.*

Ponder, “the less there is within, the more there is without.” Unless there be a fair number of people in a society who are evolving exemplars—mastering personal passions—men of the dictatorial breed take control. When Burke wrote, “Society cannot exist . . . unless a controlling power is placed somewhere,” he was reporting what all history reveals. As the control within diminishes, the control without increases.

How are we doing? Merely have a look at the trend in the U.S.A. The acceleration of governmental controls indicates the extent of our loss of self-discipline—control within. As this fateful trend proceeds liberty fades from our vision and grasp. Unless some among us are evolving, liberty is out of the question.

Based on Burke’s realistic method of grading, how many are qualified for civil liberty? One in a thousand, as we say. And even these few, while qualified, risk losing their liberty along with the many who put no chains on their appetites.

The remedy? Let those of us who prize liberty look not only to the best within ourselves but in others—past and present—for hope and counsel. For instance, note how similar are the thoughts of Burke (1727–1797) and Socrates (470–399 B.C.), the following a line in the latter’s prayer:

Grant that I may become beautiful in the inner man, and whatever I possess without be in harmony with that which is within.

Fortunately for us, the salvation of liberty is not a numbers problem. Socrates gave us the only answer for him, for you, for me: “Grant that I may become beautiful in the inner man.” This, I am certain, is the sole formula for “a highly evolved man,” the man capable of defending the liberty of others because he understands his own need for liberty.

Burke expressed precisely the same thought, except in more detail:

How often has public calamity [our present situation] been arrested on the very brink of ruin, by the seasonable energy of a single man? Have we no such man amongst us? I am as sure as I am of my being, that one vigorous mind without office, without situation, without public functions of any kind, (at a time when the want of such a thing is felt as I am sure it is) I say, *one such man*, confiding in the aid of God,

and full of just reliance in his own fortitude, vigor, enterprise, and perseverance, would first draw to him some few like himself, and then that multitudes, hardly thought to be in existence, would appear and troop about him.

The aim in life, as I see it, is to become “*one such man*.” We are thus confronted with the art of becoming, a goal to be achieved only by *overcoming* our ineptitudes, flaws, ignorance, errors; that is, by learning, evolving. As Wiggam asserted, “Evolution is a stern taskmaster that knows no compromise and grants no reprieve.” Interestingly, as I am discovering after years of effort, the formula is the same for achieving each of life’s high goals.

Unyielding integrity in word and deed is the first requirement. When anyone compromises what he may believe to be right for something that appears to be an immediate gain, he is selling his birthright for a mess of pottage. Reprieve from such error? Impossible! The already done, be it an outright lie or any deviation from what one believes to be truth, is never undone. It is glued to one’s past. A principle—what’s right—cannot be compromised but only *surrendered*.¹ How take advantage of this error? How reap a good from it? Plutarch gives us an excellent answer:

To make no mistakes is not in the power of man; but from their errors and mistakes the wise and good learn wisdom for the future.

Pursuit of so-called “short-run gains” is and has been the bane of mankind. Such practices range from ancient tribes invading their neighbors and taking home the loot to modern “tribes” getting government to do the looting for them—camouflaged thievery, no less! The millions of practitioners are not evolving but, rather, devolving individuals. The evolving individual—Burke’s “one such man”—is aware that there is no such thing as a “short-run gain” unless it be a gain in the long run. His guideline is identical to Immanuel Kant’s: Act only on that maxim [principle] which you can at the same time will that it should become a universal law. Or, in reverse, never do anything which, were everyone to do, would bring chaos. If it’s right in principle it has to work; if not, it never can! The evolving person looks to his principles.²

¹ See “The Penalty of Surrender,” *The Freeman*, April 1957.

Finally, there's one more upward step if we are to evolve to the point where we can defend the liberty of others, a step consistent with enlightened self-interest. Here it is: Understand our own *role* and the *rule* of our opposition.

William Ralph Inge, Dean of St. Paul's London (1911–1934) deplored a failing exhibited by members of his own profession:

The masses at Rome were not elevated by an unlimited provision of bread and circuses. And therefore I do not like to see the clergy, who were monarchists under a strong monarchy, and oligarchs under the oligarchy, tumbling over each other in their eagerness to become court chaplains to King Demos [the mob]. The black-coated advocates of spoliation are not a nice lot. "I take what I want," said Frederick the Great; "I can always find pedants to prove my rights."

Dean Inge was referring to a tendency among clergymen to align themselves with whatever form of spoliation happened to be dominant at the time. Mobocracy of whatever brand *rules* their passions. With a few notable and laudable exceptions, present-day clergymen of this or that religion are just as eager "to become court chaplains to King Demos."³ Dictocrats can always find pedants—conformists—to "prove" they are right. And by the millions—clergymen included!

Let us not, however, attribute this "madness of the mob" to any one profession; there is not a single occupational category in which it does not predominate—education, medicine, labor, business, or whatever.

Years ago the day's mail brought me letters from two men, heads of huge corporations. I knew both men well, but they did not know each other. Their messages were identical. In essence: "I am not interested in helping you with the freedom philosophy. If the U.S.A. becomes like Russia, I'll still be one of the head men." Perhaps so. Doubtless they would become Commissars for each of them had the kind of "talent" useful to a totalitarian state.

² For a more detailed explanation of this point, see the chapter, "Let's Look To Our Principles," in my *Comes the Dawn*.

³ For an excellent discussion of this point, see *Religion and Capitalism: Allies, Not Enemies* by The Reverend Edmund A. Opitz (New Rochelle, N.Y.: Arlington House, 1970).

Has that situation changed as related to business? While writing this, an article by the head of a multi-billion dollar corporation was called to my attention. A revealing line:

I think of national planning as a process for assessing our economic condition and prospects, setting national goals and priorities and *then* letting market forces work.

Assume my wisdom to be equal to that of the President of the U.S.A. or his most brilliant appointee or the smartest member of Congress. How competent would I be to plan the businesses of America? To grasp the utter absurdity of such a proposal, reflect on my competence to run a single life: *yours!* Doubtless the business executive just quoted would have made his way in Mussolini's Italy, for his proposal is economic fascism. While few businessmen go as far, millions of them go part way. Here, and in all the other occupational categories, we have the *rule* that originates with the opposition. Note the millions who lend support to these social planners—wielders of political power.

Now to the role of Burke's "*one such man*." If one man is graced sufficiently with "fortitude, vigor, enterprise, and perseverance, [he] would first draw to him some few like himself, and then the multitudes, hardly known to exist, would appear and troop about him." From whence the multitudes? From the crowds that are now trooping about the dictocrats—quite unconsciously.

