

**A Gift to You
from
TowardtheCenter.com**

**Benjamin Franklin, Ralph Waldo Emerson, and Andrew Carnegie
On
Wealth and Success**

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Introduction

In keeping with the purpose of TowardtheCenter.com to provide for you the most important writers who best articulated the principles that lead to personal empowerment, prosperity, and the fulfilling life, we offer here three of the most famous and time-tested little essays. In less than thirty pages you have three complete essays that summarily present the perspective of three indisputable American heroes. And, we have reformatted, edited, and added footnotes in order to make the essays more accessible to the modern reader. The questions we answer here are:

What did Benjamin Franklin, Ralph Waldo Emerson, and Dale Carnegie actually teach about wealth and success? And why are their little works so foundational?

The answer is—these three deeply understood the very key foundational principles upon which all lasting success in America (and everywhere) is built, then and now. America, as no one can honestly deny, is the most successful nation in the history of the human species. In less than three hundred years, the people of America made more progress than humanity had made in the previous five thousand years.¹ As we know, the stability and size of every building is utterly and completely dependent upon the solidity and size of its foundation; therefore, before we can build anything of lasting value and merit in our lives we must first know and apply foundational principles. Hence, this little work is composed of—

Benjamin Franklin's *The Way to Wealth*
Ralph Waldo Emerson on *Success*
Andrew Carnegie's *The Gospel of Wealth*

These three American giants need no introduction. Their lives and their contributions to the well-being of America are unique. So we will let them speak for themselves.

And now we start with Benjamin Franklin's own summary of his advice given in the Franklin's famous *Poor Richard's Almanac*.²

Benjamin Franklin's *The Way to Wealth*

Franklin's Opening Point

In 1732 I first published my Almanac under the name of *Richard Saunders*. It was continued by me about twenty-five years, and commonly called *Poor Richard's Almanac*. I endeavored to make it both entertaining and useful. And it accordingly came to be in such demand, that I reaped considerable profit from it, vending annually near ten

¹ For comprehensive and irrefutable proof of this statement see W. Cleon Skousen's book: *The 5000 Year Leap*, subtitled, *A Miracle That Changed the World*.

² Source: *The Works of Benjamin Franklin*. Edited by Jared Sparks. Vol. 2. (Boston, 1836), 2:92-103.

thousand. And observing that it was generally read, (scarcely any neighborhood in the province being without it), I considered it as a proper vehicle for conveying instruction among the common people—who bought scarcely any other books. I therefore filled all the little spaces that occurred between the remarkable days in the Calendar with proverbial sentences—chiefly such as inculcated industry and frugality, as the means of procuring wealth—and thereby securing virtue. For, as we know, it is more difficult for a man in want to act always honestly, as (to use here one of those proverbs) *It is hard for an empty sack to stand upright*”

Courteous Reader,

I have heard that nothing gives an author so great a pleasure as to find his works respectfully quoted by others. Judge, then, how much I must have been gratified by an incident I am going to relate to you. Recently, I stopped my horse where a great number of people were collected at an auction of merchants’ goods. The hour of the sale not being come, they were conversing on the badness of the times. And one of the company called to a plain, clean, old man, with white locks, “Pray, Father Abraham, what think you of the times? Will not these heavy taxes quite ruin the country? How shall we ever be able to pay them? What would you advise us?” Father Abraham stood up, and replied, “If you would have my advice, I will give it to you in short; for—*A word to the wise is enough...*, as Poor Richard says.” They joined in desiring him to speak his mind. And gathering round him, he proceeded as follows:

Franklin’s 2nd Point

“Friends,” said he, “the taxes are indeed very heavy. And, if those laid on by the government were the only ones we had to pay, we might more easily discharge them. But we have many others, which are more painful to some of us.

“We are taxed twice as much by our idleness, three times as much by our pride, and four times as much by our folly.

“And from these taxes the commissioners cannot ease or deliver us by allowing an abatement. However, let us hearken to good advice and something may be done for us. *God helps them that help themselves*, as Poor Richard says.”

Franklin’s 3rd Point

“It would be thought a hard government, that should tax its people one-tenth part of their time, to be employed in its service; but idleness taxes many of us much more. And sloth, by bringing on diseases, absolutely shortens life. *Sloth, like rust, consumes faster than labor wears; while the used key is always bright*, as Poor Richard says. *But dost thou love life, then do not squander time, for that is the stuff life is made of*, as Poor Richard says.

How much more time than is necessary do we spend in sleep, forgetting that—*The sleeping fox catches no poultry*, and that *There will be sleeping enough in the grave*, as Poor Richard says.

“If time be of all things the most precious, wasting time must be, as Poor Richard says, *the greatest prodigality*; since, as he elsewhere tells us, *Lost time is never found again; and what we call time enough, always proves little enough*. Let us then—get up and be

doing—and doing with a purpose. And so, by diligence we shall do more with less perplexity.

“Sloth makes all things difficult; but industry makes all things easy. And, He that rises late must run all day, and will scarcely overtake his business by night. While, Laziness travels so slowly, that Poverty soon overtakes him. Drive your business—let not that drive you. And, Early to bed, and early to rise, makes a man healthy, wealthy, and wise, as Poor Richard says.

“So what signifies wishing and hoping for better times? We may make these times better—if we bestir ourselves. *Industry need not wish. And, He that lives upon hopes will die fasting. There are no gains without pains; then help, hands, for I have no lands.* (Or, if I have, they are smartly taxed.) *He that has a trade hath an estate; and he that has a calling, has an office of profit and honor,* as Poor Richard says. But then the trade must be worked at, and the calling followed, or neither the estate nor the office will enable us to pay our taxes. If we are industrious, we shall never starve. Since—*At the working-man’s house hunger looks in—but dares not enter.* Nor will the bailiff or the constable enter, since—*Industry pays debts, while despair increases them.*

“Even though you have found no treasure, nor has any rich relation left you a legacy, nevertheless—*Diligence is the mother of good luck. And, God gives all things to industry. Then plough deep while sluggards sleep, and you shall have corn to sell and to keep.* Work while it is called today, for you know not how much you may be hindered tomorrow. *One today is worth two tomorrows,* as Poor Richard says. And further, *Never leave till tomorrow what you can do today.* If you were a servant, would you not be ashamed that a good master should catch you idle?

Are you then your own master? Be ashamed to catch yourself idle, when there is so much to be done for yourself, your family, your country, and your country.

“Handle your tools without mittens; remember that *The cat in gloves catches no mice,* as Poor Richard says. It is true there is much to be done, and perhaps you are weak-handed; but stick to it steadily, and you will see great effects. For—*Constant dripping wears away stones;* and, *By diligence and patience the mouse chewed in two the cable;* and *Little strokes fell great oaks.*

“Methinks I hear some of you say, ‘Must a man afford himself no leisure?’ I will tell you, my friend, what Poor Richard says, *Employ your time well, if you mean to gain leisure;* and, *Since you are not sure of a minute, throw not away an hour.* Leisure is time for doing something useful; this leisure the diligent man will obtain, but the lazy man never will—since, *A life of leisure and a life of laziness are two things. Many, without labor, would live by their wits only, but they break for want of stock;* whereas industry gives comfort, and plenty, and respect.

Fly pleasures, and they will follow you. The diligent spinner has a large shift; and now I have a sheep and a cow, and everybody bids me good morrow.”

