

Benjamin Franklin and the Lodge of the Nine Muses  
Manly Palmer Hall  
April 27, 1952

Just to keep our minds more or less balanced during Election year, we have to realize, if we look back, each time this critical period approaches there is a deluge of propaganda of one kind or another. With a systematic program of disorientation as part of the political phenomena as we know it, it is the duty of each individual who wishes to be a solid and sound citizen to keep his mind clear during these critical months. After all, the purpose of a great deal of conflicting propaganda is confusion. Those whom the Gods would destroy they first make mad, and to a certain degree, the individual who has lost his own center of thinking is most likely to be swept away in some propaganda program. This propaganda may not all of it be actually insidious; in a sense it is almost completely an internal affair. But in these days of international pressures, internal unity is greatly to be desired, yet through our political system, internal division prior to election is almost inevitable. Therefore, it is a very wise person indeed who continues to think straight regardless of the confusion that is created around him. Very few of us are in a position to estimate correctly the causes of these confused reports that go by grapevine means throughout our entire social structure.

A few days ago, a book came to my desk. I am not going to name it or the author, but it was and is one of these books of confusion. The individual who reads it will come to the end not inspired to make a contribution to a need, but with a complete sense of panic. By the time the book is finished, there are no institutions, individuals, patterns, laws, structures in our civilization that are not entirely corrupt. The individual is left in a position where any possible contribution he could make is worthless and useless by the very nature of the book itself.

I read it rather thoughtfully, it contained a number of old saws that have been in circulation for the last seventy-five years in this country, but it was definitely a disintegrating document. It gave nothing that helped, and yet, coming quietly through this threaded structure, I noted continually one or two points that seemed to be of interest, and before it was entirely finished, the summary was that in this vast structure of complete chaos, there was one untouched figure, one noble monument of integrity, and he should be elected. In other words, it was just a plain propaganda book, but done with documentation and cross-documentation until the average person would be utterly bewildered if he did not pause to study the documentation and find the authorities were no more infallible than the man who quoted them. The average person will not think these things through and comes to large negatives, and these are the impressions it is intended the public should take.

A little investigation indicated that the author of the work was a character of no particular integrity, rather unpleasant, and certainly not the kind of man who should have prepared a serious and careful political study. The whole matter was something that, unless the reader were informed and well poised, could do a lot of damage and no good, and while it was crying Americanism to the housetops, actually, it was the kind of writing

that would certainly give peace and assistance to the enemy, whoever it might be, simply by contributing to a disintegration of public morale and confidence.

This is the danger of election periods where the works of the individual and his own character and ability are sacrificed to his political programs and parties. Therefore, in these times (and they come around periodically) and with the opportunities and advantages of political prestige at a very high premium, they are maintained even in the intervals between political campaigns and keep us in a more or less constant state of uproar. Actually, all these pressures are part of a problem of personality integration; the individual must learn to be strong in the presence of the opportunity to be weak, and it is only his own strength and integrity that is an important asset to the world in which he lives.

The moment he falls into any form of defeatist mechanism, he is contributing to a collective defeat. All along through these processes, we observe too much defeatism, too much negative thinking. When a person comes with a problem and we study that individual, and he tells us he cannot do this, and that is wrong, and these people are against him, and that everything is conspiring to make life difficult for him, the inevitable answer is that he is suffering from a persecution complex. He is suffering not from what is done to him, but from his own fears. I know many individuals who have taken non-existing conditions and ruined their lives with them, simply by the process of being forever afraid.

When it comes to large political thinking, the problem is the same. A great number of individuals develop a phase of the collective persecution complex and live to perpetuate bad news. They live to fight valiantly against shadows. If we find individuals doing it, we know they are in need of mental help, but when great collectives do it, we call it patriotism and nationalism, yet actually, it is unhealthful.

There is nothing more unhealthful in human thinking than either individually or collectively sitting around describing, discussing and arguing the terrible fatalities that are inevitable. All these types of thinking can do are strengthen our own negative attitudes toward life and make essentially certain we will waste all energies we have in talking and have practically nothing left to accomplish any useful purpose. If we have any faith whatever in the universe in which we live, we will remember the thought of Karl Jung that persons past middle life seldom, if ever, can integrate their personalities unless they have a strong faith.

Faith gives us strength and fear bestows weakness; or, we might say, fear exhausts the strength resources of the personality. No matter what we fear, whether it is a hole in the dark, a personal devil, or communism, the more we think about it and fear it, the weaker we become. We merely give comfort to the opposing thought by making it so important in our lives that it paralyzes all useful activity and makes us feel we are truly cooperating with something if we sit around and talk about the magnitude of the enemy. This type of thinking can never produce any good.

The one thing all monopolistic thinking is afraid of is the individual who can do his own thinking. Therefore, in the past, wherever he appeared, he was promptly burned at the stake, and in modern times, every effort is made by the way in which we live to reduce the probability of the individual. The individual always has and always will remain the thorn in the flesh as far as ulterior motives are concerned. Everyone is afraid of him. If he can be convinced he himself is afraid, then he is removed as a danger to any collective action of a negative type, so we should not and must not waste our resources in imagining how great our adversaries may be. We are much better off if we use our resources to strengthen our own realization of the kind of values we believe in and the only way in which we can strengthen these values is to strengthen them in ourselves.

The longer we work with people, the more we realize we cannot depend upon our ability to convert anybody to anything. The only thing we can do with certainty is make ourselves into a positive force for good, and if enough individuals would do that, instead of working on each other, the collective result would be integrity; whereas, otherwise, it is only an approach from exteriors and externals in which we attempt to force our opinions upon those who may not be willing to accept them.

Democracy as we know it today is not merely a fortuitous institution that originated as a result of the great era of revolutions in Europe; the principle of Democracy is as old as human thinking, and the whole motion of the world for the last ten thousand years has been toward it.

