

Barquile



HENRY GEORGE SCHOOL of NEW JERSEY

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THE DEAN THINKS
"KNOWLEDGE AND WISDOM"

Several decades ago I looked younger than my years, which was a handicap in my profession since prospective clients involuntarily down-graded my maturity and experience. I wished ardently for an "older" appearance.

Into my life came a man considerably older who soon became my friend, mentor and guide. Of all men I have known, I admired my mentor the most, for he had knowledge, experience, logical ability, acumen -- in fact, most of the attributes to which I aspired.

I remember vividly a discussion we had one day. My friend was praising the vigor I displayed in our efforts to make the Henry George School of New Jersey a success. He sadly remarked, "Oh, if only I had your youth and energy, what a great team we would make."

My reply was the crystallization of my thoughts, my admiration and reverence for my friend. I said, "And I envy you. Your age is the culmination of years of acquiring knowledge, and with thinkers such as you, knowledge leads to wisdom and wisdom is the pathway to a better civilization and a better race." I was rather pleased with my statement. It seemed to be a profound observation and well phrased.

My friend looked at me quizzically for a moment and then asked, "Do you really believe that knowledge leads to wisdom?" My affirmation caused him to say, "This has been said before, and I find it is true! The more we learn -- the more we realize how little we know."

This seemed like the modesty of my friend, so I paid little heed to it. Now, decades later, when gray flecks my hair, after reading and absorbing "Knowledge" from hundreds of books and experiences I begin to understand.

We are prone to believe that a key to the understanding of the world is knowledge, both of the past and the future, that knowledge leads to wisdom.

Man is said to be a "time binding" animal. He alone, of all creatures on this earth, has the ability to reap the harvest of all the experiences of his forebears, and learn by their mistakes and triumphs to shape his own life and experiences. His ability to do this is

the result of his ability to symbolize reality and to respond to "thinking" which is to say, to symbolize situations in the stark, real world and to "plan" his response. The greatest symbol that man has learned to use is language; words that conjure up in his mentality the things and the situations which in Nature are his environment.

Man, above all other creatures, has the ability not only of adapting to his environment, but of changing the environment to suit his purposes. He builds and heats habitations; he cultivates and harvests the food he consumes. All of these he is able to do because of "knowledge" acquired over eons of time during which man was evolving to his present state.

Learning is endless. It may reduce the prejudices of ignorance. It may cure our sicknesses and help to erect cities and jet airplanes. But what has learning, "knowledge" evolved in the ethical concepts of the relation of man to man, and man-to the universe? Because society improves physically, we assume the improvement of the individual and view with horror, amazement and shame the destruction man has wrought in recurring wars, wars not against the scourges of his environment, but in destruction of human life by man's own contrivance and his own weapons.

Man kind, as a species and genus, and man as an individual do not come into being full-blown, as a finished product. They are the results of endless forgotten influences and experiences. Psychiatry recognizes that the experiences, the frustrations, the satisfactions that occur in the first year of a baby's life largely help to determine what personality will later develop.

Man's quest for knowledge, for learning, is in final essence, his quest for certainty, and the quest for certainty is the eternal quest for meaning. But the meaning man seeks in his external world is a futile search, since meaning is buried within himself.

When, with eyes fixed on our television screens, we see the spectacle of chosen representatives from every corner of the world assembled in the United Nations Assembly, and see and hear the threats, explicit and implied, hurled at the nations of men, most of them seeking the best for their people, then surely we can wonder how far and how fast the knowledge of history, of science and of philosophy has brought us.

SENSE & NONSENSE

As a child grows into an adult and the adult is largely the product of all the experiences from infancy onward, and since generic man is the end product of the conglomerate of all human beings, is it possible that man's learning, his accumulated knowledge will suffice to prevent him from using it to destroy civilization and even human life from this planet?

The answer lies, not in oratory at a meeting of nations, not in compacts signed and later violated, not in striving, each to surpass in material things all others, not in power and the domination of others, not in forcing humans to be "good", but in the realization by mankind that the eternal questions: "Why am I here? What is life? Why was I born?" can have no materialistic answers but that if evolution from the crawling toads and aborigines of life to mankind has any meaning, then that meaning has not fully been realized. There must be in the eons of time yet to come an evolution to a still higher form of life. Man today must be the ancestor of such future beings.

Our knowledge of the physical universe has helped us to survive and evolve. If only knowledge brought wisdom and we could plainly see the steps necessary to fulfill the destiny of man, then we might use that wisdom and knowledge. But true wisdom must be a development which mankind, as a whole, still must learn to acquire.

There are no charts, no methodology, no course of instruction that may make the acquisition of wisdom easier. Nor does education and acquired knowledge lead us, since sometimes an unlearned man may possess wisdom. Wisdom will come when the mind of man, having evolved from the rigors of fighting and building a physical environment becomes contemplative and is concerned with the relationship of man to his fellow man and to the creation and purpose of a world of sentient beings. Perhaps in the evolution of the future men, our conquest of the material universe is a necessary step which will lead to others.

