

# The Law of Human Progress

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“Intellectual dishonesty is the easiest kind of dishonesty”



**T**HE MAIN DIFFERENCE between animals and men is that animals act instinctively according to the promptings of nature whereas men deliberate before they act. Animals cannot go wrong, unless nature is wrong, but if the evidence on which man must deliberate is unnatural, *i.e.*, interfered with by other men, he

cannot deliberate correctly; he will deliberate against the laws of nature. Animals of the same species do not interfere with each other and if they co-operate they do so freely and instinctively. Men have violated free co-operation even to the extent of physical slavery. By interfering mentally one set of men can control multitudes, as many examples in history have shown. Bismarck was not the first to discover how education control could suit his purpose nor Hitler the first to discover that control of mass communications was as necessary as armaments. Without genuine freedom of thought no freedom of action can endure, whatever the form of government.

Where there is immediate threat to life and property the dangers of suppressing evidence has long been recognised. In every reputable court of law elaborate precautions are taken to ensure that all relative evidence is available publicly to the jury and that no vested interest, even that of the Government can influence the verdict.

When engaged on his task the scientist never tries to lie to himself by pushing awkward facts aside, he welcomes criticism that exposes any inconsistency in his reasoning, and he never, in order to be in fashion, ignores past experience. So scientific discovery, ever true to the laws of nature, progressively advances and places tremendous forces at the command of men.

**Whether these forces are to be used for good or ill depends upon men's understanding of their own nature and the natural laws of society.**

At a recent conference a young scientist announced that he had resigned his post because much research was waste of time and some of it “positively harmful.” Engaged on psychological research involving the transfer of brain extracts from one rat to another he was appalled at the power this might place at the command of evil forces. The use in advertising and other propaganda of the “hidden persuaders” which paralyse the reasoning faculty is another product of psychological research. The question arises how the use of such powers and all other powers enabling some men to dominate the lives of others can be checked. Some general principle must be

recognised.

Unfortunately to-day the accredited leaders in economic, political, social and religious thought seem to recognise no natural laws of human life and circumstances enable them to ignore or dismiss the evidence that shows that such laws exist. They suppose that modern man is now so clever they can override any natural impediment to his will. Early man had to rely upon his own unimpeded powers for all his needs; it is now supposed that self-reliance is impossible and general prosperity depends upon ever-increasing restrictions upon one's natural efforts to help oneself. Feudal man considered land or natural resources so necessary to everyone that land tenure governed social institutions; it is now supposed that this is of such minor importance that social discussion can ignore it in spite of the fact that man's relationship to, and dependence upon land remains fundamentally the same. It was previously supposed that low taxation, freedom to produce and exchange and an honest currency were advantages; it is now supposed that these things are disadvantages.

**The only sphere in which politicians and experts are assumed to have no power is the cost of living; that it should progressively rise is regarded as a natural phenomenon.**

These propositions are never categorically asserted so as to provoke general discussion and challenge the common sense of the ordinary person. Instead public discussion is kept to secondary levels; to effects not causes, but always with the implication that these absurdities have been established beyond question. So men's minds are not convinced by reasoning but conditioned to accept them. By so doing they delegate power over themselves to their rulers and as no principle of check is generally recognised such power must be arbitrary. But as politicians cannot in fact work miracles, they cannot reverse natural law—witness the cost of living—this betrayal of the spirit of truth cannot overcome the consequences.

Intellectual dishonesty is the easiest kind of dishonesty. It requires no courage and it incurs no penalty, except to one's conscience. But such dishonesty in those who have the power to influence opinion reaches further than any other kind of dishonesty.

On the other hand the progress of science shows that all that is required to regenerate our society is that men and women should bring to social questions the same integrity of mind and the same respect for natural law which scientists bring to their investigations.