In the process of this motion, there have been a number of interferences. We went through a long historical record of entrenched minorities or privileged groups opposing the will of the people. The reason this will was opposed was because it was profitable to oppose it, not in terms of public good, but in the terms of private advantage. As long as this world continues, there will be conflict between private advantage and public good. We do not realize it, but that conflict is based in ourselves. Each individual is to a degree an offender, and if his own personal conduct is magnified to become world conduct, conditions would not be much better than they are now; in fact, in many cases, they would be worse. Yet, because our own small selfishness seems petty in comparison to larger projects, and because our spheres of influence are small, we cannot see our own attitudes are making any important contributions to the world problem, yet actually the conflict between private advantage and public good exists in us and is marked in practically every attitude and action that manifests itself in our dispositions.

Thus, in history, as in psychology, we have the record of this conflict and yet we can all conceive, if we have the wit to look, that down through time the public good has been gradually strengthened. There have been periods in which it seemingly was set back, but each of these setbacks resulted in a more rapid advancement afterward. The whole motion of the world is a gradual motion away from tyranny and toward benevolent, cooperative human living. Even as we look back upon what we call "The good old times", we will find there has been progress in the memory of the living; we know there have been complications; we know there are worries today the others never knew; that we have critical times on our own doorsteps that the ages never

experienced. At the same time, there has never been a generation as well equipped to handle the problem as we are.

Five thousand years ago, one person in every hundred thousand persons could read or write. A thousand years ago, one person in approximately a hundred could read or write. Today, probably one person out of every five or ten on the entire planet can read or write to some degree. The progress has been consistent and continuous. A hundred years ago, there were no public institutions suitable for the needs of the human being. Two hundred years ago, hospitals such as we know today did not exist. In looking over the record of human progress, we find the humanity of man inevitably triumphing, but not at any time to its full estate; never did we accomplish all things, but we have built, and even the intervention of great military dictators, tyrants and despots of one kind or another was unable to block essential progress. In a nation for a time progress was blocked, but the tremendous wave of the human inevitable swept away the tyranny and brought these despots to their final ruin and always will.

Each generation is convinced its own crisis is the most difficult that has ever been experienced in history. In the future when our way of life is read only in text-books, other peoples will be worrying about the crises that confront them, but the whole story is one of an inevitable motion, and why is that motion, primarily?

Because that motion is man himself; because within the human being, perpetuated from generation to generation by the very processes of perpetuation, there are convictions that we all contain, and to a degree, obey. These convictions are in substance the freedom of ourselves, the release of our own purposes and convictions, and an irresistible determination to be that which we will to be.

In this tremendous pressure, policy from within is the secret of a growth that is irresistible because it is part of the very creature that is growing. This growth may be, at times, frustrated, but the more frustrated it becomes, the more determined it becomes; and actually, this growth is most rapid in periods of greatest adversity, and least rapid in those brief interludes of prosperity and security which apparently do come at times to a troubled human kind. In, therefore, estimating the forces at work in human society, we must not fail to recognize the importance of the constructive agencies which have something destructive agencies can never have, and that is the support of Universal Law itself.

That which ultimately wins is that which works with Law and not against it. The Law for man is the growth of man and the unfoldment of his own individual potential. Anything that is opposed to that must ultimately perish, even though at any particular time it may seem to be victorious.

In the inevitables of human life, we need have small concern, for they will fulfill, and it is far better for us to daily engage in cooperation with these inevitables, even on a small scale, than it is for us to waste our time and energy in morbid reflections about the strength of adversaries. As President Woodrow Wilson said at the time he was having his

troubles with the League of Nations, "It is better to fail in a cause that must ultimately win, than to win in a cause that ultimately must fail." The individual who stands strong with the progress of his world is working with a cause that will win, regardless of the time element and delays humanly created by those desiring special advantages and privileges.

During the great period that followed the restoration of learning, the period that was heralded into existence by the Reformation and the Renaissance, men recaptured mental liberty, a tremendous power which had been lost to them, especially in Europe during the Dark Ages. We have come so completely to assume that Europe was the world that the benightedness of Medieval Europe has come to be regarded as a world condition; actually, it was not.

Europe is a comparatively small part of the civilized Earth, and there has never been a time in which the whole Earth has been benighted together. Therefore, culture and progress during the Dark Ages passed into the keeping of other areas remote from those involved in the collapse of the Roman Empire. It was in Arabia, in the Western Hemisphere, and in Asia, also in areas of North Africa that culture kept faith with man, because in those regions man kept faith with culture.

After a time, the human mind became so completely surfeited with its own mass hysteria and negative thinking that a tremendous upheaval took place in the life of Europe. The human being emerged again; he refused to remain enslaved by his own fears, and having become desperate by the very processes of the introversional and persecutorial attitudes he held, he cast off this tremendous burden of negation and made a series of personal resolutions which were to change the course of history. If these resolutions can be summarized in any one statement it probably would be that "God helps those who help themselves."

Prior to the Reformation, the majority of individuals had left the control of the universe completely in the hands of Deity; whatever the Gods decreed, that would occur; whatever the will of Heaven might be, that would appear upon the Earth. But it was gradually revealed through the Dark Ages and the great tyranny of Medievalism that the human being was the agent of the Divine Plan, and that unless the human being acted himself, the Gods were powerless.

What might be termed the Divine Intercession was the impulse or inspiration within the individual, and this power manifested only to the degree that persons with courage made it manifest. The Divine Intercession was not that the Gods would do man's work, but rather they would bless the work of man if that work were true. And those that kept Faith found that Faith kept them and sustained them and protected them during long and difficult periods, and as this light increased within them, they became accustomed even to personal suffering in the cause of Faith; that whatever they did that was true was worth what it cost and was a great and essential contribution to the well-being of the whole human family. In the period that followed the Reformation, the individual emerged as the agent of the Creative Power, he became a personal

representative of those Invisible Forces behind progress and growth which seemed to be Faith or Providence or the Will of Heaven.