Franklin's 4th Point

“But with our industry we must likewise be steady, settled, and careful, and oversee our own affairs with our own eyes and not trust too much to others. Trusting too much to others' care is the ruin of many; for *In the affairs of this world men are saved, not by faith, but by the want of it...*”³

Franklin's 5th Point

“So much for industry, my friends, and attention to one's own business. And to these we must add frugality if we would make our industry more certainly successful. A man may, if he knows not how to save as he gets, keep his nose all his life to the grindstone, and die not worth a groat at last.”⁴ *A fat kitchen makes a skinny will.* And,

*Many estates are spent in the getting,
Since women for tea forsook spinning and knitting,
And men for punch forsook hewing and splitting.*

If you would be wealthy, think of saving as well as of getting. The Indies have not made Spain rich, because her outgoes are greater than her incomes. Away then with your expensive follies. And you will not then have so much cause to complain of hard times, heavy taxes, and chargeable families. For—

*Women and wine, game and deceit,
Make the wealth small and the want great.*

“And further, *What maintains one vice would bring up two children.* You may think, perhaps, that a little tea, or a little punch now and then, diet a little more costly, clothes a little finer, and a little entertainment now and then, can be no great matter; but remember, *Many a little makes a mickle.*⁵ Beware of little expenses. *A small leak will sink a great ship,* as Poor Richard says.

“Here you are all got together at this sale of fineries and knick-knacks. You call them *goods*; but, if you do not take care, they will prove *evils* to some of you. You expect they will be sold cheap, and perhaps they may for less than they cost; but, if you have no occasion for them, they must be dear to you. Remember what Poor Richard says, *Buy what you have no need of, and before long you shall sell thy necessaries.* Many a one, for the sake of finery on the back, have gone with a hungry belly and half-starved their families. *Silks and satins, scarlet and velvets, put out the kitchen fire,* as Poor Richard says.⁶

“These are not the necessaries of life; they can scarcely be called the conveniences; and yet, only because they look pretty, how many want to have them! By these, and other extravagances, the genteel are reduced to poverty, and forced to borrow of those whom they formerly despised, but who, through industry and frugality, have maintained their standing; in which case it appears plainly, that *A ploughman on his legs is higher than a*

³ Another way to make this point is: “Be wise as a serpent and harmless as a dove.”

⁴ An English silver coin worth four pence, used from the 14th to the 17th century.

⁵ A batch of something; or, a great amount; or, simply “much.”

⁶ And who can cook in the kitchen without a “fire?” What a price to pay for luxuries!

gentleman on his knees, as Poor Richard says.⁷ But this they might have known before, if they had taken his advice. *If you would know the value of money, go and try to borrow some; for, He that goes a borrowing goes a sorrowing*, as Poor Richard says.

"But what madness must it be to *run in debt* for these superfluities? We are offered by the terms of this sale, six months credit; and that, perhaps, has induced some of us to attend it, because we cannot spare the ready money, and hope now to be fine without it.

“But, ah! Think what you do when you run in debt—you give to another power over your liberty.

“If you cannot pay at the time, you will be ashamed to see your creditor; you will be in fear when you speak to him; you will make poor, pitiful, sneaking excuses, and, by degrees, come to lose your veracity, and sink into base, downright lying. Since, *The second vice is lying, the first is running in debt*, as Poor Richard says.

"What would you think of that prince, or of that government, who should issue an edict forbidding you to dress like a gentleman or gentlewoman—on pain of imprisonment or servitude? Would you not say that you were free, and that you have a right to dress as you please, and that such an edict would be a breach of your privileges, and such a government tyrannical? And yet you are about to put yourself under such tyranny, when you run in debt for such dress! Your creditor has authority, at his pleasure, to deprive you of your liberty, by confining you in jail till you shall be able to pay him.⁸ When you have got your bargain, you may, perhaps, think little of payment; but, as Poor Richard says, *Creditors have better memories than debtors; creditors are a superstitious sect, great observers of set days and times.*”

Franklin’s Concluding Point

"This doctrine, my friends—is reason and wisdom. Yet, after all, do not depend too much upon your own industry, and frugality, and prudence, though excellent things; for without the blessing of Heaven, they may all be blasted. Therefore, ask that blessing humbly; and be not uncharitable to those that at present seem to want it; but comfort and help them. Remember, Job suffered, and was afterwards prosperous.”

Ralph Waldo Emerson’s *Success*

Emerson’s Opening Point

Our American people cannot be taxed with slowness in performance or in praising their performance. The earth is shaken by our energies. We are feeling our youth and nerve and bone. We have the power of territory and of seacoast. And we know the use of these. We count our census; we read our growing valuations; and we survey our map, which becomes old in a year or two. Our eyes run approvingly along the lengthened lines of railroad and telegraph. We have gone nearest to the Pole. We have discovered the

⁷ To be clear, the gentleman is begging, not praying.

⁸ Even though debtors can no longer be thrown into prison, nevertheless, Franklin’s point is still figuratively true. The debtor is a slave to the creditor.

Antarctic continent. We interfere in Central and South America, at Canton, and in Japan; we are adding to an already enormous territory.

Our political constitution is the hope of the world. And we value ourselves on all these feats.

Emerson's 2nd Point

It is the way of the world; it is the law of youth, and of unfolding strength. Men are made each with some triumphant superiority, which, through some adaptation of fingers or ear or eye or ciphering or pugilistic or musical or literary craft—enriches the community with a new art. And not only we, but all men of European stock value these certificates. Giotto could draw a perfect circle. Erwin of Steinbach could build a minster.⁹ Olaf, king of Norway, could run round his galley on the blades of the oars of the rowers when the ship was in motion. Ojeda could run out swiftly on a plank projected from the top of a tower, turn round swiftly and come back. Evelyn writes from Rome: “Bernini, the Florentine sculptor, architect, painter and poet, a little before my coming to Rome, gave a public opera, wherein he painted the scenes, cut the statues, invented the engines, composed the music, wrote the comedy, and built the theatre.”

“There is nothing in war,” said Napoleon, “that I cannot do by my own hands. If there is nobody to make gunpowder, I can manufacture it. The gun carriages I know how to construct. If it is necessary to make cannons at the forge, I can make them. The details of working them in battle, if it is necessary to teach, I shall teach them. In administration, it is I alone who have arranged the finances, as you know.”

It is recorded of Linnaeus, among many proofs of his beneficent skill, that when the timber in the shipyards of Sweden was ruined by rot, Linnaeus was asked by the government to find a remedy. He studied the insects that infested the timber. And he found that they laid their eggs in the logs within certain days in April. And he directed that for ten days of that season the logs should be immersed underwater in the docks; which being done, the timber was found to be uninjured.

Columbus at Veragua found plenty of gold. But leaving the coast, the ship full of one hundred and fifty skilful seamen—some of them old pilots, and with too much experience of their craft and treachery to him. And so the wise admiral kept a private record of his homeward path. And when he reached Spain he told the King and Queen that they may ask all the pilots who came with him, “Where is Veragua? Let them answer and say if they know where Veragua lies. I assert that they can give no other account than that they went to lands where there was abundance of gold; but they do not know the way to return there. They would be obliged to go on a voyage of discovery as much as if they had never been there before. There is a mode of reckoning,” he proudly adds, “derived from astronomy, which is sure and safe to anyone who understands it.”

Hippocrates in Greece knew how to stop the devouring plague that ravaged Athens in his time; and his skill died with him. Dr. Benjamin Rush, in Philadelphia, carried that city

⁹ “Minster” means a church.

heroically through the yellow fever of the year 1793. Leverrier carried the Copernican system in his head; and he knew where to look for the new planet.¹⁰

We have seen an American woman write a novel of which a million copies were sold, in all languages, and which had one merit, that of speaking to the universal heart. And it was read with equal interest to three audiences, namely, in the parlor, in the kitchen, and in the nursery of every house. We have seen women who could institute hospitals and schools in armies. We have seen a woman who by pure song could melt the souls of whole populations. And there is no limit to these varieties of talent.

Emerson's 3rd Point

These are arts to be thankful for—each one is a new direction of human power. We cannot choose but respect them. Our civilization is made up of a million contributions of this kind. We esteem success to be a test in other people, since we do so first in ourselves. We respect ourselves more if we have succeeded. Neither do we grudge to each of these benefactors the praise or the profit that accrues from their industry.