So what are the rules for our role? Devoted study, thinking, writing—learning to understand and explain the freedom way of life. Become a master thereof! And there's one master guideline: *righteousness—integrity!*

True, we must live in the world as it is or drop dead. Preferring life, one has no choice but to participate in all sorts of socialized institutions: government postal "service," for instance. How, then, be consistently righteous? In one's proclaimed positions!

Further, be not herded into deviations by heeding others simply because they are celebrated, famous. Seekers after Truth should not be bound by *who* sponsors any idea—Truth being its own witness.

Evolve, forever evolve, for thus one becomes not only willing but also free and able to defend the liberty of others.

Freedom: A Youthful Adventure

Perpetual self-dissatisfaction is the secret of permanent youthfulness.

—Eliot D. Hutchinson

Speak of Youth and everyone thinks of youngsters or adolescents; the word connotes early years rather than a certain quality of mind. Perpetual dissatisfaction—the daily realization as long as one lives, that all our yesterdays are but minor steps away from ignorance—is, indeed, not only the secret of permanent youthfulness but the adventurous road to freedom. As one sage observed, “One does not *grow* old; he becomes old by not growing.”

- Youth is not a time of life—it is a state of mind. It is not a matter of ripe cheeks, red lips and supple knees; it is a temper of the will, a quality of the imagination, a vigor of the emotions; it is a freshness of the deep springs of life.
- Youth means a temperamental predominance of courage over timidity, of the appetite for *adventure* over love of ease. This often exists in a man of eighty more than in a boy of twenty.
- Nobody grows old by merely living a number of years; people grow old only by deserting their ideals. Worry, doubt, self-distrust, fear and despair—these are the long, long years that bow the head and turn the growing spirit back to dust.
- Whether ninety or sixteen, there should be in every being’s heart the love of wonder; the sweet amazement at the stars and the starlike things and thoughts; the undaunted challenge of events; the unfailing *childlike appetite for what next*; and the joy and the game of life.
- You are as young as your faith, as old as your doubt; as young as your self-confidence, as old as your fear; as young as your hope, as old as your despair.
- In the central place of your heart is an evergreen tree. Its name is love. So long as it flourishes you are young. When it dies you are old. In the central

place of your heart is a wireless station. So long as it receives and radiates messages of beauty, hope, cheer, grandeur, courage, and power from God and from your fellow-men, so long are you young.

- When the wires are all down and all the central place of your heart is covered with the snows of pessimism and the ice of cynicism, then are you grown old indeed and may God have mercy on your soul.¹

As to this thesis, there are two areas that demand exploration: the generally accepted tradition as it relates (1) to politico-economic affairs and (2) as it relates to moral imperatives. To allow one's self to be wholly governed by the former is deadening; to heed and learn from the latter is life-giving, inspiring, and assures permanent youthfulness.

As noted in "Eruptions of Truth," freedom for all individuals to act creatively as they please has never been fully achieved; it has been approximated only several times since the dawn of human consciousness, and then for relatively brief periods, historically speaking. The kind of thinking responsible for these eruptions is unknown except to a very few. Regrettably, the notions that command the "minds" of the millions, in the U.S.A. and elsewhere, are the doctrines of the Command Society. Most citizens do no more than echo the mouthings of countless dictocrats who have dominated the inhabitants of our planet. They are not yet sufficiently enlightened to feel dissatisfaction with this unholy record, let alone embrace the alternative.

Make a thoughtful assessment of the countless dictocrats, past and present; a Diocletian, a Napoleon or Mussolini or Stalin—even those in our country today. Contrary to popular notions, they are not leaders but followers. Of what? Of the tradition of servility, that is, they are imitators of do-as-I-say fallacies from the ancient past to the present day. To the extent that individual creativity is squelched, to that extent are the victims reduced to slavery. Slavery presupposes slave masters, and to whatever degree anyone succeeds in coercively inflicting his ways on another or others, to that shameful extent is he a slave master.

These coercionists give the erroneous appearance of being leaders. But they are only followers of traditional errors, followers who succeed in getting themselves up front. They are remindful of the legendary Pied Piper of Hamelin, up front

¹ For the above seven paragraphs, I am indebted to Samuel Ullman. The italics are mine.

only because the millions of other followers are equally bound to politico-economic error. Not one whit of youthfulness! Dissatisfactions? These followers—those up front and those behind—are utterly unaware of their “blind and naked ignorance,” as Tennyson phrased this common blight.

The remedy for this “blind and naked ignorance”? The best we can hope for, in my view, is to reach now and always for the truths revealed in the moral imperatives of our tradition. It is a perpetual dissatisfaction with what we do not know or understand of these imperatives that is the secret of permanent youthfulness.

The oldest moral imperative known to me is the Golden Rule as originally phrased perhaps 4,000 years ago. *Do not do unto others that which you would not have them do unto you.* Not wishing others to dictate my life—telling me what my schooling should be, where I should work and for how long and how much, what I should produce and with whom exchange—I will, if the Golden Rule be my guide, never impose my ways on any person. Such behavior is freedom. Learning how to refine our practice of this ethic, each day better than the former, is indeed an adventure in youthfulness.

The Mosaic Law, sometime later, blest us with a moral code, The Ten Commandments—a set of prohibitions or Thou-shalt-nots. Were these gems of scripture comprehended and strictly adhered to—all evil blotted out—human creativity would be at its maximum, freedom a way of life.

With reference to these moral imperatives, each of us has the problem of so learning to know and understand them that we learn to obey them. Many do not even know of their existence, while others have given no thought to the profound meaning underlying each Commandment. Take for example, the tenth: “Thou shalt not covet.” This, in my view, is the root cause of most of the evils besetting mankind. There’s only one cure for covetousness and that is the daily counting of one’s numerous blessings. Let us keep in mind that the art of becoming—our earthly purpose—is attained by overcoming, that is, knowing today what we did not know yesterday. Again, an adventure in youthfulness!

Another moral imperative is in the *New Testament*: “But seek ye first the Kingdom of God [Truth] and his Righteousness; and all these things [material well-being, enlightenment] shall be added unto you.” (*Matthew 6:33*).

Seeking, in itself, is an acknowledgment and a confirmation that there is always more to learn—regardless of how far advanced one may be. Each step upward brings into view steps previously unknown, their existence not even suspected.

And then the revelation: the more one knows the more he knows how much is yet to be known. It is an endless progression in the direction of the Kingdom of God—Infinite Wisdom. A youthful adventure, indeed, each day a birthday so long as one continues to seek and to learn.

