

## THE FIELD OF INDIVIDUAL RESPONSIBILITY AND ACTION

"...And I believe the time for me to begin to practice this creed is not at that illusive moment in the future, when I shall have greater influence, but NOW."

Robert A. Bakeman

Assuming the presence of the abundant gifts of Nature -- which, in this country, we have -- the good life for the people of any society depends on two things:

1. Good public policies and management of public affairs.
2. Constructive actions and attitudes of individuals.

These two are of course closely interrelated; neither could progress much without the other.

All past chapters have led up to the description of a certain manner of taxation believed here to be the most fundamental reform needed in the entire field of public policy -- fundamental because it would release land, the basis of all human life and activity, from speculative withholding from use, and it would release to people the full rewards of their labor. Only a people with these natural rights will have the initiative to make other reforms; without them, they will sink into indolence and corruption. That is why this public reform, far from being the only change needed in our institutions, is, however, the central reform, the one that is basic to others, and hence the one most necessary to pursue.

This final chapter is devoted to the constructive actions and attitudes needed in individuals.

Whether or not readers agree with the alleged reform here urged, they certainly will agree that it will be a long time before that measure, or any other for the same purpose, is effectively applied.

In the meantime we shall have to live as best we can with conditions about as they are. The good grace and energy with which we do this will make a great difference, not only in how well we attain personal satisfaction but in how well we do our parts for the common good. This would be true under any circumstances, good or bad, for we know that many men with good family background, education and economic prospects have, through indolence and a selfish spirit, made failures of their lives, while others from poor homes, without formal educational opportunities or good economic prospects have, through their own determination,

intelligent efforts and generous, cheerful spirits, overcome all initial handicaps and continuing adversity, attained personal satisfaction and public usefulness. These considerations throw the burden of responsibility for his own destiny squarely on each man himself, precluding his blaming society, his country, or his family for his failures. At least it will be practical for him to plan his life as if this were completely true!

To be appropriately reconciled to living in this very imperfect world, a many-faceted attitude of faith, hope, magnanimity, perseverance, and self-reliance must be developed.

Margaret Fuller, transcendentalist and literary light of Concord, is said to have said, in 1840, "I accept the universe." Emerson, hearing of this later, said, "By Gad, she'd better!" And that is good advice for us to take, but not without the resolve to do what each of us can to improve that universe, nor without heeding the prayer:

Give me the strength to change what must be changed,  
The faith to bear what cannot be changed,  
And the wisdom to distinguish one from the other.

Accepting life's seeming hardships as something to be courageously overcome when possible, or adjusted to when not, will probably do us more good than to have been born into a world complete and perfect in every way, with nothing further to do. If we, in the midst of each tough situation, could look ahead to the time when we shall be looking back at this as one more situation or problem met and conquered, with its lessons tucked under our belt, we could at the time be more cheerful and less afraid; we could gain greater strength, knowledge, character, and grace. In fact, looking back, we see that we often gained most from experiences we would have tried hardest to avoid!

Unfortunately, one of the faults of progress, as we have conceived of it, is that each generation tends to smooth the way, to make easy the path, for the next, removing the needs for exertion of body and mind, reducing and simplifying its experiences. We think it a valid endeavor to spare the young all wonder and illusion, all hardship, thought, pain, and disappointment.

But I would go along with progress as far as to reduce unwarranted hardships due to lack of justice and natural opportunity. As each player makes his entrance on the great stage of life, let it be one of free and equal chance for all, with success or failure being matters of personal responsibility, and with hope based essentially on one's own efforts. At any point we may reach in our progress toward this "fair field and no favors," we shall always have to be accepting the then existing

hardships, natural or otherwise, because Man was never intended to have supreme dominion over his world. His habit must be to say, "Thy will, not mine, be done," and to search continuously to know that "will." Only by accepting the beneficence of an objective set of natural laws and events outside his own making, and by recognizing that "Obedience to Law is Liberty," will Man gain the warmth and comfort he is entitled to as a duly humble child of his maker, avoiding the bleak and cold war with all objective circumstance that will follow his every attempt to play God.