There are already quite different degrees of moral merit in these examples. I don't know but we and our race elsewhere set a higher value on wealth, victory, and coarse superiority of all kinds than other men. And that—we have less tranquility of mind; and we are less easily contented. The Saxon is taught from his infancy to wish to be first. The Norseman was a restless rider, fighter, and freebooter.¹¹ The ancient Norse ballads describe him as afflicted with this inextinguishable thirst for victory. The mother says to her son:

“Success shall be in thy courser tall,
Success in thyself, which is best of all,
Success in thy hand, success in thy foot,
In struggle with man, in battle with brute:
The holy God and Saint Drothin dear
Shall never shut eyes on thy career:
Look out, look out, Svend Vonved!”

These feats that we extol do not signify so much as we say. These boasted arts are of very recent origin. They are local conveniences—but they do not really add to our stature.

The greatest men of the world have managed not to want them. Newton was a great man, without telegraph, or gas, or steam coach, or rubber shoes, or lucifer-matches, or ether for his pain.¹² So too were Shakespeare and Alfred and Scipio and Socrates. Such things are merely local conveniences.

And how easy it is to go now to parts of the world where not only are all these arts wanting—but where they are despised. The Arabian sheiks, the most dignified people on the planet, do not want them. Yet they have as much self-respect as the English. And they

¹⁰ Leverrier is credited with the discovery of Neptune.

¹¹ Anyone who pillages and plunders.

¹² The original friction match was patented by Samuel Jones and sold as “Lucifer” matches.

are easily able to impress the Frenchman or the American who visits them with the respect due to—a brave and sufficient man.

These feats do have great differences of merit. And some of them involve power of a high kind. But the public values the invention more than the inventor does. The inventor knows there is much more and better where this came from. The public sees in it a lucrative secret. Men see the reward that the inventor enjoys. And they think, “How shall we win that?” Cause and effect are a little tedious to us. And so we wonder how to leap to the result by short or by false means. We are not scrupulous. What we ask is victory, without regard to the cause; after the Rob Roy rule, after the Napoleon rule, to be the strongest today, the way of the Talleyrands, prudent people, whose watches go faster than their neighbors’ watches; and who, when they detect the first moment of decline, throw themselves instantly on the winning side. I have heard that Nelson used to say, “Never mind the justice or the impudence, only let me succeed.” Lord Brougham’s single duty of counsel is, “to get the prisoner clear.” Fuller says that it is a maxim among lawyers that “a crown once worn clears off all defects of the wearer thereof.” *Rien ne reussit mieux que le succes.*¹³ And we Americans are tainted with this insanity—as our bankruptcies and our reckless politics may show. We are great by exclusion, grasping, and egotism. Our success takes from all what it gives to one—it is a haggard, malignant, careworn running for luck.

Emerson’s 4th Point

Egotism is a kind of buckram that gives momentary strength and concentration to men, and seems to be much used in Nature for fabrics in which local and spasmodic energy is required. I could point to men in this country, of indispensable importance to the carrying on of American life, of this humor, whom we could ill spare—anyone of them would be a national loss. But it spoils conversation. They will not try conclusions with you. They are ever thrusting this pampered self between you and them.

It is plain they have a long education to undergo to reach simplicity and plain-dealing—which are what a wise man mainly cares for in his companion.

Nature knows how to convert evil to good. Nature utilizes misers, fanatics, showmen, and egotists, to accomplish her ends. But we must not think better of the foible for that. The passion for sudden success is rude and puerile—just as war, cannons, and executions are used to clear the ground of bad, lumpish, irreclaimable savages—but always to the damage of the conquerors.

I hate this shallow Americanism that hopes to get rich by credit, to get knowledge by raps on midnight tables, to learn the economy of the mind by phrenology, or skill without study, or mastery without apprenticeship, or the sale of goods through pretending that they sell, or power through making believe you are powerful, or through a packed jury or caucus, bribery, and “repeating” votes, or wealth by fraud. They think they have got it; but they have got something else—a crime that calls for yet another crime, and another devil behind that. These are steps to suicide, infamy, and the harming of mankind. We

¹³ Translated: “Nothing succeeds better than success.”

countenance each other in this life of show, puffing, advertisement, and manufacture of public opinion. And excellence is lost sight of in the hunger for sudden performance and praise.

Emerson's 5th Point

There was a wise man, an Italian artist, Michael Angelo, who writes thus of himself:

“Meanwhile the Cardinal Ippolito, in whom all my best hopes were placed, being dead, I began to understand that the promises of this world are for the most part vain phantoms, and that—to confide in one’s self, and become something of worth and value, is the best and safest course.”

Now, though I am by no means sure that the reader will assent to all my propositions, yet I think we shall agree on—my first rule for success—that we drop the brag and the advertisement, and take Michael Angelo’s course, “to confide in one’s self, and become something of worth and value.”

Each man has an aptitude born with him. Do your work. I have to say this often; but Nature says it oftener. It is clownish to insist on doing all with one’s own hands, as if every man should build his own clumsy house, forge his hammer, and bake his dough. But he is to dare to do what he can do best; not help others as they would direct him, but as he knows his helpful power to be. To do otherwise is to neutralize those extraordinary special talents distributed among men.

Nevertheless, while this self-truth is essential to the exhibition of the world and to the growth and glory of each mind—it is rare to find a man who believes his own thought or who speaks that which he was created to say.

As nothing astonishes men so much as common sense and plain dealing, likewise, nothing is more rare in any man than an act of his own.

Any work looks wonderful to him, except that which he can do. We do not believe our own thought; we must serve somebody; we must quote somebody. We dote on the old and the distant. We are tickled by great names; we import the religion of other nations; we quote their opinions; we cite their laws. The gravest and most learned courts in this country shudder to face a new question. They will wait months and years for a case to occur that can be tortured into a precedent; and thus throw on a bolder party the onus of an initiative.

Thus we do not carry our own counsel in our breasts; or, if we do, then we do not know it. And because we cannot shake off from our shoes this dust of Europe and Asia, the world seems to be born old; society is under a spell; every one is a borrower and a mimic. Life becomes theatrical and literature a mere quotation; and hence that depression of spirits, that furrow of care said to mark every American brow.

Self-trust is the first secret of success. Self-trust is the belief that since you are here the authorities of the universe put you here—and for cause; or with some task strictly appointed to you in your constitution. And so long as you work at that you are well and successful. It by no means consists in rushing prematurely to a showy feat that will catch the eye and satisfy spectators. It is enough if you work in the right direction.

Emerson's 6th Point

So far from the performance being the real success, it is clear that the success was much earlier than that, namely, when all the feats that make our civility were the thoughts of good heads. The fame of each discovery rightly attaches to the mind that made the formula that contains all the details—and not to the manufacturers who now make their gain by it. And this is true even though the mob uniformly cheers the manufacturer—and not the inventor.

It is the dullness of the multitude that they cannot see the house in the ground plan or the working in the model of the projector. While it is a thought, though it were a new fuel, or a new food, or the creation of agriculture, it is cried down, it is called a chimera. But when it is a fact, and comes in the shape of eight percent, ten percent, a hundred percent, then they cry, "It is the voice of God." Horatio Greenough, the sculptor, said to me of Robert Fulton's visit to Paris: "Fulton knocked at the door of Napoleon with steam, and was rejected. And Napoleon lived long enough to know that he had excluded a greater power than his own."

Is there no loving of knowledge, and of art, and of our design, for itself alone? Cannot we please ourselves with performing our work—or gaining truth and power—without being praised for it? I gain my point; I gain all points—if I can reach my companion with any statement that teaches him his own worth.

Emerson's 7th Point

The sum of wisdom is this—the time is never lost that is devoted to work. The good workman never says, "There, that will do;" but, "There, that is it. Try it; and come again—it will last always."