There may be no better way to conclude these musings on the idea that freedom is a youthful adventure than to cite the “Sage of Concord,” Ralph Waldo Emerson:

Be content with a little light, so it be your own. *Explore, and explore and explore.* Be neither chided nor flattered out of your position of perpetual inquiry. Neither dogmatize, nor accept another’s dogmatism. . . . Truth . . . has its roof, and bed, and board. Make yourself necessary to the world, and mankind will give you bread.

This is to say, “. . . and these things shall be added unto you.”

Observe the similarity in these moral imperatives and how blest we are with this persuasive-attractive tradition. The few who heed these guidelines are not only learners but leaders. On the other hand are the ones bogged down in the tradition of politico-economic behavior. These millions are but imitators and followers, be they in front or behind.

The free market, private property, limited government way of life is founded on moral and spiritual antecedents. And it flourishes as you, I, and others—forever dissatisfied—“explore, and explore and explore.”

Never the satisfied but only explorers advance the good life! Freedom, is indeed, a youthful adventure.

The Courage to Stand Alone

True courage is not the brutal force of vulgar heroes, but the firm resolve of virtue and reason.
—Paul Whitehead

The rare kind of courage to be examined—willingness to stand alone—can be clarified by explaining courage in its more or less popular acceptance. Generally, courage is thought of as synonymous with physical valor, fearless when in great danger, such as a soldier “going over the top” in the face of enemy fire—*undaunted!*

Why undaunted? It’s because we possess two brains: (1) the human cortex and (2) a small brain, the diencephalon, common to man and animal alike. The same brain, in the event of grave danger, works automatically on us as it does on animals. “When the diencephalon sends out an emergency signal through the autonomic nervous system, the adrenal medulla is made to discharge a gush of adrenalin into the blood stream.”¹ It is this gush of adrenalin that instantly turns a scared-to-death individual into a fearless “hero”—over the top, undaunted!

I have experienced this instinctive phenomenon on two occasions. To label my “brave behavior” as courage would be a gross misnomer. My thinking apparatus—the cortex—had absolutely nothing to do with my behavior. It was automatic, as in animals, that is, beyond my conscious control. So, let’s not call this courage; it is by no means the same thing as “the courage to stand alone.” This rare and true courage is a task for the other brain—a venture in thinking.

Interestingly, the courage to stand alone is, in most cases, attended by more fear than going over the top in the face of enemy fire. It is the fear of ostracism, unpopularity, being looked down upon; and this fear must be overcome by reason. No diencephalon can rescue one from this type of fear. That is a job for the big brain—the cortex—the full measure of one’s intellectual capacity.

¹ See *Man’s Presumptuous Brain* by A. T. W. Simeons, M.D. (New York: E. P. Dutton & Co., Inc., 1960) p. 149.

A classic example of nearly 2,000 years ago: Jesus of Nazareth, leader of an unpopular movement, had been arrested and his followers scattered. One of them, Simon Peter, was a victim of this fear. Read about him disowning his master:

. . . Peter was sitting outside in the courtyard, and a maidservant came up to him and said, “Weren’t you with Jesus, the man from Galilee?” But he denied it before them all, saying, “I don’t know what you’re talking about.” Then when he had gone out into the porch, another maid caught sight of him and said to those who were there, “This man was with Jesus of Nazareth.” And again he denied it with an oath—“I don’t know the man!” A few minutes later those who were standing about came up to Peter and said to him, “You certainly are one of them, you know; it’s obvious from your accent.” At that time he began to curse and swear—“I tell you I don’t know the man!” Immediately the cock crew, and the words of Jesus came back into Peter’s mind—“*Before the cock crows you will disown me three times.*” And he went outside and wept bitterly.

—Matthew 26:69

Woodrow Wilson wrote a booklet, *When a Man Comes to Himself*. That’s precisely what happened to Peter—he came to himself! And, by so doing, Simon Peter became Saint Peter. While common mortals can hardly expect to become Saints, the direction is clear: coming to ourselves, that is, gaining the courage to go it alone with whatever our highest reason suggests.

The eminent psychoanalyst, Erich Fromm, enlightens us:

Many people have, *potentially*, a passion for reason and for truth. What makes it so difficult to realize this potential is that *it requires courage and this courage is rare*. The courage which is involved here is of a special kind. It is not primarily the courage to risk one’s life, freedom or property. . . . The courage to trust reason requires isolation or aloneness, and this threat is to many even harder to bear than the threat of life. Yet the pursuit of truth by necessity exposes the searcher to this very danger of isolation. Truth and reason are opposed to . . . public opinion. The majority cling to convenient rationalizations and to the views that can be glimpsed from the surface of things. The function of reason is to penetrate this surface, and to arrive at the essence hidden behind that surface; to visualize objectively, what the forces are that moves matter and men. In this attempt one needs the courage to stand the isolation from, if not the scorn and ridicule of, those who are disturbed by the truth and hate the disturber.

Very well! Is there a formula for acquiring the courage to stand alone? All alone, if necessary, and without any fear? The answer, I believe, rests on the choice of voices: the voices without versus *the voice within*. By the voices without I mean popular babble in its countless variations, fickle public opinion, mob psychology. Anyone who tries to conform his conduct to these shifting standards will be hopelessly inconsistent in his life and ideas. He can never be right. What could be more fearsome?

The courage to stand alone can be generated only by reason—a job for the big brain—the cortex. Its criterion? Virtue! Whatever one's highest conscience—*the voice within*—dictates as righteous! Briefly, the courage to stand alone stems from the wisdom of choosing virtue, not popularity; alignment with righteousness, not applause; approval of God, not men. Fear? None whatsoever!

What distinguishes the voice within from the voices without? *Silence!* Why? Because the inner voice is composed of insights, intuitive flashes, tiny revelations—growth—in the direction of Infinite Consciousness. Here we have the intellectual, moral, and spiritual attributes of man coming to himself—inching ahead toward human destiny. But how does one listen to silence? One might call it prayer, or contemplation. The procedure is to tune out worldly distractions and noises, to passionately prepare the mind to receive the inner voice.

Ortega wrote an excellent prescription: “Truth descends only on him who tries for it, who yearns for it, who carries within himself a pre-formed, mental space where the truth may eventually lodge.”

Finally, for an important and interesting sequence. As I have written elsewhere, free societies are few and far between. Historically speaking, they have been but momentary bright spots and can be accounted for only by *eruptions of truth*. The source of these glorious outbursts are men who have freed themselves. No man is free who is not master of himself, and only those who are masters of themselves have the courage to stand alone.

Obedience to one's highest conscience—the voice within—is the root of all true courage which, in turn, is the root of all true freedom. The few individuals thus graced are entitled to acknowledge, along with the Psalmist, “For I am fearfully and wonderfully made.” Hail to our Maker!