There is great need for patience and humility as we look at public institutions we wish could be changed, reformed, improved, or abolished. Though the vast "web" of customs, beliefs, and practices, developed over generations and into which we are born and by which we are so largely governed, tends to resist needed change, still it also tends to hold the constructive gains of the past and to prevent any sudden retrogression. It even has a tendency toward net progress, as it allows time for needed evolution of truth and for the weaving of means of communications and effective relationships so necessary to a peaceful, interdependent, productive, trading society. Wherever that "web" is violently torn as by force and revolution led by those without patience, love, humility, or knowledge of history, then violence and chaos, suffering and sorrow are likely to result. Violent revolution is not the thing; where this has been the approach to oppression and injustice, leaders are all too often motivated more by hate than by love, and in the end there is likely to result less liberty and justice than before, not more. I think we in America have seen enough of revolution throughout the world to know that this is so. And while there may be in our country no incipient revolutions of the sort seen elsewhere for us to guard against, yet we can see many lessons to be learned about where the failure of individual life can lead, all the way from the case of Adolph Hitler down to those of lesser misguided malcontents.

The sharing of the common problems of society is traditional, though not of course exclusively with us in America.

But another tradition especially revered here is the devotion of a man to his own best interests and special aspirations. "Life liberty, and the pursuit of happiness" are rightly sacred to us, and, when enjoyed by each with full respect for the equal rights of all others, their preservation is seen as essential to the good of all citizens and of society as a whole. The intelligent study and pursuit of one's own interest is the basis of all self-reliance and character. It is even essential to the practice of the Golden Rule -- criterion of all morality -- and of the admonition; "Love thy neighbor as thyself," for if you had no clear insight into self-interest nor knew how you would want to be "done unto" you could not possibly know how to be just to anyone else, nor could you establish valid relationships with others. You know how to

offer love only if you have received and felt love. You cannot be generously outgoing and public spirited if your own life is not one of fulfillment and satisfaction, constantly regarded as your own first duty.

The rulers of collectivist states would not agree to this, as we know, they having branded independent initiative in the pursuit of self-interest as being opposed to the interests of society; in their view, the citizen shall work for society and it will in turn determine and serve his interest. But we put the life and active initiative of people first, and the form of social organization second. The interest of the citizen is most intimately known, most intensively felt, and most directly, efficiently, and democratically served by him, while to the officials who manage public affairs, that interest can only be known indirectly and served "in the mass," so-to-speak, being to them essentially of political interest only.

In any decent, free, or "open" society -- not in "police states" or in those dominated by "despotism tempered with assassination" -- it is not so much the openly selfish, mean, perverse, and obviously bad that we have most to fear; they can be identified, and if necessary, incarcerated, without too much trouble. But those we do have most to fear are the unhappy, the discontented, the unhinged; hence the neurotic, impatient, hateful, brutal and potentially revolutionary -- those, in short, who have no stabilizing, satisfying, happy, centered, individual, private, richly fulfilled lives of their own."\*

Ironically and unfortunately, those whose private endeavors are failures and whose inner lives are most barren of love and absorbing intellectual pursuits, and who are most dominated by an acquired, cynical competitiveness are often just the very ones who work their way into political office or other positions of dominance -- for wealth, power, and prestige -- where they naturally apply to public affairs the same personal qualities that have already impaired their private lives.

All people in public affairs are drawn from private life. So we can see how vitally important it is that the "spring" from which all talent for the service of human life can alone be drawn shall be kept pure, unpolluted by factors that wreck the economy, harden the heart, starve the mind, narrow the view, stifle the initiative,

\* Perfect examples: Adolph Hitler; Lee Harvey Oswald. (If it be said that the guilt of Oswald for the shooting, on November 22, 1963, of Pres. John F. Kennedy has never been proven, such a question is, from the standpoint of this essay on human affairs, just as purely academic as one once raised in the field of ancient literature: "Were the works of Homer actually written by him or by some other man with the same name?")

We know the assassin was the Oswald type.

or divest of joy the lives, of people, rendering them unable to successfully serve either their own interests or those of their community, their country, or the world. Thus we see that the good individual life is not only the "end" to be attained, but that it is an essential element of the "means" as well.

What can anyone do, here and now, on his own, to move toward that end? The millennium will not come in his lifetime; any appeal to society to promptly reform its institutions will be but the "Voice of one crying in the wilderness." But even if not, we are bound to see eventually that neither society, nor any branch of it, such as a union, a church, a government, a corporation, or a family, can live a man's life for him. It cannot serve as his conscience, nor can it plan his life for him without destroying his initiative and sense of responsibility. He simply must exercise a sense of direction of his own if he is to live much more fully than a domesticated animal.