At the beginning of his new orientation, the individual began to realize that unless he were informed, he could not act intelligently. The process of releasing human knowledge from the bondage of scholastic limitation, the freeing of the mind, in order that it might have the right to think, and also that it might build such methods of instruction as would qualify it to think, all of these motions marked the progress of 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> Century Europe. The great step in this tremendous program was the colonization of the Western Hemisphere. It was colonized by two entirely different groups with two highly different motives. One was a group teaching despotic control, and the other was the group teaching religious liberty.

The Spanish conquest of the Western Hemisphere was intended for one purpose only, and that was the pillaging of the resources of the Western Hemisphere. The conquest was accomplished with a tremendous amount of cruelty and despotism. The purpose was to enslave, to reduce the life standards of the conquered people and to finally bring the Western Hemisphere into the coffers of European despots as a means of finance. This type of control to enrich themselves and impoverish the areas which they approached continued to hold control of the Latin American countries long after North America declared itself free from this type of thinking.

The second migration was definitely one seeking a new world in which to build and not a world in which to pillage. We cannot say that every individual involved in this enterprise was honorable, but the general tone of the development and colonization of North America was a tone of self-expression, of release from within, and of the seeking out of a new world in which to build convictions, far from the political pressures of Europe. This program of colonization extended of course into every phase of the psychology of the times. It produced the great cycle of the story of Robinson Crusoe, the castaway building an empire for himself and becoming lord of all he surveyed. It was man going forth to conquer the universe by understanding the universe; by adjusting himself to natural law instead of bowing humbly and ignorantly to a Divine Law which he could not even interpret.

Naturally, after the tremendous ecclesiastical pressures that afflicted Europe, there was a reversal in mechanism and we had the Age of Reason, in which religion as a value in human life was definitely depreciating, and we began to assume that our clergymen were responsible for our mental bondage. Actually, our theologians were selected from our own groups; they belonged only to those same classes which they afflicted, so the common affliction was not a class but a condition, that condition being inadequate knowledge.

While ignorance remains, tyranny is inevitable, and every individual is ignorant until he is able to become a constructive factor in his own administration, and a cooperating agent with others in his community. So the motion of civilization was not only Westward but outward; it was a release of tremendous cultural powers of

advantages. It was furthermore a capturing of a dream, for we know from very early times, one concept has dominated that has always been associated with progress, and that concept was the improvement of the human being; release through him of those powers which were latent within him, powers that could not only make him self sufficient but conscious of his Divine destiny. The release of this knowledge had to be slow, because the human being has to build within himself the structure to sustain that release. He could never be better or wiser than he was able to demonstrate in action; he could never be more enlightened than he was unselfish, and conflict between selfishness and enlightenment must continue for a long time.

Day by day, there has been progress; little by little the very adversary has been forced to create institutions that will be his own ultimate overthrow. By the time of the beginning of that period which we know as the Revolutionary period in the United States, a number of very clear and well-defined policies had been established, which have been variously explained. Some (those who do not wish man to be free) have made these policies symbols of evil; but those who have wanted man to be free have seen them as symbols of good, even though that good might be qualified. In some instances, progress was not achieved in the most constructive manner possible. The degrees of resistance created fanaticism and a great deal of brutality in the administration of human affairs, but ultimately, progress itself took over and brought cosmos out of the chaos of revolution, and it must and will continue to do so until the problem is ultimately solved.

The development of the American way of life is not an invention by our forefathers, but a perpetuation of a cherished dream that long existed, a dream that had already found integration and organization in a few areas. Among the administrations and governments of Europe that led the way toward the American way of life was undoubtedly the government of Switzerland. For centuries before liberty as we know it was conceived of as a political possibility in Europe in general, it was functioning on the high peaks of the Swiss area. Here people had learned to cooperate, and protected from the general interference of their neighbors by their high location (which no one wished to assail) they were given a kind of liberty which they were able to capitalize upon.

Switzerland was a converging area in which several different nationalities lived together. Here were persons of several racial groups, yet actually they were Swiss and here they united and formed a common ground, and here they maintained and protected their liberty by standing firmly together regardless of their own racial or national backgrounds. This tremendous integration was a powerful example and proved definitely that a small country can become a tremendous force of growth, if that country is true to its own principles.

In the same way, the individual, who is the smallest social unit, can become a tremendous force of growth, if he will stay with his principles and live them. There is nothing less effective than words, and nothing more effective than action, and as a result of a fine example, Switzerland was visited by a number of leaders in different departments of human progress. These leaders studied the situation there and came back convinced if one country could do it, another could, and ultimately that a policy which

had brought security to these people could be applied to larger collective units, perhaps ultimately to the whole world. It may have been this thinking which finally caused Switzerland to become the seat of the League of Nations, because it represented already a League several hundred years old of nations and people who had learned to work together.

At the time of our Revolutionary War, the colonies were confronted with a serious situation; how serious we cannot recognize today, because most histories do not have an adequate presentation of the fact. The so called original Thirteen Colonies did not represent a political unity; they represented an extensive diversity of ideas. They also represented at least two important classes that were to emerge later as the Whigs and Tories. These groups had distinctly different concepts of values.

One group was for the establishment of a true democratic state, and the other was equally dedicated to the establishment of a completely autocratic state. In order to create a nation, these different extremes had to be compensated, compromised and reconciled. And the nation as it emerged could not be a complete statement of either policy, and as time went on, this division of policy with its various modifications, reorganizations and reintegrations, finally came into what we call the two-party system.

This system represents a primary and unreconciled diversity that was present before George Washington was elected President. It represents two basic convictions about living: one conviction being that the individual is the consideration that must come first, that the state is created to protect the individual. The second conviction is that the individual was created to protect the state. By extension, we have the problem of democracy and oligarchy. The state may or may not represent merely a political unit; it may represent a unit of aristocracy, or an economic or industrial unit, but the two concepts are basic.