But we who still lack wisdom may use our powers of mind to envision a better human race and to try to fashion the behavior and the necessary human conduct to bring the vision to reality. Only by keeping before ourselves a goal, an unaccomplished reality of a race of men dedicated to each others' welfare and freedom can any progress be made.

Most of us are not philosophers. But we do sometimes examine our own lives. None of us can claim that mistakes were not made for which we feel remorse. If such introspection leads us to better behavior, then the mistakes were not tragic in consequences. We learned by error and evolved better therefor. Perhaps if we learned each day to examine our daily behavior, we could each profit by the contemplation and remedy our mistakes on a daily basis. If, collectively, all men would do likewise, the age of wisdom might soon arrive.

Alexander W. Goldfinger,

The new nation of Ghana in Africa is now three years old. How has it fared since the British colonial yoke was removed? Well, in Accra, the capital, there is a fountain dedicated by Kwame Nkrumah at "Kwame Nkrumah Circle", into which leads Kwame Nkrumah Avenue, with Kwame Nkrumah Street only a short distance away.

Kwame Nkrumah looks down and at you from everywhere--from billboards, from stamps, with radios and newspapers slavishly mouth-ing his praises. Why all this adulation? Because Nkrumah, who is the President of the Republic of Ghana, has made this former British colony on the Gold Coast his personal property.

It is obvious that eliminating colonialism is not solving the problems of the people of these countries. If anything, their condition is worse. Before they were exploited by foreign people, many of whom were in their own countries for long periods of time and thus could not exploit them efficiently. Now, they are being exploited by their own people. They are finding out as the Irish did, that the Irish landlords were worse than the absentee British landlords they deposed.

Americans sometimes forget that when our country won its freedom, it had as leaders such men as Thomas Jefferson, Thomas Paine and Patrick Henry, lovers and students of freedom, who helped to educate the people. But these African countries have few, if any, people who understand freedom, or, for that matter, have had any education at all. To assume that these African countries will emulate us is absurd. Our founding fathers were steeped in the knowledge and understanding of the philosophy of John Locke, of the Physiocrats, of Adam Smith, and they put their ideas into practical life. Those African leaders know none of this. What little they do know is socialism, which is what they are giving their people and with terrible results. Conditions in the Congo are tragic reminders of the fallacy of complex governments in the hands of illiterate, socialistic oriented men. The people in Ghana will find that self-determination under socialism is worse than colonialism.

Did you know that poor public officials are elected by good citizens who don't go to the polls?

International Union of Electrical Workers! President James B. Carey is having difficulty keeping his strike against General Electric going. The Schenectady local voted by a large margin against going on strike but under his pressure did so. Finally, they went back to work despite Mr. Carey. Apparently, the workers are beginning to realize that he is not serving their interests, yet despite the fact that they voted democratically not to strike, he considers it a betrayal. Is Mr. Carey supposed to serve the workers' interests or are the workers to serve his interests?

Speaking of unemployment, the human brain has more than 10 billion cells.

After listening to the TV debates between the contenders for the presidency the real question in the minds of the voters is which one is Tweedledum and which Tweedledee?

Listener to Politician: "That was a great talk. I liked particularly the straightforward way you dodged the issues"

The Arab oil states are meeting in Beirut, Lebanon to solve the problem of overcapacity of oil. How? The usual way. Mohamed Salman, secretary-general of the meeting said, "Oil producing countries should regulate production to protect their interests. It's as simple as that." Salman will find out that this simple solution is one of the most complex and difficult. Let him look to Brazil and her attempts to regulate the production of coffee, which resulted in other countries entering into the coffee producing game to make mincemeat of Brazil's scheme to regulate things to her own satisfaction. Nobody believes in the law of supply and demand solving these problems with the least harm. They must always learn it the hard way. The tin cartel, the rubber cartel, the coffee cartel all result in failure. We will now be reading about the oil cartel and how it failed.

There's never enough time to do the job right, but there's always enough time to do it over.

LETTER TO THE EDITOR

To a Canadian, it is pleasant to find a U.S. citizen so well informed about even one of the lesser Canadian provinces, as Mr. Johansen shows himself to be in his article "State Socialism" in October GARGOYLE. His criticism of the present Saskatchewan government is well taken.

However, for a balanced picture two items to the credit of this government should be noted. One is, it has abolished a long-standing tax on restaurant and hotel meals, including even 15¢ snacks and meals in boarding houses and on trains passing through the province. If not of great importance, this move has done away with a constant annoyance.

Of much greater importance is this: For several decades prior to 1951, the three westernmost provinces allowed municipalities complete freedom to tax buildings on any part of the assessment, or to exempt them altogether. Most of the municipalities took advantage of their freedom; these provinces came to be the most prosperous in the Dominion, with the highest per capita production. Unhappily, control was in the hands of councils (not, as in Australia, in the hands of the people) and from 1922 on the tendency was to increase taxes on buildings. Still, in 1950 about 75% of municipal taxes were levied on land in Alberta, and about 85% in Saskatchewan. In 1951-2 the Alberta government deprived the municipalities of control over their taxes. The British Columbia government of the last few years has left them consider-

able freedom, but has exerted great pressure to make them tax buildings on 75% of assessment. In these provinces now over 50% of the municipal taxes are on buildings, or are raised in more objectionable ways.