I realize that to undertake, even in a limited way, to tell anyone else how to take his own life and problems in hand is dangerous ground, to be trod, if at all, only with care in avoiding what may always be matters purely of personal taste, staying well within the accumulated, conservative wisdom of the race, indicating the sort of things a prudent person would do, no matter how individualistic he wanted to be otherwise. I venture on this ground at the risk of being chided, by some, for stressing the obvious, and for being "puritanical," by others who, I say, have never sought natural principles by which to judge what responsibilities are rightly public and what are private.

The self-reliant mind gets little encouragement in this age; the whole trend of thought, especially that called "liberal", on the part of those wishing to plan or govern, is that all but the most successful must be cared for, saved for, and planned for, by programs of aid for these, aid for those, aid for the others. I claim this need not be so for those determined that it shall not be.

From among the innumerable objectives for which people work, strive, and hope, three appropriate examples are selected for discussion here; they are important in themselves, and they illustrate well the essential place of personal effort in the support of private lives as compared to any place public action may have in the support of private lives. I refer to health, education, and welfare.

These three words suggest to Americans a huge government bureaucracy whose growth is the very symbol of the increasing tendency for personal responsibilities to be regarded as government functions. Though granting that some services for the common good might, if divorced from the pressures of politics and special interests, be well rendered or aided by government, such as medical research,

drug analysis, and protective laws for sanitation and safety, nevertheless it is here contended that health, education, and welfare are essentially private functions, properly rendered by people to themselves. Popular thought, however, seems to be that more money will surely mean more of such attributes enjoyed by people. There also appears to be the belief that money, if collected from people by taxation and expended by government officials as they estimate relative needs, is more effectively expended than if the same money were left in the hands of the citizens. We know, of course, that people like to get something for nothing, and that government officials like to augment their spheres of influence, their prestige and power. But how important these tendencies are is debatable. Some people, even with apparently "no axe to grind," seem habitually to think the government must know best or must have a more broadly based and dispassionate judgment.

But now let us consider the great extent to which health, education, and welfare -- not as vast programs, but as the attributes of the lives of people -- are actually dependent not upon money but upon subjective factors, such as the energy, intelligence, study, wisdom, and perseverance of each person himself.

Consider health. It is true that some physical things -- food, clothing, shelter, medicine, dietary supplements, and various mechanical, optical, or electronic attachments to the human body -- can be bought with money. But all these will come to naught if the subject himself does not "live right," so-to-speak, that is, if he buys and eats foolishly, abuses himself, becomes addicted to drugs and stimulants, over-works, under-works, takes no physical exercise, fresh air or needed sleep, and harbors debilitating thoughts of hate, selfishness, inferiority, and fear, and, above all, if he has no great, absorbing, worthwhile interests to maintain an eagerness for living and doing -- doing for himself, doing for others. When he lets himself down in these ways, then he begins to say he does not know what is the matter; he blames anything but himself, and soon becomes an object first of sympathy, then of pity, finally of aid in some form, becoming a burden to society. The things that could be rendered to him from outside himself could perhaps keep him up and dressed, but they alone could never give him an impelling purpose for living nor the zest, let us say, to bounce out of bed long before breakfast, get out in the morning air and "split up a pile of hickory logs."

Consider education. (Vocational training is outside the scope of this work.) A liberal education, either formal or self-directed, is a most central attribute of a person's development, and is the basis of the attainment of most all other satisfactions and achievements. It consists, in part, in an accumulated body of knowledge and skills, and the ability or the propensity, through reading, study, thought, observation, consultation and

discussion, to add constantly to that accumulation. To progress in education depends on having a respect for the value of time, and on not having the common, habitual predilection for the purely diversionary pastimes that consume the leisure of most people. It depends on an habitual preference for an atmosphere of peace and quiet untortured by puerile entertainment or idle, contentious talk. It depends on an eager grasp of ever new fields of knowledge and thought such as to broaden one's outlook among people and matters not previously seen, understood or enjoyed. It depends on being at ease with many sorts of people, especially those able to impart knowledge and understanding, and on being entirely free of a neurotic and pointless sense of inferiority in the presence of those of education, accomplishment, and greatness. And finally, the gaining of education depends on a true sense of personal dignity and the appropriate, sincere, and entirely unostentatious ambition to make something of one's own life, and on the realization that nothing need stand in the way. In all of this, I conceive the highest desire to be for the actual substance of education, not merely for the outward symbols of it -- the citations, certificates, diplomas, degrees, and titles.