The question is: "Is the industry created to support the man, or is the man created to support the industry?" These decisions are still without clarification in our way of life, but the natural tendency under pressure is for the individual to be submerged in his own activity, this being because his own internal integrity is not strong enough to dominate environment. It is easier to be submerged than it is to emerge, even as it is easier to drown than it is to swim. The only reason why we do not drown is because of the tremendous intensity within ourselves which determines to save itself even when we give up. And the reason we are not finally immersed in our own activities is because of the inalienable individuality which is within us and which ultimately rebels against practically all forms of regimentation.

At any given time, there are two philosophies of life. One is that the individual is important, and the other is that the things which he does are important. If we are materialistic, which is the outcome of one viewpoint, then the things we do are the only excuse for ourselves. If, however, we are idealistic in our concept, the things we are, are the only excuses for the things we do. It is again a reversal of policy, and the individual has to decide with his own conscience which, at the present moment, is his conviction. If



he is given the fact simply and without distortion, he will nearly always decide to be himself. If he is not given this opportunity, in most cases, in a clear and simple manner, values become so involved that he writes away his own constitution while attempting to preserve it, and in this way, many serious difficulties arise in society.

Schooling as we know it is largely the result of the activities of a man by the name of Komensky, whom we know as Comenius, the father of the public school system. This man was very strongly influenced in the creation of the public school system by the reading of the “Novum Organum” and “The New Atlantis” of Lord Bacon, in which the concept of an ideal system of education was unfolded.

Comenius was by nature an educator essentially, whereas, Lord Bacon was essentially a philosopher and scientist. As a result, Comenius took the idea and began to interpret it on the plane of educational institution. Out of his dream and the foundations he laid, Northern Europe received the beginning of a public school concept of education which included a very important concept, namely, that it was the responsibility of government to educate its people. It is hard to realize it is only about three hundred and fifty years since that concept came into existence. Up to that time, it was the privilege of government to exploit the people, and it did this most conveniently by keeping them ignorant. The idea that power, authority, government, leadership, had responsibility is comparatively recent in our experience; that is, the restoration of it is recent, there were older periods in which it flourished, but in the development of European and American civilization, this concept is only that old.

In the beginning to think in these terms a foundation was laid which, however, rapidly got into difficulties. After all, oligarchy as government is no longer able to oppose the progress of education per se, finds it most easy and convenient to adapt education to the philosophy of autocracy. Education, therefore, became the process of training the slave, not releasing him.

In time, the oligarchal powers found that the educated slave, in this case the skilled man, would be more profitable to them. Therefore, education was largely limited to increasing the individual's ability to produce without increasing his ability to think. That was the rub. He should never find in education the means of releasing himself into a plane of individuality. He should learn to type, to do double and single-entry bookkeeping, he should learn to hammer and put plumbing fixtures together; he should go a little higher, become a legal hammerer and a medical plumber. He should do all these things, but he should never be brought into a concept which told him that as an individual he had the right to be a creative idealist. That would be detrimental to the concept that the individual exists only to protect or advance his overlord.

Education, therefore, quickly adapted what might be termed a practical program entirely unfolded on an economic level which resulted in the immediate development of industrialism, and the gradual expansion of great combines and things of that nature. The individual was trained to fit in as a wheel in this elaborate machinery, and the result was the thing which satisfied him, namely, elevation on the physical level of living. He found

he could have more conveniences, could make more money, by the development of his abilities on an industrial level. Therefore, with all his problems, he gradually increased his pay check, until today it is the highest he has ever known, but because of the way in which it was done, it is more heavily underwritten with debt than ever before, and also, the individual with the money has not yet learned how to spend it. The entire ethical overtone was ignored. It was a mere adaptation of education by dragging it down to the previous level, but interpreting it now as the creation of efficiency, by which the servant was better informed but was never able to actually free himself.

This type of thinking gradually took hold on the plane of education and very largely dominates it at the present time. This was not enough. It did not have within it the solution of its own difficulties. As a result of this interpretation and it was not the basic idea, but the immediate ensoulment of that idea by a powerful pressure group. The great scientists and philosophers of the 17<sup>th</sup> Century have been called “Fathers of materialism”; they are not. The two men whose names are most closely associated with this, Descartes and Bacon, were both of them highly devout individuals. They had no intention of developing a materialism. What they wished to do was create a larger individual intelligence with which to release ethical overtones. But the ethical part of the program was carefully ignored by those who came after them and finally written out of existence as not contributing to the status quo on a political level.

In this phase of the matter, also we will find the emergence of the French Encyclopedist and a tremendous group of intellectuals associated with the rise of mental emancipation in France. Why it should be in France rather than in some of the more so called stable countries was because of the very fact that France was created to be in a strange way the cradle of liberty.

The answer may lie in the temperament of the French people, who have never become so reasonable that they failed to remain emotional. The French people are people of enthusiasm, tremendous intensities which on a certain level may seem very impractical, but for a great length of time the French individual has been willing to sacrifice most practical values for the fulfillment of his dreams, whatever they may be. A great many of these dreams may not have been entirely world-saving, and certainly France produced Napoleon, and even the French themselves are not so certain they are proud of it. There is a very strong mixture of feeling in France about Napoleon and always has been.

Actually, France is much more proud of men like Rousseau, Voltaire, and Montesquieu, the fathers of French liberty, and to a degree the fathers of democratic liberties throughout the world. These men were the ones who dared to assail the smug power of the autocratic policy of an interpretation of world education. These were brilliant men who were maligned by those who did not understand them. We have produced men like that in our Western civilization, and there is no doubt in the world that Tom Paine dipped his pen in the ink supplied by Rousseau and Montesquieu.