The Saskatchewan government, however, if it has made no improvement in this respect has spoiled nothing. More than 80% of local taxes are still on the land. The result is, a complete absence of slums, brisk enterprise, the largest proportion of income tax payers in Canada, the lowest death rate, such generally good health conditions that medical expenses are still low in spite of official waste. This government's blunders are not to be excused, but they are less damaging than the Alberta government's tax measures, which have pretty well nullified the effect of their commendable handling of their oil resources.

Ernest J. Farmer, Toronto, Ontario

Note: Thank you Mr. Farmer we are grateful to you for this information which we think our readers will also appreciate.

PUBLIC DEBTS AND INDIRECT TAXATION

Now that the Fall and Winter months are upon us, as you sit at home in the evening, rather than watch TV you might browse through one of Henry George's works.

"Social Problems" contains 22 essays which are real treasures. They are short, simple and to the point, and you can easily read one or two in an evening and reflect on how they apply to conditions today. Invariably you will find that they are up to the minute as when they were first written. Why? Because he dealt with fundamental problems and suggested fundamental solutions.

The 16th essay, "Public Debt and Indirect Taxation" is especially apropos today when the National Debt is almost \$300 billion -- a sum so fantastically large that it is beyond the comprehension of anyone.

Have you ever wondered why governments embarked on debt to pay expenses? George points out that it sprang from the monopolization of land. Under the feudal system public expenses were defrayed from the rent of land, but the great landholders wanted to be rid of this burden of paying rent, which was the condition on which they held the land. They did this by encouraging the government to borrow and to adopt methods of taxing the people indirectly. With the government able to get its money in that way, the feudal lords were able to reduce or eliminate their rental payments to the sovereign.

Debt today is so common that nobody even thinks of denouncing the governments for indulging in it. On the contrary whenever a program is advanced, along with it goes the suggestion that the government finance it through issuing more bonds. The assumption is that the cost of the program can be passed along to future generations. George points out how preposterous this is, and adds that "if it were possible for the present to borrow of the future, for those now living to

draw upon wealth to be created by those who are yet to come, there could be no more dangerous power, none more certain to be abused; and none that would involve in its exercise a more flagrant contempt for the natural and inalienable rights of man."

But, of course, you can't live off food produced next year, and he says that "public debts are not a device for borrowing from the future...they are merely a device for obtaining control of wealth in the present by promising that a certain distribution of wealth in the future shall be made--a device by which the owners of existing wealth are induced to give it up under promise, not merely that other people shall be taxed to pay them, but that other people's children shall be taxed for the benefit of their children or the children of their assigns."

He pointed out that debts permit great and wasteful expenditures by silencing those who would otherwise resist if they realized the expenditures were actually coming out of current income.

What would he say today if he saw our present debt and the profligacy with which we throw our wealth away? No doubt, he would say as he did say that "a great public debt creates a great moneyed interest that wants 'strong government' and fears change, and thus form a powerful element on which corrupt and tyrannous government can always rely as against the people."

It may appear unduly pessimistic to talk of tyrannous government in the United States, but you have only to reflect that we now have a peace-time draft, controls over agriculture, controls over visiting other countries, and other restrictions to note the steady loss of freedom which has grown apace as the debt increased. As the debt grows, restrictions will increase and we will, indeed, have tyranny in government. The only question is how long will it take?

Oscar B. Johannsen

SALT OF THE EARTH
No obligation is paid more promptly or willingly than what a woman believes she owes to herself.

A genius is a man who can talk his boss into giving him a raise and his wife into letting him keep it.

A great moment occurs in your life when you find out you can collect on two hospitalization plans.

A woman's face is her fortune and her husband usually has the cosmetic bills to prove it.

You can tell a person's real age by the pain he feels when he gets a new idea.

Flattering introductions are like smoking. They won't hurt you if you don't inhale.

You can't carve your way to success with cutting remarks.

Have you heard of the lady after-dinner speaker? Every time she speaks to a man, she's after dinner.

Many a man goes into politics with a fine future and comes out with a terrible past.

Man doesn't realize the dog is his best friend until he has bet on a horse.

Success is more or less relative -- the more the success, the more relatives.

They call it legal tender,
That green and lovely stuff.
It's tender when you have it,
But when you don't -- it's tough.

Did you ever realize how foolish it is to worry about yesterday or tomorrow, and how silly to worry about anything as temporary as today.

W E D N E S D A Y E V E N I N G D E C E M B E R F O U R T H E E N T H
S A V E T H A T N I G H T - N O C H R I S T M A S
S H O P P I N G ! There will be a S U R P R I S E F O R Y O U
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