If the artist, in whatever art, is well at work on his own design, it signifies little that he does not yet find orders or customers. I pronounce that young man happy who is content with having acquired the skill that he had aimed at, and waits willingly when the occasion of making it appreciated shall arrive, knowing well that it will not loiter.

The time your rival spends in dressing up his work for effect, hastily, and for the market, you spend in study and experiments towards real knowledge and efficiency. He has thereby sold his picture or machine, or won the prize, or got the appointment. But you have raised yourself into a higher school of art; and a few years will show the advantage of the real master over the short popularity of the showman.

I know it is a nice point to discern this self-trust, (which is the pledge of all mental vigor and performance), from the disease to which it is allied, namely—the exaggeration of the part that we can play. Nevertheless, they are two different things.

And it is sanity to know that, over my talent or knack, and a million times better than any talent, is the Central Intelligence that subordinates and uses all talents. And it is only as a door into this, that any talent or the knowledge it gives is of value. He only who comes into this Central Intelligence, in which no egotism or exaggeration can be—comes into self-possession.

Emerson's 8th Point

My next point is that in the scale of powers it is not talent but sensibility that is best. Talent confines—but the Central Life puts us in relation to all. How often it seems that the chief good is to be born with a cheerful temper and well adjusted to the tone of the human race. Such a man feels himself in harmony, and conscious—by his receptivity of an infinite strength. Like Alfred, “good fortune accompanies him like a gift of God.” Feel yourself, and be not daunted by things.

It is the fullness of man that runs over into objects that makes his Bibles and Shakespeares and Homers so great. The joyful reader borrows of his own ideas to fill their faulty outline; and knows not that he borrows and gives.

There is something of poverty in our criticism. We assume that there are few great men; and that all the rest are little; that there is but one Homer, but one Shakespeare, one Newton, one Socrates. But the soul in her beaming hour does not acknowledge these usurpations. We should know how to praise Socrates, or Plato, or Saint John, without impoverishing ourselves. In good hours we do not find Shakespeare or Homer over-great. We see that they were only translators of the happy present. And we see that every man and woman holds divine possibilities. It is the good reader that makes the good book; a good head cannot read amiss. In every book he finds passages that seem to be confidences or asides hidden from all else and unmistakably meant for his ear.

The light by which we see in this world comes out from the soul of the observer. Wherever any noble sentiment dwelt, it made the faces and houses around it shine. Nay, the powers of this busy brain are miraculous and illimitable. Therein are the rules and formulas by which the whole empire of matter is worked.

There is no prosperity, trade, art, city, or great material wealth of any kind, that if you trace it home, you will find it rooted in—a thought—of some individual.

Emerson's 9th Point

Is all life a surface affair? It is curious, but our difference of wit appears to be only a difference of impressionability, or a difference of our power to appreciate faint, fainter, and infinitely faintest voices and visions. When the scholar or the writer has pumped his brain for thoughts and verses, and then comes abroad into Nature, has he never found that there is a better poetry hinted in a boy's whistle of a tune, or in the piping of a sparrow, than in all his literary results? We call it health. What is so admirable as the health of youth? His days are long because his eyes are good; and brisk circulations keep him warm in cold rooms. And he loves books that speak to the imagination. And he can read Plato, covered to his chin with a cloak in a cold upper chamber, though he should associate the Dialogues ever after with a woolen smell.

It is the bane of life that natural effects are continually crowded out—and artificial arrangements substituted. We remember when in early youth the earth spoke and the heavens glowed; when an evening, any evening, grim and wintry, sleet and snow, was enough for us; the houses were in the air. Now it costs a rare combination of clouds and lights to overcome the common and mean. What is it we look for in the landscape, in

sunsets and sunrises, in the sea and the firmament? What but a compensation for the cramp and pettiness of human performances?

We bask in the day; and the mind finds something as great as itself. In Nature all is large, massive repose. Remember what befalls a city boy who goes for the first time into the October woods. He is suddenly initiated into a pomp and glory that brings to pass for him the dreams of romance. He is the king he dreamed he was; he walks through tents of gold, through bowers of crimson, porphyry and topaz, pavilion on pavilion, garlanded with vines, flowers and sunbeams, with incense and music, with so many hints to his astonished senses. The leaves twinkle, and pique, and flatter him; and his eye and step are tempted on by hazy distances to happier solitudes. All this happiness he owes only to his finer perception. Conversely, the owner of the woodlot finds only a number of discolored trees, and says, "They ought to come down; they aren't growing any better; they should be cut and corded before spring."

Wordsworth writes of the delights of the boy in Nature:

"For never will come back the hour
Of splendor in the grass, of glory in the flower."

But I have just seen a man, well knowing what he spoke of, who told me that the verse was not true for him—that his eyes opened as he grew older—and that every spring was more beautiful to him than the last.

We live among gods of our own creation. Does that deep-toned bell, which has shortened many a night of ill nerves, render to you nothing but acoustic vibrations? Is the old church that gave you the first lessons of religious life, or the village school, or the college where you first knew the dreams of fancy and joys of thought, only boards or brick and mortar? Is the house in which you were born, or the house in which your dearest friend lived, only a piece of real estate whose value is covered by the Hartford insurance? You walk on the beach and enjoy the animation of the picture. Scoop up a little water in the hollow of your palm; take up a handful of shore sand—well, these are the elements. What is the beach but acres of sand? What is the ocean but cubic miles of water? A little more or less signifies nothing. No, it is that this brute matter is part of something not brute. It is that the sand floor is held by spherical gravity, and bent to be a part of the round globe, under the optical sky—part of the astonishing astronomy, and existing at last to moral ends and from moral causes.

Emerson's 10th Point

To the eye, the world is not made up of figures—that is only half. It is also made of color. How that element washes the universe with its enchanting waves! The sculptor ends his work; and behold—there is now a new world of dreamlike glory. It is the last stroke of Nature; beyond color she cannot go.

In like manner, life is made up, not of knowledge only—but of love also. If thought is form, sentiment is color. It clothes the skeleton world with space, variety and glow. The hues of sunset make life great; so the affections make some little web of cottage and fireside populous, important, and filling the main space in our history.

The fundamental fact in our metaphysic constitution is the correspondence of man to the world. Every change in the world writes a record in the mind. The mind yields

sympathetically to the tendencies, or laws, that stream through things and make the order of Nature. And in the perfection of this correspondence or expressiveness—the health and power of man consists.

If we follow this hint into our intellectual education, we shall find that it is not propositions, not new dogmas or a logical exposition of the world that constitute our first need—but to watch and tenderly cherish the intellectual and moral sensibilities, those fountains of right thought, and woo them to stay and make their home with us. Whilst they abide with us we shall not think amiss.

Our perception far outruns our talent. We bring a welcome to the highest lessons of religion and of poetry out of all proportion beyond our skill to teach. And, further, the great hearing and sympathy of men is more true and wise than their speaking is accustomed to be. A deep sympathy is what we require for any student of the mind; for the chief difference between man and man is a difference of impressionability. Aristotle or Bacon or Kant propounds some maxim that becomes the keynote of philosophy thereafter. But I am more interested to know that when at last they have hurled out their grand word—we find that it is only some familiar experience of every man in the street. If not—it will never be heard of again.

Ah! If one could keep this sensibility, and live in the happy sufficing present, and find the day and its cheap means contenting, which only ask receptivity in you—and have no strained exertion and cankering ambition, overeager to be at the head of your class and the head of society, and to have distinction and laurels and consumption.

We are not strong by our power to penetrate—but by our relatedness. The world is enlarged for us, not by new objects, but by finding more affinities and potencies in those we have.

This sensibility appears in the homage to beauty that exalts the faculties of youth—in the power that form and color exert upon the soul when we see eyes that are a compliment to the human race, and features that explain the Phidian sculpture. Fontenelle said: “There are three things about which I have curiosity, though I know nothing of them—music, poetry and love.” The great doctors of this science are the greatest men—Dante, Petrarch, Michael Angelo and Shakespeare.