23

Emphasize the Positive

Action that is wholly against must lead to inaction as soon as it is successful.

—Jacques Baezun

It was 33 years ago, long before I had met and read the works of the brilliant Jacques Barzun, that I discovered how wholly ineffective it is just to be *against* politico-economic nonsense. In view of the fact that ever so many antisocialists are presently using this negative tactic, a sharing of my experiences seems appropriate.

My first book, *The Romance of Reality*, was published in 1937 when I was Manager, Western Division, U. S. Chamber of Commerce. Its thesis was that the growing socialism—locally and nationwide—should be dealt with by educational methods rather than by political action. The book was surprisingly well received by those disposed toward the freedom way of life.

It was my emphasis in that book on the educational approach that resulted in an invitation to become General Manager of the Los Angeles Chamber of Commerce, the nation's largest. My assignment was not so much to manage customary chamber of commerce projects as to take the leadership in California against numerous socialistic programs rapidly gaining in popularity.

Among these schemes was a renowned socialist's EPIC plan—End Poverty in California. Another was the Governor's "Production for Use"—so-called. A third, known as "Ham and Eggs," had been devised and promoted by two brothers recently out of prison. And so serious was the situation that it failed of passage in the state by a bare 5 per cent of the vote.

It is often hard to identify the chicken that lays such a socialistic egg. As a case in point, we had prepared a pamphlet entitled "Production for Use," *proving it was wrong*. It was sent to 10,000 people in the State: legislators, leaders in business, labor, education, and so on. One recipient was a professor of economics at a leading university. After reading the pamphlet he remarked to a friend, "I cannot successfully refute any one of the points made by the Los Angeles Chamber." That's

the last we ever heard of “Production for Use.” This professor had been the power behind the movement; the Governor a mere front man, not caring about either production or use!

There were other campaigns, and I’d like to emphasize that we succeeded in defeating each scheme we tackled. A 100 per cent batting average! The method? *Merely proving that each was wrong!* We were successful with our negative tactic, or so it seemed. Thus, these successes should, as Barzun suggests, lead to inaction—the tactic sufficient, the job done.

After six years of these “successes,” it became evident that if the intellectual soil from which these fallacies sprung were rancid, new ones would spring up in their places. Only the labels would be different. What I had been doing was comparable to proving only that the earth isn’t flat. Succeed in that and there remains the task of proving it isn’t a cube, a cone, a cylinder, or any of countless shapes. And then the light: Someone discovered that the earth is a spheroid. The positive knowledge of what’s right rid us of the whole caboodle of fallacies about the earth’s shape.

While it is necessary to understand and explain fallacies, that’s less than half the problem. Finding the right is the key to salvation, for the wrong can be displaced only by the right. “It is,” as Burke wrote, “not only our duty to make the right known, but to make it prevalent.”

So, early in 1945 I began a search for the sources from which *the right*, as related to the freedom philosophy, might be emanating. Here were my findings just 32 years ago:

- There was an enormous outpouring of what’s wrong in magazines, newspapers and books, such as *The New Deal in Old Rome*—an approach similar to the one I had been using.
- At that time there were a few but not many lectures or pieces of literature emphasizing the positive, that is, few explanations of the freedom philosophy and why its miraculous results.
- There were such remarkable works in preparation as *Human Action*, but it was not published until 1949. Another example I recall was an English translation of Bastiat’s *The Law* but it was not available in modern American idiom.

Doubtless, there were numerous reasons for this lack of emphasizing the positive. Both the depression and the war lessened the demand for ideas on liberty and, thus, the supply was minimal.

These discoveries had a profound effect on my methods in advancing an understanding of the freedom way of life. Instead of dwelling only on the negative—proving this and that to be wrong—my associates and I, since the beginning of FEE in 1946, have *emphasized the positive*, bringing what's right to light to the best of our abilities.

Indeed, there was a genuine need for FEE. The best indication that our task has been rather well performed is the fact that we have helped and encouraged ever so many others to start similar endeavors and to compete with us. Some of these others are real good, and at least in several aspects of the philosophy—publishing and teaching—are now further advanced than we at FEE. This is the way it should be: the more competition, the better! But freedom waxes and wanes, so the job is never done. It is one of continuing search and self-education.

As to how FEE is doing in this competition we so highly favor, there is our monthly journal, *The Freeman*. Many readers insist that it improves with each issue. FEE's catalogue, "A Literature of Freedom," lists some 120 volumes ranging all the way from such easy-to-read books as *The Mainspring of Human Progress*, *Economics in One Lesson*, *The Law*, to such profound tomes as *Human Action*. New books are being added annually. In any event, it is a freedom library well worthy of study and respect.

Not all ideas on liberty are new. But of first importance is to relate some of the earlier formulations to the conditions of our time. I first heard about and read Bastiat's *The Law* in the mid-forties—nearly a century after he'd presented the ideas to his fellow Frenchmen. Excited with its brilliance and simplicity, I had it printed and sent copies to some 1,500 friends around the nation expecting orders galore. But there was no such response! Why? That edition was translated by an Englishman, a contemporary of Bastiat, into nineteenth-century British English. Several years later, Dean Russell, then a FEE associate, translated it into modern American idiom. Result? We have now sold at least 600,000 volumes. The lesson? We must learn to improve now and forever in communicable language.

To repeat my beliefs, ours is not a numbers problem—thank heaven! All good movements in history have been led by an infinitesimal minority. And, further, ours is not a selling but, rather, a learning problem—aiming toward excellence in

understanding and clear exposition. Let our ambition be this: the persistent and diligent search for lessons along life's pathway.

From whom seek? From those who are known and unknown, and from individuals who are wrong as well as right. Often truth is revealed as error is discovered. Bear in mind that many sources of both right and wrong are hidden from view. As we seldom know the individuals who lay the socialistic eggs—the university professor, for instance—so are we unaware of many thinkers who add gems of thought to the freedom philosophy and your and my enlightenment. Keep an open ear and eye—now and always!

Let each among us emphasize the positive, that is, be an exemplar of what's right. We can then be positive that freedom will again prevail.

24

Through Darkness to Light

*He who is so unjust as to do his brother injury
can scarce be so just as to condemn himself for
it.*
—John Locke

Locke's brilliant observation brings a supporting thought to mind: "He sees enough who doth his darkness see." It is obvious that any person who deals unfairly with others will never condemn himself for his own shortsightedness; so shrouded is he in darkness that his eyes do not see the light.

