

UP TOWARD THE LIGHT OF REASON

Much of progress, as now conceived, is in a direction exactly opposite to that of the ultimate objectives of human desires and endeavors.

In the field of the world's productive work, instead of bringing closer human association, progress replaces men with machines; instead of variety in the all-round development of mental and physical powers, progress brings narrow specialization and monotonous, stultifying routine, and the approach of the push-button job and the windowless factory; instead of freedom, individuality, and self-determination we get industrial or governmental regimentation.

In the field of human living, instead of a feeling of space, privacy, dominion over our environment, and contact with the realm of Nature, progress brings crowding and urbanization, and the habits of indoor confinement.

In our work and in society, we obey and conform, in fewer relationships able to call our souls our own.

So inverted has our philosophy become that education as now conceived helps most those who are already ahead, privilege makes the rich richer and the poor poorer, and we believe it more blessed to consume than to produce! Many more paradoxes could be cited.

Now, do not take these sweeping generalizations too seriously or literally! But try to sense the essence of their meaning, great or small as you see it, and consider:

Is our course or condition consistent with the dreams or ideals of America? Is it reasonable? Need it be so?

The pursuit of reason requires the open-minded and dispassionate study of facts and principles. The following chapters aim to help in such a study, in the fields of public and private actions and responsibilities.