The wise Socrates treats this matter with a certain archness—yet with very marked expressions.

“I am always,” he says, “asserting that I happen to know, I may say, nothing but a mere trifle relating to matters of love; yet in that kind of learning I lay claim to being more skilled than any one man of the past or present time.”

They may well speak in this uncertain manner of their knowledge, and in this confident manner of their will, for the secret of it is hard to detect, so deep it is. And yet genius is measured by its skill in this science.

Emerson's 11th Point

Who is he in youth or in maturity or even in old age, who does not like to hear of those sensibilities that turn curled heads round at church, and send wonderful eye-beams across assemblies, from one to one, never missing in the thickest crowd? The keen statist reckons by tens and hundreds; the genial man is interested in every slipper that comes into the assembly. The passion, alike everywhere, creeps under the snows of Scandinavia, under the fires of the equator, and swims in the seas of Polynesia. Lofn is as puissant a divinity in the Norse Edda as Camadeva in the red vault of India, Eros in the Greek, or Cupid in the Latin heaven.¹⁴

And what is especially true of love is that it is a state of extreme impressionability. The lover has more senses and finer senses than others; his eye and ear are telegraphs; he reads omens on the flower, and cloud, and face, and form, and gesture, and reads them aright. In his surprise at the sudden and entire understanding that is between him and the beloved person, it occurs to him that they might somehow meet independently of time and place. How delicious the belief that he could elude all guards, precautions, ceremonies, means and delays, and hold instant and sempiternal communication!¹⁵ In solitude, in banishment, the hope returned, and the experiment was eagerly tried. The supernal powers seem to take his part. What was on his lips to say is uttered by his friend. When he went abroad, he met, by wonderful causalities, the one person he sought. If in his walk he chanced to look back, his friend was walking behind him. And it has happened that the artist has often drawn in his pictures the face of the future wife whom he had not yet seen.

But also in complacencies in no manner as strict as this of the passion—the man of sensibility counts it a delight only to hear a child's voice fully addressed to him, or to see the beautiful manners of the youth of either sex. When the event is past and remote, how insignificant is the greatest event when compared with the piquancy of the present!

Today at the school examination the professor interrogates Sylvina in the history class about Odoacer and Alaric. Sylvina can't remember, but suggests that Odoacer was defeated; and the professor tartly replies, "No, he defeated the Romans." But it is plain to the visitor that it is of no importance at all about Odoacer. And it is a great deal of importance about Sylvina. And if she says he was defeated, why he had better a great deal have been defeated than give her a moment's annoyance. Odoacer, if there were a particle of the gentleman in him, would have said, "Let me be defeated a thousand times."

Emerson's 12th Point

And as our tenderness for youth and beauty gives a new and just importance to their fresh and manifold claims, just so a similar sensibility gives welcome to all excellence—and has eyes and hospitality for merit in every corner.

¹⁴ These are all mythological figures each representing an aspect of love.

¹⁵ "Sempiternal" means—enduring, forever, eternal.

An Englishman of marked character and talent, who had brought with him hither one or two friends and a library of mystics, assured me that nobody and nothing of possible interest was left in England, and that he had brought all that was alive away. I was forced to reply: "No, next door to you probably, on the other side of the partition in the same house, was a greater man than any you had seen." Every man has a history worth knowing—if he could tell it—or if we could draw it from him.

Character and wit have their own magnetism. Send a deep man into any town, and he will find another deep man there, unknown hitherto to his neighbors. That is the great happiness of life, to add to our high acquaintances. The very law of averages might have assured you that there will be in every hundred heads, say ten or five good heads. Morals are generated as the atmosphere is. It is a secret, the genesis of either—but the springs of justice and courage do not fail any more than salt or sulfur springs.

The world is always opulent. The oracles are never silent. Yet the receiver must, by a happy temperance, be brought to that top condition, that frolic of health, so that he can easily take and give these fine communications. Health is the condition of wisdom. Its sign is cheerfulness—and an open and noble temper.

There never was a poet who did not have the heart in the right place. The old troubadour, Pons de Capdueil, wrote:

"Oft have I heard, and deem the witness true,
Whom man delights in, God delights in too."

All beauty warms the heart. All beauty is a sign of health, prosperity, and the favor of God. Everything lasting and fit for men the Divine Power has marked with this stamp.

What delights, what emancipates, not what scars and pains us, is wise and good in speech and in the arts. For, truly, the Heart at the center of the universe with every throb hurls the flood of happiness into every artery, vein, and veinlet, so that the whole system is inundated with the tides of joy. The plenty of the poorest place is too great; the harvest cannot be gathered. Every sound ends in music. The edge of every surface is tinged with prismatic rays.

Emerson's 13th Point

One more trait of true success—the good mind chooses what is positive, what is advancing, and embraces the affirmative. Yet our system is one of poverty. It is presumed, as I said, that there is but one Shakespeare, one Homer, one Jesus—and not that all are or shall be inspired. But we must begin by affirming.

Truth and goodness subsist forevermore. It is true there is evil and good,
night and day—but these are not equal. The day is great and final. The
night is for the day; but the day is not for the night.

What is this immortal demand for more, which belongs to our constitution? What is this enormous ideal? There is no such critic and beggar as this terrible Soul. No historical person begins to content us. We know the satisfactoriness of justice, the sufficiency of truth. We know the answer that leaves nothing to ask. We know the Spirit by its victorious tone. The searching tests to apply to every new pretender are quantity and

quality—what does he add? And what is the state of mind he leaves me in? Your theory is unimportant.

The real question is—what new stock can you add to humanity? Or, how high can you carry life? A man is a man only as he makes life and nature happier to us.

I fear that the popular notion of success stands in direct opposition in all points to the real and wholesome success. One adores public opinion, the other private opinion; one fame, the other desert; one feats, the other humility; one lucre, the other love; one monopoly, and the other hospitality of mind.

We may apply this affirmative law to letters, to manners, to art, to the decorations of our houses, etc. I do not find executions or tortures or lazar houses, or grisly photographs of the field on the day after the battle, fit subjects for cabinet pictures.¹⁶ I think that some so-called “sacred subjects” must be treated with more genius than I have seen in the masters of Italian or Spanish art to be right pictures for houses and churches.

Nature does not invite such exhibition. Nature lays the ground plan of each creature accurately, sternly fit for all his functions; and then veils it scrupulously. See how carefully she covers up the skeleton. The eye shall not see it; the sun shall not shine on it. She weaves her tissues and integuments of flesh and skin and hair and beautiful colors of the day over it; and forces death down underground; and makes haste to cover it up with leaves and vines; and carefully wipes out every trace by new creation. Who and what are you that you would lay the ghastly anatomy bare?

- Don't hang a dismal picture on the wall.
- And do not daub with the dark and gloomy in your conversation.
- Don't be a cynic and disconsolate preacher.
- Don't bewail and bemoan.
- Omit the negative propositions.
- Nerve us with incessant affirmatives.

Don't waste yourself in rejection, nor bark against the bad—but chant the beauty of the good. When what is spoken is that which has a right to be spoken—the chatter and the criticism will stop. Set down nothing that will not help somebody.

“For every gift of noble origin
Is breathed upon by Hope's perpetual breath.”

The affirmative of affirmatives is—love. As much love, so much perception. As thermal capacity is to matter, just so is love to mind. Love enlarges; and love empowers the mind.

Emerson's 14th Point

Good will makes insight, as one finds his way to the sea by embarking on a river. I have seen scores of people who can silence me; but I seek one who shall make me forget or overcome the frigidities and imbecilities into which I fall. The painter Giotto, Vasari tells us, renewed art because he put more goodness into his head.

¹⁶ A “lazar house” is a place to quarantine leprous people.

To awake in man and to raise the sense of worth, to educate his feeling and judgment so that he shall scorn himself for a bad action, that is the only aim.