The development of mental liberty became a tremendous emotional experience in France. Behind it was put all the intensity of the French temperament, an intensity which brought the revolution, but also laid many valuable foundations more valuable and useful outside of France than in France. But every country of Europe and the American Colonies were influenced by the French struggle for liberty. And in France at about the time of the American Revolution, there was a very interesting group that descended from a much earlier cycle of activities, probably connected originally with the Royal Society formed by Cardinal Richelieu.

Richelieu was a churchman, but primarily a statesman, and like many others of his time and type, he was never as much of cleric as he was a government and political administrator. He saw the advantage of learning and he gave every possible inducement to it among the people of France. After the passing of a long time in which his various activities vanished, there emerged this tremendous pressure of democracy in Europe spearheaded by Rousseau, Voltaire, and Montesquieu, and finally came into manifestation in the Lodge of the Nine Muses in Paris.

This has been called the Cradle Lodge of Liberty. It was originally a Masonic Lodge, but it gradually changed a great many of its attributes and aspects as time went on, and by the time Benjamin Franklin was elected Grand Master of the Lodge of the Nine Muses, it had assumed tremendous proportions in the educational world in Europe. It might have been one of those groups we would all liked to have known.

It represented a brilliant group of intellectuals above the ordinary level, idealists who were united for the purpose of breaking the bond of materialism that was holding every department of life. As a result of the condition under which they were functioning, the activity took a very aggressive form, much in the form of skepticism, cynicism, and even downright and open rebellion against the thinking of the times. But, behind all of this thinking was the tremendous slogan blazoned across the Lodge of the Nine Muses, "The Rights of Man". That is what the problem was concerned with.

Into this Lodge flowed a tremendous number of intellectuals who had been previously interested in diverse activities, educators, members of secret societies, philosophical alchemists and cabbalists, mystics and materialists, leaders on the level of politics, militarism and religion. They all, however, were gathered upon one basic premise, the inalienable right of the human being to grow, and their substance and essence was contained in the statement with which we are all familiar, the right of the individual to seek for himself and pursue according to his own light, such courses as would bring him life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness. It was a problem of release, and yet because of the condition of the times, it was necessary for this release to be rather carefully developed.

The Lodge of the Nine Muses became a very interesting source of endless agitation against those in positions of tyranny. It is believed the famous Junius Papers in which an unknown English journalist attacked England in England, because of its attitude toward the American Colonies, was directly or indirectly tied in with the Lodge of the

Nine Muses. We know definitely that John Paul Jones secured his first ship as the result of donations made by the ladies who were the wives and relatives of the members of the Lodge of the Nine Muses, and that he named this ship "The Poor Richard" after Benjamin Franklin who published for so many years "Poor Richard's Almanac". We know that later Simon Bolivar, the South American liberator, was initiated into the Lodge of the Nine Muses and went back to Latin America to fight for his own people. We know that later still, Garibaldi was a member of the Lodge of the Nine Muses.

It was the Lodge of the Revolutionists, of those who were resolved to break the power of autocracy in the management of human affairs. Naturally, they could not break the power entirely, but they did make such inroads that from the time of the Revolution on, there has been an entirely different active force at work in the world, and today for the majority of human beings with good minds and purpose, the rights of man are important, they are worth defending, worth sacrificing much to maintain, and while we may abuse those rights, even if we use liberty as an excuse for license, still we believe in the principle of liberty, of the rights of man in the administration of his own affairs. Primarily, the right of man is the right to grow, the right to increase and enlarge within himself.

Probably no better example of the rather simple but direct statement of these convictions can be found than in the person of scholarly old Dr. Ben Franklin himself. He has sometimes been referred as "The first American gentleman". Certainly, he was a solid citizen devoted to the things he believed, and ever ready to defend them with wisdom, judgment, and prudence. He was a tremendously exciting personality. He was quiet, dignified, and bespeckled with his own personal invention, the first bifocal eyeglasses. He was interested in science, he was a progressive man in learning, already aware of the potential possibilities of electricity. He lived a very inquisitive life, and also a practical life as a printer and publisher. He is best known, however, as the first American diplomat, and he was given the most difficult and sensitive commission, the commission to the Court of France.

Here it was that he mingled, at the last, with many of the brilliant minds of France, and it was here that he and Voltaire embraced upon the Trestle Board floor of the Lodge of the Nine Muses. These men had purposes, and every effort to undermine their intent will ultimately be exposed. They were working and working quietly, but they were not merely individuals working alone. They had inherited something, a great empire that had to come, a project that had been approached in a dozen different ways and all of them had failed. But still, the end had not been achieved, perhaps because the approach had not been right. Nearly all the previous approaches toward world democracy had been through the insistence of a policy, a militant organization of some kind, to accomplish its end, and its very militancy defeated its end, because militancy again ends in the intensification of autocratic impulses.

It was this that destroyed the Knights Templar; it was this, also, that resulted in the final decline of the Knights of Malta. It was this same danger that had been recognized by the French intellectuals and by this wonderful and serious group of the

Nine Muses, a name which represented, of course, a coordination and balance of arts and sciences, and the Muses have always been associated with Inspiration.

It was a group combined of those seeking to serve through inspiring individuals to the release of the aspirations within themselves, and yet it had to be very carefully and politically thought out, in order that it might not be destroyed by the pressures around it.

In the last several years, I have been researching very carefully on the development and descent of certain motions in the society of mankind, and there seems to be every landmark to prove beyond any question that from the earliest periods of recorded history, certain very powerful groups, but comparatively unknown groups, have been protecting, preserving, and advancing the human liberties of man.

From the earliest time, the division took place between those who lived to gain and those who lived to give. And in policies there have always been two groups, those who lived off each other and those who lived for each other. This condition existed in the dawn of history and has never essentially changed. Those seeking the emancipation of man constitute the great panorama of pioneers that we revere for their contributions to essential knowledge and progress. They have worked constructively and will continue to do so, and just as surely as we are inclined to feel that ulterior motives are old and deeply entrenched, there is no doubt that right motive is equally old and equally deeply entrenched, with one advantage; that right motive is actually sustained by the deepest conviction of man, whereas, wrong motive is not.

