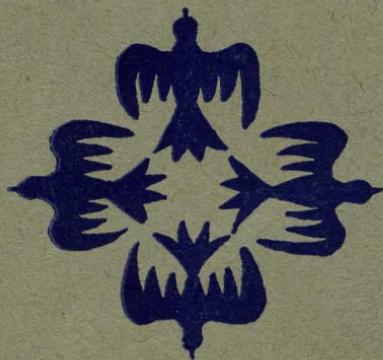


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THE FOUR FREEDOMS



Rev. Brendan Larnen, O.P.
The Hour of Faith



The Four Freedoms

BY

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FREEDOM OF SPEECH

(August 6, 1944)

There is an error prevalent among men that freedom is a comparatively modern or new concept. However, worthwhile and effective freedom is as old as Adam, for it goes back to the beginning of time when the first man created by God was given the privilege to be free to do what is right. All freedom since then, down through the ages, has been true freedom only when it was concerned with doing what was right. Any other understanding of freedom than that it is the privilege to do what is right, is a mistaken concept of freedom.

The abuse of freedom is neither comparatively new nor comparatively modern either. The first man, Adam, abused his freedom and suffered as a consequence. Whatever man-made suffering has been inflicted upon humanity since the beginning of the world can be traced to the abuse of freedom on the part of man. One man's freedom should not be another man's slavery, for freedom must be something absolute and not something relative. The present Archbishop of Westminster considers these two aspects of freedom when he observes, "The Nazis said they were fighting for freedom . . . In fact for them

freedom meant the power to do exactly as they pleased, so long as it was to the apparent advantage of the German race . . ." But real freedom, Archbishop Griffin concludes, is, ". . . to do what one should do rather than what one wants to do."

We Americans have always understood the importance of freedom, but we have not always understood its obligation or its responsibility. In other words, we always realized how much freedom meant to us, but we have not always realized the meaning of freedom. Our founding fathers achieved both. Since their time we have often groped toward a realization of freedom. Though we knew the definition, we did not always know the reality. Had we known the reality rather than the definition, we would have been more fortunate.

Twenty five years ago or so we subscribed to an ideal which epitomized the meaning of freedom. We sent our youth to an alien land to fight that the world might be made safe for democracy. Within the past quarter of a century we saw that great ideal become less and less a reality, so much so that

the years of peace which we enjoyed were merely an interlude between wars. We failed to achieve the goal of the last war, we failed to make the world safe for democracy, because we failed to make democracy safe for the world.

Today we and practically all other peoples are suffering because we have abused our freedom. At present we assure ourselves that this will not happen again. We have even taken some definite steps toward that goal. Lest we betray ourselves again when we assure ourselves and the world that freedom will once more prevail among men, this time we should consider the obligations which freedom entails. We need not be too exhaustive or exhausting in such a consideration. We can, for instance, confine ourselves to the Four Freedoms and analyze them.

Such an analysis will disclose whether these four freedoms will provide a sound basis for a worthwhile post war world. Such an analysis will also disclose that each of these freedoms, if they are to be realized and effective, demands responsibility on the part of those privileged to enjoy it. Thus if these four freedoms are found to be valid, they will demand a world or a society based upon rights and responsibilities which are mutually inclusive.

The first of the Four Freedoms is freedom of speech. Its responsibility should be respect for truth. Respect for truth, of course, is a somewhat vague generality. It is quite a nice sounding phrase and might remind us of those Harvard men who attended George Santayana's lectures not to learn but to listen, for he talked so well they didn't care what he said. Such a reaction is quite typical of us Americans. We have continually succumbed to phrase makers not for what they said but for how they said it. After the last war we were assured that we would fashion a brave new world and we agreed to such a destiny without question, so much so that what we actually created was a grave old world. We never evaluated the words to determine whether they conformed to objective reality or not, for we were attracted not to truth but to truisms.

Henceforth freedom of speech cannot mean freedom to say anything whether it be true or not. Instead it must mean that we are morally free only to speak the truth. Of course, some believe or at least practice the principle that truth is relative, that there is no such thing as absolute truth. They seem to believe that that which is expedient is true; or if they don't really believe it in their hearts, at

least they act as if they did. Herein lies the greatest error of our age. Such an error created the situation which we witnessed at Munich in October 1938. At that time Hitler said that he had no further territorial ambitions and Chamberlain was quite certain that he had achieved peace in our times. The confidence of Chamberlain and the deception of Hitler arose from the fact that the one believed that the other meant what he said whereas he lied. In a world where the leaders of men and nations reject absolute truth and admit only a so-called truth that is relative to their personal or national convenience, how can anyone trust another?