It is cheap and easy to destroy. There is not a joyful boy or an innocent girl buoyant with fine purposes of duty, in all the street full of eager and rosy faces, but a cynic can chill and dishearten with a single word. Despondency comes readily enough to the most sanguine. The cynic has only to follow their hint with his bitter confirmation; and they check that eager courageous pace and go home with heavier step and premature age. They will themselves quickly enough give the hint he wants to the cold wretch. Which of them has not failed to please where they most wished it, or blundered where they were most ambitious for success? Or found themselves awkward or tedious or incapable of study, thought or heroism, and only hoped by good sense and fidelity to do what they could and pass unblamed? And this witty malefactor makes their little hope less with satire and skepticism—and slackens the springs of endeavor.

Yes, this is easy; but to help the young soul, add energy, inspire hope, and blow the coals into a useful flame; to redeem defeat by new thought, by firm action—that is not easy, that is the work of divine men.

Emerson's Concluding Point

We live on different planes or platforms. There is an external life, which is educated at school, taught to read, write, cipher and trade; taught to grasp all the boy can get, urging him to put himself forward, to make himself useful and agreeable in the world, to ride, run, argue and contend, unfold his talents, shine, conquer and possess.

But the inner life sits at home—and does not learn to do things, nor value these feats at all. It is a quiet, wise perception. It loves truth, because it is itself real. It loves right, it knows nothing else; but it makes no progress; it was as wise in our first memory of it as now; it is just the same now in maturity and hereafter in age as it was in youth.

We have grown to manhood and womanhood; we have powers, connection, children, reputations, professions—the inner life makes no account of them at all. It lives in the great present; it makes the present great. This tranquil, well-founded, wide-seeing soul is no express rider, no attorney, no magistrate—it lies in the sun and broods on the world. A person of this temper once said to a man of much activity, “I will pardon you that you do so much; and you pardon me that I do nothing.” And Euripides says, “Zeus hates busybodies and those who do too much.”

Andrew Carnegie's *The Gospel of Wealth*

Carnegie's Opening Point

The problem of our age is the proper administration of wealth—so that the ties of brotherhood may still bind together the rich and poor in harmonious relationship. The conditions of human life have not only been changed, but also revolutionized, within the past few hundred years.

In former days there was little difference between the dwelling, dress, food, and environment of the chief and those of his retainers. The Indians are today where civilized man then was. When visiting the Sioux, I was led to the wigwam of the chief. It was just like the others in external appearance; and even inside the difference was trifling between it and those of the poorest of his braves. The contrast between the palace of the millionaire and the cottage of the laborer with us today measures the change that has come with civilization.

This change, however, is not to be deplored, but welcomed as highly beneficial. It is well, nay, essential for the progress of humanity—that the houses of some should be homes for all that is highest and best in literature and the arts, and for all the refinements of civilization—rather than that none should be so. Much better is this great irregularity than universal squalor. Without wealth there can be no Mæcenas.¹⁷

The “good old times” were not good old times. Neither master nor servant was as well situated then as today. A relapse to old conditions would be disastrous to both—not the least so to him who serves—and would sweep away civilization with it. But whether the change is for good or ill, it is upon us, and it is now beyond our power to alter. And, therefore, the change is to be accepted and made the best of. It is a waste of time to criticize the inevitable.

Carnegie’s 2nd Point

It is easy to see how the change has come. One illustration will serve for almost every phase of the cause. In the manufacture of products we have the whole story. It applies to all combinations of human industry, as stimulated and enlarged by the inventions of this scientific age. Formerly articles were manufactured at the domestic hearth or in small shops that formed part of the household. The master and his apprentices worked side by side, the latter living with the master, and therefore subject to the same conditions. When these apprentices rose to be masters, there was little or no change in their mode of life. And they, in turn, educated in the same routine succeeding apprentices. There was, substantially, social equality and even political equality, since those engaged in industrial pursuits had then little or no political voice in the State.

But the inevitable result of such a mode of manufacture was crude articles at high prices. Today the world obtains commodities of excellent quality at prices that even the generation preceding this would have deemed incredible. In the commercial world similar causes have produced similar results—and humanity is benefited thereby. The poor enjoy what the rich could not before afford. What were the luxuries have become the necessities of life. The laborer now has more comforts than the landlord had a few generations ago. The farmer has more luxuries than the landlord had, and is now more richly clad and better housed. The landlord has books and pictures rarer, and appointments more artistic, than the King could then obtain.

¹⁷ Mæcenas (Gaius Cilnius) was an ancient Roman statesman and a patron to Horace and Virgil. The name now signifies any wealthy, generous patron, especially to literature and art.

Carnegie's 3rd Point

The price we pay for this salutary change is, no doubt, great. We assemble thousands of operatives in the factory, in the mine, and in the counting-house, of whom the employer can know little or nothing; and to whom the employer is little better than a myth.¹⁸ All intercourse between them is at an end. Rigid castes are formed, and, as usual, mutual ignorance breeds mutual distrust. Each caste is without sympathy for the other, and ready to believe anything disparaging in regard to the other caste. Under the law of competition, the employer of thousands is forced into the strictest economies, among which the rates paid to labor figure prominently. And often there is friction between the employer and the employed, between capital and labor, between rich and poor. Human society loses homogeneity.

The price society pays for the law of competition, like the price it pays for cheap comforts and luxuries, is also great. Yet the advantages of this law are also greater still, for it is to this law that we owe our wonderful material development, which brings improved conditions in its train. But, whether the law be benign or not, we must say of it, as we say of the change in the conditions of men to which we have referred—it is here.

We cannot evade it; no substitutes for it have been found. And while the law may be sometimes hard for the individual, it is best for humanity—because it insures the survival of the fittest in every department. We accept and welcome therefore, as conditions to which we must accommodate ourselves, great inequality of environment, the concentration of business, industrial and commercial, in the hands of a few, and the law of competition between these, as being not only beneficial, but essential for the future progress of humanity.

Having accepted these, it follows that there must be great scope for the exercise of special ability in the merchant and in the manufacturer who has to conduct business upon a great scale. That this talent for organization and management is rare among men is proved by the fact that it invariably secures for its possessor enormous rewards—no matter where or under what laws or conditions. The experienced in business always rate the person whose services can be obtained as a partner as not only the first consideration, but such as to render the question of his capital scarcely worth considering, for such men soon create capital; conversely, without the special talent required, capital soon takes wings.

Such men become invested in firms or corporations using millions; and estimating only simple interest to be made upon the capital invested. It is inevitable that their income will exceed their expenditures, and that they must accumulate wealth. Nor is there any middle ground that such men can occupy, because the great manufacturing or commercial concern that does not earn at least interest upon its capital soon becomes bankrupt. It must either go forward or fall behind—to stand still is impossible. It is a condition essential for its successful operation that in addition to interest on capital, it must be profitable. It is a law, as certain as any of the others named, that men possessed of this peculiar talent for business, under the free play of economic forces, must, of necessity,

¹⁸ A counting-house is any building where a business firm carries on operations such as accounting and correspondence.

soon be in receipt of more revenue than can be judiciously expended upon themselves. And this law is as beneficial for humanity as the others.

Carnegie's 4th Point

Objections to the foundations upon which society is based are not in order, because the condition of humanity is better with these than it has been with any others that have been tried. Of the effect of any new substitutes proposed we cannot be sure. The Socialist or Anarchist who seeks to overturn present conditions is to be regarded as attacking the foundation upon which civilization itself rests. For civilization took its start from the day that the capable, industrious workman said to his incompetent and lazy fellow, "If thou doest not sow, thou shall not reap,"—and thus ended primitive Communism by separating the drones from the bees.

One who studies this subject will soon be brought face to face with the conclusion that upon the sacredness of property civilization itself depends—the right of the laborer to his hundred dollars in the savings bank, and equally the legal right of the millionaire to his millions.