Perhaps our most urgent, specific concern about education now is that our children may get into high school and college, find satisfaction and success there, and later put to good use what they gained, in rich, useful lives. Whether, or how well, they do this depends on the efforts, tastes, love, common sense, and foresight of ourselves, their parents. Attitudes of amiability, good cheer, self-confidence, helpfulness, honesty, family loyalty, intellectual curiosity and industrious activity must all begin in the home, and practically at birth. Parents should, themselves, take an active interest in all serious interests of their children, especially their school work, helping them grasp principles of academic study, creating a home atmosphere conducive to mental concentration, giving scholastic accomplishments a worthy status in the eyes of the impressionable young. Children and young people should be introduced courteously to guests and encouraged to take their part in the conversation and other amenities, just as if they were people. Yet we know the proportion of American homes in which the atmosphere is one of noisy competitiveness, of impatience and anxiety, continuously tortured by hideous "programs" -- anything but conducive to serenity, studiousness, or independent thought. When there are guests, children are ignored, shooed out of the room, or otherwise treated in undignified ways destructive of any development of poise, social grace or desirability among worthwhile companionship. Social training, of a simple, basic, loving nature is well within the capabilities of all parents who realize it and are determined on the best for their children. But the golden opportunities pass unrealized. Then later, teachers, principals, and deans all complain -- with entire justification -- that they are now expected to train

students in such elementary matters as sex, common courtesy, social etiquette, how to speak correct English and many other matters and attitudes which are actually attributes that should have been the natural by-products of proper home and family life.

Good schools and money to buy some things all have their place, but without dynamic inner attitudes, personal abilities, and an awakening to broad, worthwhile interests and ambitions, they are powerless to educate. We can lead a horse to water but we cannot make him drink; we can lead a boy to college but we cannot hope that he will drink at the right sources -- those of wisdom and knowledge -- unless we, his parents, have, from his earliest childhood, done our part for his well-rounded up-bringing. The schools have their place in education, obviously. But all they can build on is whatever parents and society have already instilled into children's characters. In saying this, we are exactly within the subject of this chapter, the field of individual responsibility and action. Nobody had to give Lincoln his education!

Consider welfare. I suppose "welfare" could include every phase of peoples' well-being, and that in every case it is the total result of education, personal endeavor, economy, common sense, health, good luck, and so on. We have seen for a generation and more how peoples' conditions are increasingly regarded as being due to forces beyond their control, and how government -- local, state, and federal -- is coming to mean "all things to all people."

The great extent to which people accept these suppositions of their own helplessness is undermining their determination to do all they can for themselves. This is weakening them, rendering them more and more sheeplike, while promoting the growth, power, cost, all-pervasiveness and eventual tyranny and corruption of government. That is a major complaint to be expressed about Americans. It is true that in an advanced, exchange economy like ours, material sustenance can be bought with money, and government can collect money and dole it out for our sustenance. But through no such process can we obtain the conditions, the atmosphere, the use of the mind, the freedom to err, to learn, and to live, nor the challenges to be met and intangible satisfactions to be gained, which differentiate the proper destiny of Man from that of the dumb animals.

Of course the theory of public welfare, or of the action of public agencies for such a purpose, is that from those who can spare it shall be taken part of their earnings to be distributed to those in desperate, undeserved need, all done in the name of a humane society, and purporting to affect a more expedient distribution of wealth. But public distribution of wealth is wrong in principle, and every system based on it is, in the end, abused and corrupted, and naturally so, for no one retains any incentive to stand on his own feet and meet what are rightly his own personal problems. The padding of welfare rolls is notorious, as



everyone knows, and government officials often have, if any, only an indirect, political incentive to restrain abuses or to discipline people; their largesse with public funds, and their desperate efforts to meet sad situations are alike liable to circumvent Nature's discipline. There are many good, honest workers in the field of public welfare, of course; but a whole comprehensive system of permanent, publicly institutionalized welfare, aid, or relief -- from Social Security all the way down to aid to dependent children -- can be a problem and danger in itself. It is wide open to abuse and misuse of politicians and prospective recipients as well.

Society, having failed to assure to all people the natural rights which in most cases would have given them self-reliance, employment, and personal savings, cannot now drop any great proportion of the various forms of "welfarism" now relied on as "stop-gap" measures in support of the unfortunate, desirable as it will be, when possible, to reduce them.