Our American boys who rest beneath the poppies of Flanders Fields since 1918, did not die that Hitler might ruin the world twenty years later. Our American boys who die on the beachheads of Normandy are not throwing away their bright young lives that twenty years hence another generation of American youth will have to go forth again to save the world. In fact, the next generation of our youth may be reluctant to do so. They may have a casual knowledge of history and decide that the world which their elders have continually ruined, is not worth the effort.

Such ruthless and bloody sacri-

fices will never again be necessary, should truth prevail among men. This will mean that men will have to be honest with each other, and as a consequence nations will be honest, for a nation is as moral as its citizens. If truth be respected among men, there will be no cause for dispute among them. Instead there will be peace, not the peace which came after the last war and which was irreverently described as the peace that "surpasseth all understanding." Instead it will be a peace that can be described in the words of a great American as one with malice toward none and charity toward all.

Our American heritage, if it is anything, is a respect for truth. Respect for truth is so essential a part of justice that without truth there will be no justice among men and, without justice there will be no truth. Equal justice for all is the principle that created our nation and has made our nation great. Thus if freedom to speak the truth means freedom of speech, freedom of speech is very important to us. If it means anything less, then we are mocking God when we say, "In God we trust." God is not mocked. God wants the truth to be spoken, for as Saint Augustine advises, ". . . tell the truth, God hath no need for a lie."

God is truth. He created us as

unique beings, creatures who could speak the truth. He gave us that precious gift of speech to reveal our thoughts—not to conceal them, as the cynic would have it. We then have the responsibility to our fellow men, to our nation, but more so to God, to use and never to abuse the gift of speech. Some day we will have to account to God for how we used that gift. God will not be impressed if we explain that we spurned freedom of speech and its responsibility because it was a device conjured up by a political party.

Truth is not a matter of political party affiliation. Nor is it a matter of prejudice. It is instead a matter of facing facts or reality. Our world between wars refused to do so. We particularly betrayed our youth in this regard. They in turn lost their moorings, so much so that the current literature of the era described them as *the lost generation*, or *the beautiful and the damned*. They remembered the anguished cries of their loved ones who a few brief years before had died to save the world. They saw that the world had not been saved. Their world could have been, but would not be, saved, because of the duplicity of men. In fact during those years duplicity and diplomacy became synonymous. Logically they

concluded that their generation had been sacrificed in vain. Some of them believed, as one of their own had described it, that war was an idiot's delight. Some who were more discerning wondered who were the idiots. None of them liked to think that the bitter joke was on themselves.

We don't want another lost generation after this war. We don't want another bitter joke visited upon our youth. But such might become the fact if the Four Freedoms become no more significant than the ideal of making the world safe for democracy. Thus the ominous tendency regarding the Four Freedoms which is somewhat prevalent today—that attitude that the Four Freedoms are just hollow words—must be guarded against. Let us guard the Four Freedoms until something better and more effective can be proposed in their stead. Unless we want another hollow victory and another futile peace, we must guarantee these freedoms.

Our youth who are fighting this war for us, our youth who are to continue this great nation of ours, must not be deceived. They must not make sacrifices in vain. Their destiny must not be to face another war in another few decades. Instead they must be assured first of all that freedom of speech means

something—that it means the freedom to speak the truth—that it is the instrument whereby justice may prevail among men and nations. That's what they want, and that's what we must give them.

Together we and our youth can build a better world if we accept this responsibility of speaking the truth. If we become or remain prejudiced or personal regarding freedom of speech, then we are inviting our own ruination. We don't have to be Republicans or Democrats to fight to maintain this freedom. We only have to be Americans. No political or personal prejudices have intruded themselves in the fighting of this war. Our army and our navy know no such distinction. None should prevail in the making of the peace either. Instead there should be some objective thinking, free from prejudice, to guide us.

Such a condition prevailed in the making of America. All the various and dissident elements were

united to found and further a republic of the people, by the people, and for the people. Truth and honesty, as well as justice whence they sprung, were the motivating forces that created America. Such was America of the past. Such should be America of the future.

America was built upon the fear and love of God, respect for neighbor and for country, with truth as the integrating factor. Something of that national structure has vanished. It must be restored on the firm bases of truth, religion, humanity, and patriotism. It will be if these four freedoms for which we fight become effective. They are not exactly new, for they are implicitly contained in the Bill of Rights which is as old as America itself. They have made our country a great country, and they alone can keep it great. But of them all, perhaps freedom of speech is the most important, for it is the freedom to speak the truth, and the truth will make us free.