At given periods, these two political circumstances, and the inventiveness and industry of the time, right and wrong motives may appear confused and wrong motives may apparently triumph, but in the long run that which is essentially right is the only thing the human being himself will support, and he will support it even at his own expense, after a certain time has passed. He cannot escape the implication of it; he cannot endure in the kind of a world in which integrity is not the final criterion. He knows this, even though he wishes it were otherwise. He would like to believe he could be selfish and other people unselfish and then he would flourish at their expense, but he knows in his heart that this cannot work. And even while he is practicing it, he wonders how long he will get away with it.

And that is more or less the picture of world conditions at the present time, but with this year of electional problems coming up, I think we should definitely bear in mind that the integrated forces of progress are just as strong or stronger in substance than integrated forces for destruction. That which is essentially contrary to the release of consciousness cannot completely win at any time and cannot ultimately win at all. Every time the individual is enslaved, his resolution to be free is strengthened. Tyrannies can only exist if they are supported by the people, and people will only support tyranny as long as it appears economically, politically, or financially advantageous to them. The moment tyrannies begin to relax upon those who are tyrannical, it results in the disintegration of the entire project.

The answer to the problem is almost mathematical, and that is that two evils uniting destroy each other; two good things uniting become one better thing. Everywhere in nature, corruption conflicts with its own nature. Two corrupt men will not work together; two good men will. But the two corrupt men will never be satisfied until they have destroyed each other, and that is only an embodiment of a policy in nature. Error cannot coalesce with itself and pyramid; the reason being each error is always in conflict with all others. There is no possibility of integrating corruption, and we have a good example of that in criminal syndicates and empires. These consist of an almost constant sequence of assassinations and murders. Each corrupt individual reaching a certain state of power becomes the target of his own lieutenants and underlings, and this goes on and on and on. That which is essentially evil finds no support with good and no support with its own kind; the reason again being there are many forms of error but only one form of Truth. These errors cannot work together because they are diversified. Truth works together because it is always justified within itself.

Therefore, in any system in the world, although corruption may seem to last for a long time, it cannot survive because it cannot possibly integrate internally. Its survival depends upon its physical power, and most of all upon its power to cause fear. It is not the strength of the adversary, but the weakening of the individual by indoctrination that makes possible the survival of corruption in most institutions. It is not because the corruption is strong, but because those who could oppose it have been frightened out of opposition and this is done by systematic processes of propaganda by which the individual is taught the infallibility of the status quo and that he must endure it regardless of the cost. In these kinds of thinking, however, there is no consideration for the inevitable pressure build up in humanity by any long enduring corruption, it always results in its own overthrow, and in the time of its overthrow, it finds itself friendless and alone.

If, then, we wish to think in the terms of the most basic factors, we know the whole progress of growth is away from ignorance and toward enlightenment, away from what we call division and toward what we call Unity. Democracy represents a degree in the development of the concept of Unity, but it cannot function formally as Unity as long as human consciousness itself is without the essential realization of Unity. Therefore, instead of Unity at the present time, we have what might be termed tolerance; we have individuals regardless of their personal desires and tastes required by the world in which they live to practice a certain appearance of camaraderie.

The individual realizes that in this country, the rights of religion, of free speech and things of that nature, are protected; therefore, it is useless for him to attempt to exercise his own totalitarian instincts upon them. Out of this association, however, comes something very important: the gradual realization of the other person's viewpoint; the gradual and inevitable recognition that it is possible to live with people who are different from ourselves, to live with them happily, to cooperate with them, to enjoy their cooperation, so that it is quite feasible for human beings to be united on certain essentials without emphasizing the differences in details and particulars that might once have been the cause of an inquisition. Thus, in the gradual experience of a protected democracy, we

are beginning to experience the quality of true fraternity, true recognition of basic human values. The more these values are recognized and the more essential they become, the more we shall be inclined toward democratic life.

Today we are in the presence of a very serious world crisis, but let us also remember a world crisis is always present. With every generation, there has been a crisis, because the world crisis is nothing more nor less than a statement of policies. Whatever we do, believe in, aspire after or want, there is always an adversary. "Even with Paradise was devised the snake", says Omar and that is essentially true. There cannot be a condition in which the human aspiration is not confronted with obstacles; there cannot be a time in which that which is the greater good is not opposed by that which is the more immediate advantage. We must make the decision within ourselves, even as we make it socially, economically, and politically.

Today we have certain so called enemies, certain forces in society which we regard as basically opposed to our way of life, we call them subversives. We are constantly wondering how industriously these subversives are working and to what degree they will be successful; and yet this problem of subversive activity is easily understood.

Naturally, subversives have to work harder because they are trying to maintain something that is essentially untrue. They are attempting to achieve it by means that are essentially dishonorable, and they are being motivated by instincts which are not found in any broad, rational understanding of life. Your fanatic always has to be ignorant; you cannot have an enlightened fanatic, and yet you cannot have release from fanaticism without enlightenment. To the degree the individual becomes enlightened, he becomes capable of correcting the faults in his own viewpoint, and that was one of the jobs that was set forth as a principle by the Lodge of the Nine Muses, that only the enlightened individual can contribute to the perpetuation of an enlightened commonwealth.

Democracy can never function completely or adequately until the majority of persons forming the state are enlightened, and in the statement as attributed to Montesquieu, Enlightenment is the internal realization that the public good is of greater importance than private advantage; that the individual must place integrity, values, ideals, principles above all other considerations in the administration of his affairs. He cannot possibly be unselfish and with idealistic motives unless he is either motivated by a high degree of intelligence or a highly refined emotional stimulation. The systematic program of sacrificing the lesser to the greater requires discrimination to recognize the greater, and without discrimination, democracy cannot function and falls into chaos. And, as Plato pointed out, when a democracy falls into chaos, it falls into a dictatorship.