Never forget Aristotle's truism: "One may go wrong in many different ways, but right only in one." Why freedom works its wonders but fails to prevail is a problem with no single answer. The reasons are as numerous as are the intellectual, moral, and spiritual frailties of human beings. This is why there is not now and never will be a final answer to our problem. Also, this explains why, in our efforts to refine, we go over much the same ground again and again. If repetition be the mother of learning, then retracing old ground brightens our own lights.

It is only when we are aware of our own darkness and seeking light that we'll catch a tiny glimmer now and then. For encouragement reflect on this Scottish epitaph: "There is not enough darkness in the whole world to put out the light of one wee candle." It is self-evident that darkness has no resistance to light. So, let us push back the darkness by lighting one or a dozen or even thousands of wee candles. This symbolizes the mission of all freedom devotees.

Never underestimate the difficulty of bringing liberty and its blessings to mankind. Should we think of this problem as simple and easy, we'll waste our time, spin our wheels and probably do more harm than good.

As a starter, reflect on *John* 3:19; "Men loved darkness rather than light because their deeds were evil." Based on my experience with people from various walks of life and over many years, I am convinced that the evildoer—"so unjust as to do his brother injury"—with few exceptions, is totally unaware of any evil. It's no more than an unfortunate witlessness accounted for by the person's abysmal blindness.

No eyes to see their own wrongdoing in the darkness—let alone a candle of light and righteousness. They deserve not censure but sympathy.

This analysis should include a few reflections on those actions by you or me or whoever which are so unjust as to do our brothers harm. What are such behaviors? My answer: *Lending support or giving encouragement to any action which restrains the creativity of our brothers is harmful.* Using this as a yardstick, there isn't one in thousands who in today's U.S.A. is not unjust to his brothers—more or less. Can this yardstick be refuted? Not unless the would-be critic can name creative actions that ought to be outlawed. I have never heard of a single one that should be squelched!

Everything in the cosmos stems from Creation. We know that Creation is, but not what it is. Man's highest purpose is to edge as best he can toward this Infinite Wisdom. Any steps in that direction are measured by growing creativity, possible only as men are free to so proceed. The first step is freeing one's self from personal inhibitions, superstitions, imperfections, ignorance, darkness. And the second step is possible only as others leave him free to act creatively as he pleases—absolutely free, no exceptions!

To thwart the creativity of our brothers is to thwart the purpose of Creation; it is to put a damper on human evolution—Manifest Destiny. Those who so interfere are victims of the little-god syndrome, actually believing that they can direct the lives of their brothers better than can those individuals themselves. There is no greater evil, but such people are utterly blind to any wrongdoing.

In the realm of goods and services, one can act creatively only if he is free to produce whatever he wishes; trade for whatever he can peacefully receive in exchange; work for as few or as many hours as he wishes; enter any field that suits his fancy, be it managing a hamburger stand or manufacturing jet planes. It follows that anyone who supports or encourages any restrictions to free trade and open competition is not only unjust to his brothers but thwarts creation and *Creation*—both levels. And be the thwarting minor or major, note the absence of self-condemnation! Several examples:

While many get paid for not farming, others are not free to grow whatever they please on their own farms. Reflect on the enormous number of coercive planners who outlaw free planting. Equally unjust are those who approve or encourage the stifling of any other creative endeavor. Do any of these persons sense being unjust to their brothers? No, their blindness prevents such seeing!

Freedom to trade and compete? There are millions of businessmen who succeed in their advocacy of tariffs, quotas, embargoes and other restrictions against their brothers across the borders and the seas. Not only are these tactics unjust to those in other lands but also to more than 200 million American consumers. Try to import mutton from Australia or ever so many kinds of goods and services from other countries. “Buy my wares or go without!”

Perhaps freedom of choice to act creatively suffers no greater impairment than in the wage-and-hour domain. It would be wrong to refer to labor union behavior as “the labor market.” A market is featured by free exchange; unionism, on the other hand, is featured by coercion. Minimum wage and maximum hours are fixed and coercively enforced. Tens of millions are trapped in this uneconomic strait jacket, ranging from unaccomplished youngsters to airline captains.

The just alternative to this unjust procedure? As to wages, let anyone labor for nothing, if he so chooses, or for all he can obtain in peaceful exchange. As to hours, let anyone work not at all, or day and night, if he so chooses. Neither you nor I nor labor unions nor governments are ordained to cast our brothers in our images—all of us imperfect!

There would be no monopolies or cartels short of governmental enactments. Think of the countless thousands who exclude their brothers from ever so many ventures and opportunities by getting government to erect the barriers. Try, for instance, to start an airline or a TV broadcasting station or a power and light company, or try delivering first-class mail. These opponents of free entry are at least free from the embarrassment of condemning themselves. Poor souls!

Another illustration will suffice to make my point: the tens of millions who run to government for food stamps, social security, “free education,” golf courses, medicare, parks, and countless other handouts. This is the rob-Peter-to-pay-Paul attempt at something for nothing. It rarely if ever enters the heads of these people that they are robbing their brothers and, thus, they are free, by reason of their blindness, of self-censure.

There is no remedy for all of this blindness except a better understanding of liberty: the free market, private ownership, limited government way of life, along with its moral and spiritual antecedents.

How can we identify those individuals who are fortunate enough to have some understanding of why liberty works its wonders? By their deeds, *for no one understands liberty who is not working on its behalf?* How explain? Any individual

who has the slightest idea of what liberty is all about—the wisdom in the free and unfettered market—cannot help but work in behalf of this miracle worker. Such is the power, the drive of even meager understanding.

Only the few who are conscious of their own darkness will strive to light their wee candles. The rise and fall of liberty is governed by the appearance and disappearance of candle lighters. So, let us join in the prayer of Cardinal Newman: “Lead Kindly Light, amid the encircling gloom. Lead Thou me on!”

The Mystery of Attraction

The first point of wisdom is to discern that which is false; the second, to know that which is true.
—Lactantius

Everything is the Cosmic Order, from an atom, to a blade of grass, to the Milky Way appears mysterious. This is precisely what we should expect when finite minds confront the mystery of Infinite Consciousness. Thus, the best any of us can do is to acknowledge the infinite mysteries and forever explore, gaining a bit of light—which we will if our approach be right. To set the stage for what seems right to me, here is a quote by a noted astronomer:

All the phenomena of astronomy, which had baffled the acutest minds since the dawn of history, the movement of the heavens, of the sun and the moon, the very complex movement of the planets, suddenly tumble together and become intelligible in terms of the one staggering assumption, this *mysterious “attractive force.”* And not only the movements of the heavenly bodies, far more than that, the movements of earthly bodies, too, are seen to be subject to the same mathematically definable law, instead of being, as they were for all previous philosophers, mere unpredictable happen-so’s.¹

It is my contention that the same law applies to human bodies as to the astronomer’s “earthly bodies.” He may have meant this; in any event, I believe he would agree.