Pursuing the subject of this chapter, the effort here is to emphasize, for the thoughtful reader, the hopeless limitations of material aids from outside a person in creating for him a good and worthy physical, mental, and spiritual life, and to show, on the other hand, the very well-founded hope of attaining the elements of such a life -- using "health, education, and welfare" as examples -- through one's own personal planning, imagination, vision, determination, and efforts.

For the individual, this is where hope lies.

I believe we have become too deeply entangled in the competitive struggle for material things, measuring the value of every activity by the "ledger," sacrificing leisure for luxury, turning economic life into what is today called "the rat race." Strangely our political leaders urge still more of this, stressing more "gross national product" and faster "economic growth," which means more specialization, centralization, and urbanization, even though such progress and change have already been stimulated to the point of chaos, or to a condition to which the large numbers of those of merely ordinary ability simply cannot adjust. This seems largely unreasonable to me. Competition and industrialism, within reason, have their rightful place in our way of life. But unfortunately much of it has been built up on the involuntary participation of those who earliest succumbed to the many forces tending toward centralization of all functions of society, largely becoming "factory hands," "organization men" and the like. Though many may seem financially better off than they would have been a century ago, yet they have lost most of whatever they might have had of independence and now live in ways that hold them in strict conformity to conditions of living and working rigidly established for them, accepting the values and thoughts of those around them, with fortunes geared to the vicissitudes of the market over which they have no control.

A growing number of people are beginning to realize this, and some are deliberately making a change, which, typically, is a move from city toward country, where they can have more room and more personal freedom; where they can perform many services for themselves in which, also, children find outlets for their immature powers, joining with their parents in what can be the companionable struggle with Nature. That struggle is a noble one and entirely normal in the economic life of Man, in contrast with the unnatural, "bumper to bumper, dog eat dog" struggle of man against man so characteristic of the fiercely competitive commerce in the world's goods amid the crowd and din of smoke-filled rooms and teeming streets -- a contrast so well expressed by the words of Walter Rauschenbusch:

"The world of men is made of jangling noises,  
With God is a great silence."

Many men, long after they have far outdistanced any possible danger of want, continue to fight on to the end, neglecting higher values, stuck in the narrow rut of money-making, restlessly haunted by the thought, once solemnly expressed to me, as deepest wisdom, by a broker's agent: "No income is enough if you could get more". Such are destined never to attain peace before reaching the cemetery.

Better and longer might they live by taking some of the advice of O. Henry, conveyed in the words of the chief of a sanitarium admitting a nervously unstrung architect:

"What you need is absolute rest and exercise."

That move which I say a few are making in the direction of sanity and peace is one that the individual may well try to make without hopelessly waiting for society to agree with him or his sense of values. If you can live in a manner and a place such as to be able to meet at least some of your own needs, with such goods and services not having to pass through the channels and vagaries of the market -- our exchange economy -- you will broaden your own powers and outlook, improve your health, increase your sense of oneness with other people, and bring meaning and variety to your work. True, you will sacrifice some of the technical advantages of modern specialization, but be freer of its strains, closer to your family, closer to Nature -- the shade of trees, the songs of birds, the sight of wild flowers, the softness of green grass, the clean air, the "great silence," "the hills," the "still waters."

Of course many people could not possibly understand or do this; they would not have the wit, the strength, or the imagination, perhaps not even the slightest feeling of need for a broader, more varied outlook or for a relief from modern tensions. And I do not propose or envision a full-scale movement "back to the land," a dream that many have long entertained; but some modified move of that nature I certainly do, carried in individual cases as far as each person sees fit to go. And I know that many agree with this, and some are taking action. Many did so, long ago. And

to the extent that they succeed they may develop a trend, even giving "status" and hope to the very idea of recovering and enjoying in this lifetime some desirable measure of that personal independence and peace we think of as an American ideal.

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Of course in the actual attempt to find and acquire land enough for that feeling of space for peaceful, varied living, as envisioned here, you will run smack into the old "land question" again, and perhaps learn more in a day than you have from this work of mine!

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It should seem practically axiomatic that the quality and the future hopes of any society are measured, in part, by the proportion of its members who are so grounded in morality that they will regularly do the right and honest thing, just because it is right, whether or not their acts are known by others with or without authority and whether or not any legal statutes cover the field of their actions. As Americans, we have so much to be thankful for and to preserve and improve that all of us should feel deeply inspired to take our places among such members and do our best, for the sake of the integrity of our consciences, our children's future, our self-preservation, our loyalty and sacred honor, perhaps remembering the words on an old New Hampshire grave stone:

Honor and shame from no condition rise,  
Do well your part, there all the honor lies.