To those who propose to substitute Communism for this intense Individualism the answer, therefore, is—Humanity has tried that. All progress from that barbarous day to the present time has resulted from its displacement. Not evil, but good, has come to humanity from the accumulation of wealth by those who have the ability and energy that produce it.

But even if we admit for a moment that it might be better for humanity to discard its present foundation, Individualism, and affirm that it is a nobler ideal that man should labor, not for himself alone, but in and for a brotherhood of his fellows, and share with them all in common, thus realizing Swedenborg's idea of Heaven, where, as he says, the angels derive their happiness, not from laboring for self, but for each other. Even admit all this, and a sufficient answer is—that is not evolution, but revolution.

It necessitates the changing of human nature, which is itself a work of eons—even if it were good to change human nature, which we cannot know. It is not practicable in our day or in our age. Even if desirable theoretically, it belongs to another and long-succeeding sociological stratum.

Our duty is with what is practicable now; our duty is with the next step possible in our day and generation. It is criminal to waste our energies in endeavoring to uproot present society when all we can profitably or possibly accomplish is—to bend the universal tree of humanity a little in the direction most favorable to the production of good fruit under existing circumstances.

We might as well urge the destruction of the highest existing type of man because he failed to reach our ideal as to favor the destruction of Individualism, Private Property, the Law of Accumulation of Wealth, and the Law of Competition—for these are the highest results of human experience, the soil in which society so far has produced the best fruit.

Unequally or unjustly, perhaps, as these laws sometimes operate, and imperfect as they appear to the Idealist, they are, nevertheless, like the highest type of man—the best and most valuable of all that humanity has yet accomplished.

We start, then, with a condition of affairs under which the best interests of humanity are promoted—but which, nevertheless, inevitably gives wealth to the few. Thus far, accepting conditions as they exist, the situation can be surveyed and pronounced good.

Carnegie's 5th Point

The question then arises—and, if the foregoing is correct, it is the only question with which we have to deal:

What is the proper mode of administering wealth after the laws upon which civilization is founded have thrown it into the hands of the few?

And it is of this great question that I believe I offer the true solution. It will be understood that *fortunes* are here spoken of, not moderate sums saved by many years of effort, the returns on which are required for the comfortable maintenance and education of families. That is not *wealth*, but only a *competence*, which should be the aim of all to acquire.

There are but three modes in which surplus wealth can be disposed of.

- It can be left to the families of the decedents.
- Or, it can be bequeathed for public purposes.
- Or, finally, it can be administered during their lives by its possessors.

Under the first and second modes most of the wealth of the world that has reached the few has hitherto been applied. Let us in turn consider each of these modes.

The first is the most injudicious. In monarchical countries, the estates and the greatest portion of the wealth are left to the first son so that the vanity of the parent may be gratified by the thought that his name and title are to descend to succeeding generations unimpaired. The condition of this class in Europe today teaches the futility of such hopes or ambitions. The successors have become impoverished through their follies or from the fall in the value of land. Even in Great Britain the strict law of entail has been found inadequate to maintain the status of the hereditary class. Their lands are rapidly passing into the hands of strangers. Under republican institutions the division of property among the children is much fairer. Nevertheless, the question that forces itself upon thoughtful men in all lands is: Why should men leave great fortunes to their children? If this is done from affection, is it not misguided affection? Observation teaches that, generally speaking, it is not well for the children that they should be so burdened. Neither is it well for the state. Beyond providing for the wife and daughters moderate sources of income, and very moderate allowances indeed, if any, for the sons, men may well hesitate—for it is no longer questionable that great sums bequeathed oftener work more for the injury than for the good of the recipients. Wise men will soon conclude that, for the best interests of the members of their families and of the state, such bequests are an improper use of their means.

It is not suggested that men who have failed to educate their sons to earn a livelihood shall cast them adrift in poverty. If any man has seen fit to rear his sons with a view to their living idle lives, or, what is highly commendable, has instilled in them the sentiment that they are in a position to labor for public ends without reference to pecuniary considerations, then, of course the duty of the parent is to see that such are provided for in *moderation*.

There are instances of millionaires' sons unspoiled by wealth, who, being rich, still perform great services in the community. Such are the very salt of the earth, as valuable as, unfortunately, they are rare. Still, it is not the exception, but the rule, that men must regard. And, looking at the usual result of enormous sums conferred upon legatees, the thoughtful man must shortly say, "I would as soon leave to my son a curse as the almighty dollar," and admit to himself that it is not the welfare of the children, but family pride, which inspires these enormous legacies.

As to the second mode, that of leaving wealth at death for public uses, it may be said that this is only a means for the disposal of wealth, provided a man is content to wait until he is dead before it becomes of much good in the world. Knowledge of the results of legacies bequeathed does not inspire the brightest hopes of much posthumous good being accomplished. The cases are not few in which the real object sought by the testator is not attained, nor are they few in which his real wishes are thwarted. In many cases the bequests are so used as to become only monuments of his folly.

It is well to remember that it requires the exercise of no less ability than that which acquired the wealth—to use it so as to be really beneficial to the community.

Besides this, it may fairly be said that no man is to be extolled for doing what he cannot help doing, nor is he to be thanked by the community to which he only leaves wealth at death. Men who leave vast sums in this way may fairly be thought of as men who would not have left it at all, had they been able to take it with them. The memories of such cannot be held in grateful remembrance—for there is no grace in their gifts. It is not to be wondered at that such bequests seem so generally to lack the blessing.

The growing disposition to tax more and more heavily large estates left at death is a cheering indication of the growth of a salutary change in public opinion. The State of Pennsylvania now takes—subject to some exceptions—one-tenth of the property left by its citizens. The budget presented in the British Parliament the other day proposes to increase the death-duties; and, most significant of all, the new tax is to be a graduated one. Of all forms of taxation, this seems the wisest. Men who continue hoarding great sums all their lives—the proper use of which for public ends would work good to the community—should be made to feel that the community, in the form of the state, cannot thus be deprived of its proper share. By taxing estates heavily at death the state marks its condemnation of the selfish millionaire's unworthy life.

It is desirable that nations should go much further in this direction. Indeed, it is difficult to set bounds to the share of a rich man's estate that should go at his death to the public through the agency of the state. And by all means such taxes should be graduated, beginning at nothing upon moderate sums to dependents, and increasing rapidly as the amounts swell, until of the millionaire's hoard, as of Shylock's, at least "...the other half comes to the privy coffer of the state."¹⁹

This policy would work powerfully to induce the rich man to attend to the administration of wealth during his life, which is the end that society should always have in view, as

¹⁹ Here Carnegie is quoting a line from Shakespeare's *The Merchant of Venice*.

being that by far most fruitful for the people. Nor need it be feared that this policy would sap the root of enterprise and render men less anxious to accumulate wealth. To the class whose ambition it is to leave great fortunes and be talked about after their death, it will attract even more attention. And, indeed, it is a somewhat nobler ambition to have enormous sums paid over to the state from their fortunes.

Carnegie's 6th Point

There remains, then, only one other mode of using great fortunes. And in this we have the true antidote for the temporary unequal distribution of wealth, the reconciliation of the rich and the poor—a reign of harmony—another ideal, differing, indeed, from that of the Communist in requiring only the further evolution of existing conditions, not the total overthrow of our civilization. It is founded upon the present most intense individualism. And humanity is projected to put it in practice by degree whenever it pleases.

Under its sway we shall have an ideal state, in which the surplus wealth of the few will become, in the best sense, the property of the many—because administered for the common good. And this wealth, passing through the hands of the few, can be made a much more potent force for the elevation of our species than if it had been distributed in small sums to the people themselves. Even the poorest can be made to see this—and to agree that great sums gathered by some of their fellow-citizens and spent for public purposes, from which the masses reap the principal benefit, are more valuable to them than if scattered among them through the course of many years in trifling amounts.