What follows is an attempt to explain that growth in wisdom—awareness of truth—is governed by the advancement of the individual’s intellectual, moral, and spiritual qualities. This mysterious attractive force—magnetic affinity—draws to it only that additional perceptiveness which is far enough advanced to respond. And the higher one’s quality, the more wisdom or truth will be perceived. Mysterious?

¹ See *Science Is A Sacred Cow* by Anthony Standen (New York: E. P. Dutton and Company, Inc., 1950), pp. 53–64.

No less so than electricity! We do not know what it is, only *that* it is and *what* it does. As we harnessed electricity to our benefit, let us harness this mysterious force to the glory of mankind—freedom to grow, emerge, evolve in awareness, perception, consciousness.

To advance the freedom way of life, it is necessary to correct a popular and destructive fallacy. Time and again, this notion: “The socialists are winning; we are losing. Adopt their tactics.” Those who commend this approach have not as yet realized that the higher grade the objective is, the higher grade must the method be. The tactics for destroying a free society are strikingly different from those needed to create a free society. A bit of reflection, and this is self-evident.

Assume a low-grade objective: another’s demise. A low-grade method suffices: a dagger or gun.

Move up the hierarchy of values and assume that my objective is to make a poet of you. This is slightly absurd. First, I am not a poet and, second, you may have no potential for becoming a poet. But if this were my objective, you would not listen unless I displayed poetic talents. Otherwise, no magnetism, none whatsoever.

Now, move up the hierarchy of values as far as one can go: human liberty—every individual free to act creatively as he pleases. This correlates with understanding and wisdom, and the method must be commensurately as high. What is the method? It is nothing less than achieving that degree of excellence which will cause some others to seek one’s tutorship. The greater the excellence, the more responsive to the magnetism!

To dramatize the point I am trying to explain, pick up a horseshoe magnet. Put some sawdust on a table and hold the magnet above it. The magnetism is there but the sawdust lacks a responsive quality. Do the same with bits of iron or steel. Instantly, they respond to the magnetism. The difference is in the quality of what’s on the table, not the ever-present magnetism. Pursuing the analogy, are we human beings sawdust or steel? We can make ourselves one or the other. *The extent that we move from next to nothing to something, determines the extent that the heavenly and earthly magnetisms will draw us to them!* A few comments on heavenly and earthly magnetisms.

Heavenly. With this in mind, an appropriate daily prayer would be, “May I develop *qualities* that will be attracted by Thy Infinite Wisdom.” If the prayers be not of the rote variety but, instead, a fervent, sincere, yearning-for-learning kind,

then Infinite Wisdom will begin to unfold—consciousness of finite minds moving heavenward.

Earthly. Take stock of finite minds. Every person who has ever lived, regardless of how wise, has been surrounded by people who were his superiors in this or that bit of expertise. Even the relative “giants”—ancient as well as contemporary—are dependent on these innate differences. Were all identical to Socrates, acclaimed as the wisest, all would perish. Precisely the same can be said of Leonardo da Vinci, Goethe, Bastiat, Emerson, Mises and, certainly, of me—and you, whoever you are!

Here is a demonstrable truth: The more we know the more we know we do not know. Thus, if one is not becoming more and more aware of how little he knows, he is not growing in that quality which is attracted to the everpresent magnetism. Grasp this rarely understood truth, as did Socrates, and we will think not only of ourselves but of all others—Presidents, Ph.D.’s, or whoever—as in a kindergarten class. Interestingly, the very few who *progress* into this stage of humility acquire a strong, vibrant, yearning-for-learning.

Reflect on this kindergarten maxim:

Good, better, best;
Never let it rest
Until good becomes better
And better becomes best.

I would add only this thought: Best is but a momentary stage in a never-ending progression; it’s better, better, better forever! “Truth and nothing but the truth” is not within man’s possibilities. What then is the noblest game in life? *The search for truth!*

Very well! What *is* the formula for learning from our earthly brethren, past and present? How gratify one’s yearning? But, first, two thoughts to keep in mind in order not to be confused by the “attractive forces” here reflected upon:

1. In a distinctly different category is what might be termed the “repeat-after-me” type of learning. The multiplication table is an example. To know instantly and without thought that 7×6 equals 42 is invaluable but is no contribution to mathematical science. Repeating the alphabet is another example of this kind of learning, but this common skill is a far cry from creating a language. Similarly, with millions of other skills on which our lives depend—bits of learning that range from

repairing motors to flicking switches. These are indispensable repetitions but not creations, that is, they are not responses to the “attractive forces.”

2. Do not be misled by the millions who are not in search of truth. How can they be identified? They are those who know not how little they know and, thus, believe they can run our lives better than we can run our own. These unfortunate people—dictocrats and their followers—are in the pied piper clan and are, unknowingly, the enemies of creativity and freedom, and are easily spotted.

Here is our formula: Those who have progressed in their own search for truth possess a magnetism, and the more the growth the more the magnetism. If our *quality* be advanced enough, we will automatically be drawn to their enlightenment.

Finally, the sources will be as mysterious as the magnetism. So, forever listen! Wisdom may come, as the Bible suggests, “from out the mouths of babes.” To repeat the analogy, convert ourselves from sawdust to iron and steel and then observe how the magnetism performs its wonders—day in and day out. It is glorious to behold!

26

It's How We Use Our Liberty

We are a free people. However . . . it is not from our privileges and liberties . . . but from the use we make of them, that our felicity is to be expected.
—Jonathan Mayhew

Several decades after the U.S.A.'s founding people from numerous nations expressed astonishment over the miracle of America's success. Other countries were graced with soils as fertile, climates as friendly, resources as plentiful. Yet, relative to America, they remained in the same, old humdrum poverty. How come? Why the U.S.A.'s fantastic prosperity?

Governments of several countries sent commissions to the United States to unearth the secret. Their findings? It was our Constitution that made America successful. Home they went and copied our document. But no miracle followed! Why? Our political documents—the Declaration of Independence, the Constitution, and the Bill of Rights—unparalleled though they are—were not cause but, rather, the flowering of moral and spiritual roots. Alexis de Tocqueville is credited with having found the answer:

I sought for the greatness and genius of America in fertile fields and boundless forests; it was not there. I sought for it in her institutions of learning; it was not there. I sought for it in her matchless Constitution and democratic congress; it was not there. Not until I went to the churches of America and found them aflame with righteousness did I understand the greatness and genius of America. America is great because America is good. When America ceases to be good, America will cease to be great.