Dictatorship is nothing but opportunism on the level of politics; it is someone taking advantage of the disorganization of people and advancing his own cause by catering to the selfishness and egotism of people. As long as these can be catered to, they will be catered to and government policies will be unsound.

If we follow the course of history, we will observe that people carry these burdens for a certain length of time; they apparently carry them until they are fully convinced of the fact, and having become fully convinced of the fact, they resign themselves to the fact, and a reformation is practically this resignation to fact. The individual stops fighting inevitables and decides if the universe wants to be honorable, the best thing for the individual to do is accept that and be honorable, having tried everything else without success.

As Voltaire observed, An honorable individual is a person who has tried every other possible way of life and found it unendurable. He would never start in by being honorable; he says he cannot face the unknown, he has not the machinery, or the courage within himself. To live honorably without enlightenment would be to simply suffer the afflictions and troubles caused by others. The person would feel himself endlessly buffeted about, the victim of everything that happens, and finally gives up. Only when his own internal supports him is he capable of consecutive honorable action internally satisfying.

So we have today this division in the political scheme of things, a division that gets stronger as time goes on and represents itself in innumerable candidates, legislations, and opportunities. Actually, it is one of the strange illusions of the human mind that human beings can actually be held captive. You can never emancipate a fool, and you can never enslave a thinker, regardless of the political system under which he lives. The human mind cannot be controlled or prevented from fulfilling its own internal insight. It can live well in any form of life, and live badly in any form of life, according to its own nature, and it is inevitably conspiring with other minds of its own kind to create patterns or systems similar to its own instincts, and in society we have this constantly manifesting equation.

In the Lodge of the Nine Muses, we have not only the Cradle of Political Liberty as we know it, but a clue to the possibility of world education as the foundation of world unity. As only an informed world can work together, the first or essential adversary must always be ignorance. Ignorance is the parent of perversion. No individual can indulge perversions unless he is ignorant.

The first perversion of ignorance is selfishness. No individual can be intelligent and selfish at the same time; one must be sacrificed to the other. Nor can any individual be arrogant and enlightened at the same time. Also, wherever we find these pressures which react to temptation, as an example, the dictatorships of Europe in the last thirty years, we find these dictators always coming into power by catering to the negative instincts of their followers. Regardless of the amount of schooling a nation receives, it remains ignorant so long as its negative instincts have never been touched by reformation.

Each individual, therefore, is a potential cause of trouble. I know a great many people who are advanced thinkers, so called, in a great many ways; and they are. They have a very profound knowledge of a great many abstract subjects, but my experience



with them has been that the more serious they are, the more involved they become in various philosophies and ideals, the more gullible they get.

In the first place, they have not sufficient anchorage. The average student of ideals is not a disciplined thinker; he is not a student by law and order, but a student by emergency. He has come to some critical period in his own life and has started using something he thought would help him, but he has never subjected himself to any actual training. He has therefore never actually examined himself, or determined upon courses of discrimination in his own conduct.

If, therefore, we find a wave of terrorism going through an area, it is just as likely to strike those comparatively well informed, especially if they have strong imaginational and fantasy faculties developed within themselves. These persons become terribly unhappy and want to take their ideals and messages and convey them to all. The one thing these persons have never considered is the fact that the moment the bad news hit they were among the first to be panic-stricken. They would not call it panic in their case, it would be justifiable anxiety, but from the outside, it looks an awful lot like a panic.

They have not integrated themselves. Fully believing the universe is ruled by Divine Law, they feel it absolutely necessary to go out and save it. Fully convinced there is a plan operating in nature, they are so afraid the plan is not going to work they have to go out and make sure it works. They are ready to go out, except they have no place to go and nothing to do when they get there, because they do not understand the problem and have no estimation of it, and furthermore, most of them, by their positions in life, could not do anything about it anyway. So, they become very unhappy, neurotic individuals, and when the time comes for a decision, they have been carefully cultured out of making one, and because they cannot do something big, they do nothing, and the situation drifts as it always has.

It was the beginning of the concept, as far as the French intellectual group under Rousseau and later under Franklin was concerned, that each individual must start where he is, and that a democracy depends for its success upon each individual instituting a democracy in his own personal life.

He is the cornerstone, and he is not only the cornerstone the Builder rejected, but a cornerstone which he himself as a builder is most likely to reject. He is not interested in that little stone of his own that has to go somewhere in the sub-basement, he is much more interested in being the tall spire on the cathedral. If he cannot make a magnificent contribution, he just will not play. It is not glamorous to go to work on oneself, but we all of us have three spheres of influence, and if one percent of our population made industrious use of those three spheres of influence, the reformation of our political system would be very rapid.

We have ourselves, our families at home and our immediate social and economic environment. If the man is in business, he has his business; if the woman is in social life, she has her clubs, her social groups, and those with whom she has her sphere of

influence. She has her home and her family, and these units reach out very rapidly. Indoctrination within a home means that that indoctrination in ten generations will reach thousands of persons.

If one home in every ten thousand in the United States today was firmly established with a doctrinal principle that was communicated clearly and definitely to the children, within five hundred years, every American citizen would be touched and affected by it.

We cannot imagine the tremendous increase in influence. We can think of it in negative terms. We know, for example, that one person infected with venereal disease, can, even though that disease is so called “cured”, contribute bodily defect in the future to over a thousand persons. Why cannot an individual who is doctrinally enlightened and personally enlightened also contribute those forms of constructive heredity?

A child in a bad home is not only going to be a menace to his own children when he grows up, but bad environment is not outlived for ten generations. It decreases, naturally, with each generation, but it is not wiped out as a negative factor in ten generations. A good idea will not be wiped out for ten generations either, because that good idea going on through ten generations will be justified and restated so many times by experience that it will become practically immortal.