If we consider what results flow from the Cooper Institute, for instance, to the largest portion of humanity in New York not possessed of means—and compare these with those which would have arisen for the good of the masses from an equal sum distributed by Mr. Cooper in his lifetime in the form of wages, (which is the highest form of distribution, being for work done and not for charity)—we can form some estimate of the possibilities for the improvement of humanity that lie embedded in the present law of the accumulation of wealth.

[Editor's note: The Cooper Institute is known today as the Cooper Union for the Advancement of Science and Art. It now offers both tuition-free bachelor's and master's degrees in engineering as well as bachelor's degrees in both art and architecture. And it offered the very first free public reading room in New York City. At one time, in its earlier years, it was a highly important meeting hall specifically for the free exchange of ideas. The school also runs the nation's oldest continuing education program.]

Much of this sum, if distributed in small quantities among the people, would have been wasted in the indulgence of appetite, some of it in excess. And it may be doubted whether even the part put to the best use—that of adding to the comforts of the home—would have yielded results for humanity at all comparable to those which are flowing and are to flow from the Cooper Institute from generation to generation. Let the advocate of violent or radical change ponder well this thought.

We might even go so far as to take another instance, that of Mr. Tilden's bequest of five millions of dollars for a free library in the city of New York. Yet in referring to this, one cannot help saying, involuntarily, how much better if Mr. Tilden had devoted the last

years of his own life to the proper administration of this immense sum. In that case, neither legal contest nor any other cause of delay could have interfered with his aims. But let us assume that Mr. Tilden's millions finally become the means of giving to this city a noble public library, where the treasures of the world contained in books will be open to all forever, without money and without price. Considering the good for that part of humanity that congregates in and around Manhattan Island—would its permanent benefit have been better promoted had these millions been allowed to circulate in small sums through the hands of the masses? Even the most strenuous advocate of Communism must entertain a doubt upon this subject. Most of those who think will probably entertain no doubt whatever.

Poor and restricted are our opportunities in this life; narrow our horizon; our best work most imperfect. But rich men should be thankful for one inestimable boon. They have it in their power during their lives to busy themselves in organizing benefactions from which the masses of their fellows will derive lasting advantage—and thereby dignify their own lives.

The highest life is probably to be reached, not by such imitation of the life of Christ as Count Tolstoy gives us, but instead—while animated by Christ's spirit—by recognizing the changed conditions of this age, and adopting modes of expressing this spirit suitable to the changed conditions under which we live, still laboring for the good of our fellows, which was the essence of his life and teaching. Yet laboring, however, in a different manner than Tolstoy suggests.

This, then, is held to be the duty of the man of wealth:

- First, to set an example of modest, unostentatious living, shunning display or extravagance.
- Secondly, to provide moderately for the legitimate wants of those dependent upon him.
- And, thirdly, after doing the above, to consider all surplus revenues that come to him simply as trust funds, which he is called upon to administer, and strictly bound as a matter of duty to administer in the manner which, in his judgment, is best calculated to produce the most beneficial results for the community.

The man of wealth thus becomes the mere agent and trustee for his poorer brethren, bringing to their service his superior wisdom, experience, and ability to administer; and doing for them better than they would or could do for themselves.

Carnegie's 7th Point

We are met here with the difficulty of determining:

- What are moderate sums to leave to members of the family?
- What is modest, unostentatious living?
- What is the test of extravagance?

There must be different standards for different conditions. The answer is that it is as impossible to name exact amounts or actions as it is to define good manners, good taste, or the rules of propriety. Nevertheless, these are verities, well known even though they are indefinable. Public sentiment is quick to know and to feel what offends these. And this is just as true in the case of wealth.

The rule in regard to good taste in the dress of men or women applies here. Whatever makes one conspicuous offends the canon. If any family becomes chiefly known for display, for extravagance in home, table, equipage, for enormous sums ostentatiously spent in any form upon themselves—if these are their chief distinctions, we have no difficulty in estimating their nature or culture. And it is also the same in regard to the use or abuse of their surplus wealth, or to generous, freehanded cooperation in good public uses, or to unabated efforts to accumulate and hoard to the last, whether they administer or bequeath. The verdict rests with the best and most enlightened public sentiment. The community will surely judge and its judgments will not often be wrong.

The best uses to which surplus wealth can be put have already been indicated. Those who would administer wisely must, indeed, be wise, for one of the serious obstacles to the improvement of our species is indiscriminate charity. It were better for mankind that the millions spent by the rich were thrown into the sea than spent so as to encourage the slothful, the drunken, or the unworthy. Of every thousand dollars spent in so-called charity today, it is probable that \$950 is unwisely spent—so spent, indeed, that it unwittingly promotes the very evils that it proposes to mitigate or cure.

A well-known writer of philosophic books admitted the other day that he had given a quarter of a dollar to a man who approached him as he was going to visit the house of his friend. He knew nothing of the habits of this beggar. He did not know the use that would be made of this money—although he had every reason to suspect that it would be spent improperly. This man professed to be a disciple of Herbert Spencer; yet the quarter-dollar given that night will probably work more injury than all the money that its thoughtless donor will ever be able to give to true charity will do good.²⁰ He only gratified his own feelings, saved himself from annoyance—and this was probably one of the most selfish and very worst actions of his life. In all other respects, he is most worthy.

Carnegie's 8th Point

In bestowing charity, the main considerations should be:

- to help those who will help themselves;
- to provide part of the means by which those who desire to improve may do so;
- to give those who desire to use the aids by which they may rise;
- to assist—but rarely or never to do all.

Neither the individual nor humanity is improved by alms giving. Those worthy of assistance, except in rare cases, seldom require assistance. The really valuable men of the world never do, except in cases of accident or sudden change. Everyone has, of course, cases of individuals brought to his own knowledge where temporary assistance can do genuine good. And these he will not overlook.

But the amount that can be wisely given by the individual for individuals is necessarily limited by his lack of knowledge of the circumstances connected with each. He is the only true reformer who is as careful and as anxious not to aid the unworthy as he is to aid the worthy. And, perhaps, even more so—because in alms-giving more injury is probably done by rewarding vice than by relieving virtue.

²⁰ Herbert Spencer (1828-1903) was a Victorian biologist and philosopher.

The rich man is thus almost restricted to following the examples of Peter Cooper, Enoch Pratt of Baltimore, Mr. Pratt of Brooklyn, Senator Stanford, and others, who know that the best means of benefiting the community is to place within its reach the ladders upon which the aspiring can rise—parks, and means of recreation, by which men are helped in body and mind; works of art, certain to give pleasure and improve the public taste; and public institutions of various kinds, which will improve the general condition of the people. In this manner they return their surplus wealth to the masses of their fellows in the forms best calculated to do them lasting good.

Carnegie's Concluding Point

Thus is the problem of Rich and Poor to be solved. The laws of accumulation will be left free. Likewise, the laws of distribution must be left free. Individualism will continue, but the millionaire will be but a trustee for the poor. The wealthy are entrusted for a season with a great part of the increased wealth of the community. And they will administer it for the community far better than it could or would have done for itself.

The best minds will thus have reached a stage in the development of humanity where it is clearly seen—that there is no mode of disposing of surplus wealth creditable to thoughtful and earnest men into whose hands it flows save by using it year by year for the general good.

This day already dawns. But in a little while, and without incurring the pity of their fellows, men may die who are sharers in great business enterprises from which their capital cannot be or has not been withdrawn; and it is left at death chiefly for public uses.

Yet the man who dies leaving behind many millions of available wealth, which was his to administer during life, will pass away “unwept, unhonored, and unsung,” no matter to what uses he leaves the dross that he cannot take with him. Of such as these the public verdict will then be: “The man who dies thus rich dies disgraced.”

Such, in my opinion, is the true Gospel concerning Wealth, obedience to which is destined someday to solve the problem of the Rich and the Poor, and to bring—“Peace on earth, among men Goodwill.”

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