Members of the foreign commissions saw only the flower: our Constitution. The discerning Tocqueville, on the other hand, discovered the root below the blossom: *the churches aflame with righteousness!*

The nature and source of this righteousness is all but forgotten. We, therefore, owe a debt of gratitude to the scholarly Franklin P. Cole for his book, *They Preached Liberty*.¹ Who are “they”? The preacher-patriots, those clergymen who 20 to 25 years prior to the Declaration of Independence, laid the groundwork, established the roots, for the very essence of Americanism:

... that all men are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness.

In all exemplary movements there is a leader, some one out front. Who was America’s pacemaker? “To Jonathan Mayhew (1720–1776) belongs the distinction of being the first of the Revolutionary preacher-patriots.” Indeed, this Doctor of Divinity wrote and/or preached the outstanding ideas that appeared in the Declaration of Independence 25 years prior to its signing. “. . . great minds run in the same channel, but Jonathan Mayhew said it first.” Therefore, it seems appropriate that we reflect upon and take advantage of this man who “said it first”—his seminal ideas.

Parenthetically, our forefathers had a drive working for them which seems to have lost its power. Relative to today’s material abundance, they were poverty stricken. With them it was a case of root hog or die, and they rooted. They had to exchange goods and services or go hungry, and so they traded. Unless they were honest no one would trade with them, and so they were truthful. Briefly, they were faced with obstacles to overcome, and *overcoming is the road to individual becoming*. This explains to a marked extent the morality and exemplarity of our forebears.

Horace, a Roman of 2,000 years ago, observed:

Adversity has the effect of eliciting talents which in prosperous circumstances would have lain dormant.

The adversity of our forebears elicited talents that accounted, in no small measure, for their exemplary behavior. Intellectual and moral talents in our prosperous circumstances tend to lie dormant and that dormancy accounts, in no

¹ *They Preached Liberty*, Franklin P. Cole (Indianapolis: Liberty Press).

small measure, for a reprehensible behavior on the rampage—a flagrant misuse of our liberty!

Upon our use of our liberty, thought Mayhew, depends our happiness and our fortune—our felicity. Another great thinker, Lecomte du Noüy, expressed the identical thought in 1947:

In order to improve himself [man] must be free, since his contribution to evolution *will depend on the use he makes of his liberty* . . . and only a highly evolved man is willing to defend the liberty of others.

It is a fair guess that neither of these Frenchmen, Toc-queville or du Noüy, ever heard of Jonathan Mayhew. But it is another confirmation that “great minds run in the same channel.”

History reveals another “great mind,” a preacher-patriot whose preachings and writings appeared one century after Mayhew’s works—Henry Ward Beecher. Reflect on the following wise observations.

There is no liberty to men whose passions are stronger than their religious feelings.

When passions—run-away feelings—override or take the place of religious feelings, there can be no liberty. Passions, thus defined, forge our fetters. Had passions been stronger than righteousness—religious feelings—there would have been no Declaration of Independence, no individual liberty, no American miracle. Hail to our preacher-patriots!

There is no liberty to men in whom ignorance predominates over knowledge.

Ignorance in the driver’s seat explains why liberty has so rarely appeared in the history of mankind, and why we Americans will lose our precious liberty if knowledge doesn’t come to the rescue. Today, there are those in the political driver’s seat who haven’t the slightest awareness of how little they know. They “think” they can run your life and mine better than we can—each driver behaving as if he were the Creator.

For wisdom to predominate requires no more than a few clean and clear thinkers such as Mayhew, du Noüy, Beecher to arrive on the scene, individuals who know how to use their liberty. Exemplars!

There is no liberty to men who know not how to govern themselves.

Imagine no self-governing individuals, no self-control exercised by anyone, everybody running around hog wild, as we say. With no self-imposed restraints, the situation could be likened to a population of madmen or of imbeciles. Liberty? None whatsoever!

The very first step in knowing how to use our liberty is self-government. What is the key to this discipline, the mastery of pride? It is humility, the right estimate of self. Saint Augustine gave an excellent guideline: “The sufficiency of my merit is *to know that my merit is not sufficient.*” Rudyard Kipling adds his wisdom: “Still stands Thine ancient sacrifice, an humble and a contrite heart.” Liberty is possible *only* when men know how to and do, in fact, govern themselves!

In conclusion, ponder the profundity of du Noüy’s thoughts:

1. To improve himself, man must be free.
2. His contribution to evolution *depends on the use he makes of his liberty.*
3. Only a highly evolved man *is willing to defend the liberty of others.*

Man’s earthly purpose is to evolve, to emerge, to grow in awareness, perception, consciousness—possible only when he is free. And how will the highly evolved individual use his liberty? He will strive as best he can to defend the liberty of others, regardless of race, creed or nationality. It is the very essence of enlightened self-interest for each of us to strive for the liberty of all.

Why do I find encouragement in our present situation? In an informal group designated *The Remnant*, coordinated by my associate, The Reverend Edmund A. Opitz, we know at least 650 present-day preacher-patriots. And there must be hundreds of others unknown to us, not only in this country but throughout the world. Thus, the writings and preachings of Jonathan Mayhew, the preacher-patriot who said it first, are bearing fruit.

27

A Word from the Wise

*Seek ye first truth and righteousness and all
these things shall be added unto you.*

—Luke 12:31

The freedom way of life is threatened today more than at any time since the U.S.A.'s founding. It is frowned upon, denigrated, caricatured, opposed. The anti-freedom movement is devolutionary, and it is so powerful and cleverly phrased—popularized—that many good citizens give ground, concede this or that point, unwittingly lending support to a way of life they openly decry. As a consequence, they become infected with a plethora of “buts” and thus bend and give the case away. No longer ramrod straight!

Our problem is serious, but it is one with which man long has struggled. And for help in our time, we well may look to the wisdom and goodness of the ages. I refer to those individuals, past and present, near and far, whose wisdom is ours for the seeking—partners in principles and insights. For, as Archbishop Whately wrote, “It makes all the difference in the world whether we put Truth in the first place or in the second place!” What light can these wise men bring to bear on some of our urgent questions?

Our concern is for life and liberty. And one of the first questions has to do with the source of our rights to these things. If we will listen to the sages, we may hear Jefferson and his colleagues of 1776 declare:

. . . that all men are . . . *endowed by their Creator* with certain unalienable rights, that among these are Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness.

So, man was created to be free, and Montesquieu tells us:

Countries are well cultivated, not as they are fertile but as they are free.

Yes, we are created free and need to be free, but to what purpose? Why are we here?

Man is on earth as in an egg.

—*Heraclitus*

Now, you cannot go on being a good egg forever; you must either hatch or rot.

—*C. S. Lewis*

Let him who would save the world first move himself.