We have not time for that, we just have to go out and talk to our Congressman or Senator who is not going to do anything about it anyway. We have to form a petition. I remember one group not long ago had about fifteen members – it was back in the days when Gandhi was alive – and this group trying to get together to see what they could do for India, could not think of anything more vital to do than have the fifteen members sign a telegram telling Mr. Gandhi they were solidly behind him. They were behind him, but they were so far behind him that he never even heard about them. If these individuals had done something in their own lives to prove that they admired and respected his way of life, it might have had a permanent effect upon their families, their descendants, and the world in which they lived. But their idea of a great big effort was to sign a telegram.

We are frustrated because we go out and tell people and they pay no attention to us, and because we sign petitions and they are promptly torn up, and because we write our Senator and get a very nice letter back and the legislation goes in the opposite direction, and because when it comes time to vote we have two candidates both of whom we suspect of the worst. Therefore, we are completely frustrated in our effort to do bigger and better things, perhaps because nature had an idea of its own; namely, that the individual’s final achievement is to do something bigger and better with himself, and by the gradual pressure upon all persons, each person becomes a self-solving unit.

The trouble hits a hundred million and this hundred million cannot work together. They are divided by prejudices that are far too deep at this stage of civilization. They do not trust the members of their own group, but the pressure hits all of them. So each one has the opportunity of responding to that pressure as an individual collectively and

constructively, regardless of how his neighbor acts or any organizational group requires. Each person has the right to react, to accept a challenge, and he is receiving the most powerful indoctrination he can possibly receive from the fact he is in trouble.

There is no greater inducement than these pressures. They are far more real to him than anything anyone can say to him. Nature has said it all before we can get our mouths open, and said it in the one way we cannot deny; pressure, expense, sickness, unhappiness. Each individual is given every inducement to solve his own problem. If he would accept that and meet it constructively, the collective pressure would dissolve; but in our desperate effort to meet the problem collectively first, we doom ourselves to disappointment, because the very forces we are depending upon will not cooperate. All growth must be from the gradual manifestation of the fact we experience, and right there we come down to the one contribution everyone can make, and that is the contribution of his own integrity, and by the use and example of it he can become very definitely a force for progress around him in his immediate environment.

If, in the course of such personal endeavor, there is released through him, if he happens to be one of those in whom there are many values, if he is what you might term the genius or the individual who is obviously capable – this gradual development of his own integrity will release through him the qualities of a larger leadership, and he will grow into whatever sphere of progress he can fill. But he must grow from his own seed, and that is the seed of his own integrity

There is absolutely no use in this world of being afraid of anything. There is no use in worrying about the things that are going to happen, because everything that happens is helping someone make a decision, and whatever conditions arise cannot affect the essential program of nature. Man can never destroy the Plan by which he exists. He may for a time apparently delay it; he may at times oppose it, but he is powerless to destroy the source of himself. That source is far too remote for him to be able to reach it.

Therefore, what we call calamity is mostly nature telling us what is necessary, and just as pains in the body, if neglected, can bring on serious illness, so social pains, pains of policy and economics, if neglected, may destroy that organism; but though it may destroy the organism it cannot destroy the life from which that organism descends, and that life will build and grow forever.

The most we can destroy is the structure we have built in ignorance, but the essential values are untouchable. We are either standing by contributing to a structure that will perish, or we are hard at work contributing to a structure that will endure, and this depends upon ourselves. We are the units of construction, and in a democratic system, as it was inspired by the French School, and by the teachings of the Founding Fathers of this country, the importance of the individual cannot be overestimated; he is the unit, he is the thing upon which the whole structure must stand, and democracy must live or die with the democratic conduct of the people.

If we will take that very seriously to ourselves, and every moment that we have been spending fearing, wondering, hoping, doubting or in a state of panic over subversive activities, if all that time we will now devote constructively to a program of cooperation with the realities of living, that we shall make it our program to control ourselves, direct our resources, overcome the delinquent instincts of our own natures, create peace and harmony and security in our own environment, and strongly and simply refuse to cooperate with that which is corrupt, we shall become something that is a great cause of worry to corrupt politicians, and a great source of inspiration to leaders who must come forth if there is any chance of their being supported. The individual begins the salvation of his world by controlling his own temper, overcoming his own prejudices, recovering from his own jealousies, and by putting his values on a solid foundation and keeping them there. He is then actually a center of progress. The result can be noticed and will be noticed, and we can begin by taking our own homes and making democracies out of them.

The great Greek philosophy was that the first democracy was the home. And if the individual cannot maintain a happy, harmonious, constructive and idealistic home, he has nothing to contribute to world progress. If he has a business it is the same problem. Unless he conducts that business on democratic principles and ideals of fairness and equity, he has nothing to preach to other people; and if he is doing these things himself, he probably has very little time to preach to anybody, but he is building and can have the satisfaction of knowing that regardless of what happens he is part of something that must ultimately win.

So let us in that type of thinking be true to the principles on which our nation was founded, get over fears and worries and get to work, always supporting with our best intelligence everything that seems to us right. If we are wrong, it is not so terribly important. It is that we are sincere, honest, and true to principles, and if a democratic nation responds to this quality from within themselves – the nation being the people – there is no possibility that a government can pass unaffected by this.

So that type of thinking is what we owe to the Founding Fathers and the great plan which was behind them, and I think if we live it, we will find it improves our health, makes us more companionable and useful, and that it gives us that internal sense of values with which we can face all change with a good hope, and when emergencies arise, instead of wondering what is happening, we are out trying to do what we can for those whose vision is not as great as our own. It is that we should become constructive, creative people, instead of confirmed worriers on the level of religion or politics.

Manly Palmer Hall - April 27, 1952

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