The reform I have urged has been often resisted by those who would have granted its validity had short-sightedness not caused them to fear any change in the traditional patterns of the distribution of wealth and advantage, or had their well-meant human sympathies been more intelligently directed. In as much as the values of the land of their country is legally owned by about 10% of its people, why should anyone lavish all his sympathy on hundreds, to the disregard of the rights of thousands, and so reject consideration of a measure for distributing to all on equal terms the advantages heretofore enjoyed essentially by only the few? It is to be hoped that these and all others desiring a better society may gain the faith that under a more just dispensation they would live in a better, safer, happier state of society whose benefits they would share. Attaining and practicing this faith would indeed be a perfect example of following one of the greatest of precepts:

Seek ye first the kingdom of heaven,  
And all these things shall be added unto you.

Only do we ourselves, sitting alone with our inner secret consciences, know how diligently, how unselfishly, how by our own initiatives, willingly making sacrifices, we have done all we could for truth and justice.

But, if religion be brought to bear on this matter, were we actually alone, and is that such a secret place?

In the background of this entire philosophy stands God, seeing and knowing all things, past, present and future, and who has ordained the laws of our being, which, if we learn to live by them, prove his love, wisdom, and power. The collective perception of this by the race over the ages has been expressed in the irrefutable words of the Psalms:

"O Lord, thou hast searched me, and known me. Thou knowest my downsitting and mine uprising, thou understandest my thought afar off. Thou compassed my path and my lying down, and art acquainted with all my ways....Whither shall I go from thy spirit, or whither shall I flee from thy presence? If I ascend up into heaven, thou art there, if I make my bed in hell, behold, thou art there. If I take the wings of the morning, and dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea; even there shall thy hand lead me, and thy right hand shall hold me. If I say, surely the darkness shall cover me, even the night shall be light about me. Yea, the darkness hideth not from thee, but the night shineth as the day: the darkness and the light are both alike to thee....Thine eyes did see my substance, yet being unperfect; and in thy book all my members were written, which in continuance were fashioned, when as yet there was none of them....How precious also are thy thoughts unto me, O God! how great is the sum of them....Search me, O God, and know my heart; try me, and know my thoughts; and see if there be any wicked way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting."

Surely no one can gainsay these words of vision and faith!

I realize we get the results of our acts and attitudes more or less as we go along, in this life. But I find it intriguing -- and perhaps it would be salutary -- to contemplate that long prophesied Judgment Day, when we shall stand before our Creator and be asked to prove that we are "...fitted for service above." In our last days on Earth all that will have proven of value will be the love of our fellow men, any "victories" we may have "won for humanity," our simple acts of kindness. These alone could have given us "An holy boldness in the day of death." But now, our very approach to the Judgment Seat will have divested us -- as by the "refiner's fire" -- of all vain pride and confidence and of the shallow sophistries we might have used in earthly courts, for here will be the one judge who cannot be deceived or moved. As all from America, the land that had been unusually blessed by the Creator, are asked to stand forth, within sight and hearing of those from all nations, races, creeds, and stations, our minds, perhaps for the first time, will stand at respectful attention, drained of all but a long-overdue humility, before our heavenly Father. If this moment of long-conjectured but inevitable confrontation prove at first -- as we might have expected -- "awfully terrific", I am sure it will at once be succeeded by an

august calm, appropriate to God's love and transcendent, practical sense, as He, with perfect justice, mercy, and reason, will say,

"YOU KNOW THE SUBSTANCE OF THE COMMANDS -- TO LOVE THY NEIGHBOR AS THYSELF, TO DO GOOD TO THOSE THAT HATE YOU, TO OVERCOME EVIL WITH GOOD, TO DO JUSTLY, LOVE MERCY, AND WALK HUMBLY WITH ME. IF YOU ARE NOW PREPARED TO DO THOSE THINGS, THEN WE WILL REMEMBER NOT PAST YEARS, BUT YOU WILL JOIN ME IN THE PURSUIT OF THINGS ETERNAL, CASTING OFF THE HOLD OF LESSER THINGS AS DID MY SON WHEN HE SAID, "I HAVE OVERCOME THE WORLD".

No one can say that this is not the way it will be.

If we could look ahead to the time when we shall be looking back over life, and see God's commands as the precepts by which we should all along have been guided, as ultimately we shall be, then why not begin practicing them NOW?