—*Socrates*

So our purpose then is to grow, to advance through selfimprovement. But can we act well if we have not thought wisely?

Everyman should use his intellect. . . as the lighthouse uses its lamps, that those afar off on the sea may see the shining and learn their way.

—*Beecher*

To make no mistake is not in the power of man; but from their errors and mistakes the wise and good learn wisdom for the future.

—*Plutarch*

If it be right in principle, it has to work.

—*Benjamin A. Rogge*

Perfect liberty is an ideal, a castle in the air. What are we to do with this vision?

If you have built castles in the air, your work need not be lost; there is where they should be. *Now put foundations under them.*

—*Thoreau*

Should we spend much time trying to find the right words to expose fallacies and throw light on the truth of liberty?

No man has a prosperity so high or firm, but that two or three words can dishearten it; and there is no calamity which right words will not begin to redress.

—*Emerson*

How may one become the good thinker which the revival of liberty requires?

A man with a scant vocabulary will almost certainly be a weak thinker. He who would learn to think should learn to write. Good ideas are elusive and must be captured in flight; . . . jot down a good thought the moment after it lights up the mind.

—Henry Hazlitt

What, then, is the first step toward wisdom?

That man thinks he knows everything, whereas he knows nothing. I, on the other hand, know nothing, but *I know I know nothing*.

—Socrates

The spirit of God delights to dwell in the hearts of the *humble*.

—Erasmus

Humility, like darkness, reveals the heavenly lights.

—Thoreau

We live in deeds, not years, in thoughts, not breaths; . . . He most lives who thinks most, feels the noblest, acts the best.

—Gamaliel Bailey

Yes, humility is a prelude to learning. What are some of the other virtues that may help us to find and to practice freedom?

Nothing is at last sacred but the integrity of your own mind. Absolve you to yourself, and you shall have the suffrage of the world.

—Emerson

This above all: *To thine own self be true*. And it must follow, as the night the day, Thou canst not then be false to any man.

—Shakespeare

It is easier to find a score of men wise enough to discover the truth, than to find one intrepid enough, in the face of opposition, to stand for it.

—A. A. Hodge

We need to practice humility and integrity. And what more?

If you do not *expect* the unexpected you will not find it.

—Heraclitus

In *belief* lies the secret of all valuable exertion.

—*Bulwer*

Let us be of *good cheer*, remembering that the misfortunes hardest to bear are those which never come.

—*Lowell*

All growth depends upon activity. There is no development physically or intellectually without effort, and effort means work. Work is not a curse; it is the prerogative of intelligence, the only means to manhood, and the measure of civilization.

—*Calvin Coolidge*

We seek to improve ourselves, true, but how is the best in others brought more fully into play?

I have believed the best of every man,
And find that to believe it is enough
To make a bad man show him at his best,
Or even a good man swing his lantern higher.

—*Yeats*

Does not despotism in the nation emerge only after it has begun in the minds of people?

Reform must come from within, not from without. You cannot legislate virtue.

—*Cardinal Gibbons*

The idea of liberty must grow weak in the hearts of men before it can be killed at the hands of tyrants.

—*Thomas H. Hogshead*

Is not a man's right to his property the cornerstone of liberty?

The man who is not permitted to own is owned.

—*Santayana*

What are some of the deterrents to the recovery of freedom?

Half our *fears* are baseless, and the other half discreditable.

—Bovee

Nothing is so rash as *fear*; its counsels very rarely put off, whilst they are always sure to aggravate the evils from which it would fly.

—Burke

All infractions of love and equity in our social relations are speedily punished. They are punished by *fear*.

—Emerson

What happens when fear causes us to abandon a principle?

It is by compromise that human rights have been abandoned. The country . . . deserves repose. And repose can only be found in everlasting principles.

—Charles Sumner

Wouldn't it be nice were evil and error always obvious?

Oh, were evil always ugly,
What a boon to virtue that would be!
But oft it wears a pretty face,
And lets us cheat unknowingly.

—Anonymous

O, what a goodly outside falsehood hath, a goodly apple rotten at the heart.

—Shakespeare

And if man partakes of that apple, what are the results?

Man, proud man! dressed in a little brief authority, plays such fantastic tricks before high heaven as make the angels weep.

—Shakespeare

What's wrong with the idea of everyone being forced to conform to type?

A system of fixed concepts is contrary to natural law. It prevents life from flowing. It blocks the passage of the universal law.

—Newton Dillaway

Were all alike, instead of free,

T'would mean the end of me and thee.

—*Anonymous*

When men turn to coercive measures, what are the dangers of abuse of such governmental powers?

The essential nature of government is organized force. The history of liberty is a history of the limitation of governmental power, not the increase of it.

—*Woodrow Wilson*

Government is not reason, it is not eloquence—it is force. Like fire it is a dangerous servant and a fearful master; never for a moment should it be left to irresponsible action.

—*George Washington*

What are some of the basic reasons why government spending is on the rampage?

It is easy to be generous with other people's money.

—*John Day*

When men are most sure and arrogant they are commonly most mistaken.

—*David Hume*

And of all mistakes, what are the two destructive extremes in political economy?

Socialism is planned chaos. Anarchy is unplanned chaos.

—*Ludwig von Mises*

Is anything worse than a good thing turned from its true purpose?

The law . . . has converted plunder into a right, in order to protect plunder.

—*Bastiat*

I have never been able to conceive how any rational being could propose happiness to himself from the exercise of power over others.

—*Jefferson*

In the light of all the error, the darkness, is there no hope?

Adversity has the effect of eliciting talents which in prosperous circumstances would have lain dormant.

—*Horace*

When will the socialistic trend reverse?

In the history of man it has been very generally the case, that when evils have grown insufferable, they have touched the point of cure.

—*E. H. Chapin*

Does social harmony stem from coercion or does it reflect moral values?

Morality once shattered destroys the people and the ruler. Outside of prison and this side of hell men are not bound together by the club but by the consciousness of moral obligations.

—*Walter A. Lunden*

The above are no more than samplings of how sages—past and present, near and far—have answered life's most important questions. Bear in mind, however, that there are answers galore—tens of thousands—unknown to you and me, some of which may be ours for the seeking. And what's higher in the realm of endeavor than seeking enlightenment!

Conceded, not every answer is "the whole truth and nothing but the truth." All men are fallible; thus, those of us who seek must make our own evaluations, conscious of the fact that we also err in our judgments.

But of one judgment I feel fairly certain: The best guideline is "Seek ye first truth and righteousness." And what then are "these things that shall be added unto you" and me? Liberty and the fantastic wisdom of the free and unfettered market, the fountainhead of miracles by the millions.