FREEDOM OF RELIGION

(August 13, 1944)

There was once a little girl who began to draw a picture of God. When one of her elders informed her that nobody knew what God looked like, she replied, "They will after I'm finished." Each of us, like this little child, has some concept of God. It may not be accurate and it may not be authentic, but it is nevertheless a reality for us. Even the atheist has to think of God to deny His existence. God is a reality which we either affirm or deny. Most of us affirm the reality even though our affirmations differ. Despite these indifferencees which divide us regarding the reality of God, practically all of us are united in the common belief, the unassailable conviction, that God does exist.

This acknowledgment of God has always been characteristic of Americans. Ever since the days of the founding fathers of our republic, we have at least officially recognized the sovereignty of God. The fact that sixty of our many millions do not attend church services, is not our fault but theirs, for here in America we can attend church services and we can worship God according to the dictates of conscience.

No matter what creed may separate us from our fellow Americans in religious belief, we are all united in a religious sense by the primary demand of all religion and all ethics worthy of the name, in that we obey our conscience, for conscience is the immediate norm of all morality. Thus we cannot quarrel with any man who follows his conscience. We may believe, and even rightly, that his is an erroneous conscience. We may try, and even rightly too, to correct his conscience. But we cannot in justice deny him the right to do what he believes to be his conscientious duty.

Conscience then and not controversy should be the main concern in any consideration of the freedom of religion or the freedom of worship. This does not mean that we have to agree with the tenets of any particular religious faith. It does not mean that we have to assent to such tenets. But it does mean that every man has the right to believe and to worship according to his conscience. We cannot, either as sincere religious people or as American citizens, deny the right of conscience.

There are, however, two inher-

ent dangers in freedom of worship. One is fanaticism and the other is indifferentism. One is due to an excess of religion and the other is caused by a defect of religion. One of them is just as inimical to American interests as the other. Neither of them will make any contribution to the common good of our nation nor prove in any way helpful in rescuing mankind from the chaos in which the world is now submerged.

The old type of fanaticism which occasionally occurred in America was based on religious grounds. It was stife between one religion and another. Gradually we became intellectually mature enough to realize that such dissension availed nothing, that neither side achieved anything, that both parties to the controversy suffered unnecessarily.

Today, however, a new type of religious dissension or strife is cropping up throughout our land. It threatens particularly our unity as a people. Fanatics and demagogues would have us believe that because a man assents to a certain religious creed, he is thereby an advocate or an adherent of one of the detestable state-centered philosophies which have ruined modern Europe. While the Protestant, the Jew, and the Catholic are united

in arms to conquer a common enemy, while they fall together on the field of battle, while they languish together in the enemy prison camp, while they live and die together for the Four Freedoms which can be so important in the remaking of the modern world, here on the home front we give battle to each other for no just cause. Name calling, accusations, vandalism, and social irritation in the name of religion, make a mockery of the sacrifice which our fellow Americans are making on the global battlefield.

If there is any time when it might be true, it is today, that the old American custom of not mixing religion with politics should be observed. Of course, this does not mean that the custom be observed as it was by a dishonest wardheeler, who excused his dishonesty and squared his conduct with his conscience on the ground that he never mixed his religion with his politics. Those who mix religion with politics violate not only freedom of worship by questioning the patriotism of their fellow Americans because of their religious beliefs, but they also violate freedom of speech if it means, as it should, the freedom to speak the truth; for all the attacks against religious groups or persons of a religious group, based

on political reasons, upon analysis prove not to be true.

Real religion demands real patriotism. You cannot have the one without the other. If a man is using his religion to be subversive, then he is not religious. Real religion produces patriots not traitors. Thus it is dishonest to allege that because a man is a good Jew, he is a Communist; that because a man is a good Catholic, he is a Fascist.

When we begin to allow a denial of truth and a denial of religion in American life, then we are beginning to prepare for our own ruination. Real Americanism has been founded upon truth and religion. We consider both to be quite important, so much so that we are sacrificing or risking the lives of millions of our youth that they may prevail in our land, that they provide a plan or a way of life for other peoples to begin again to live in peace. There is no place in our land, or in any land for that matter, for the crackpot fanatic or demagogue who would create suspicion and distrust because of the religious creeds that we as individuals may profess.

When we begin to become more conscientious about that commandment of God which demands that, "Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself," then we are making a

positive contribution toward the Four Freedoms. We are achieving for ourselves and for all men that one world which Mr. Willkie popularized quite recently. If we wish to yield to excessive religious activity, let us find something positive to satisfy such excess. If we concentrate on the fulfillment of that commandment of the love of neighbor with all the excess, all the fanaticism we can summon, we will be doing a real service to God and country. If we do this we won't have much time, if any, for baiting other people or other creeds. Instead we will be busy all the day long, doing the will of God. Which is not true when we engage in witch hunting. If we want to be religious, if we want to be patriotic, we need to love our neighbor.

Some of us need to be reminded or taught that religion has a global aspect, that there is no isolation in the works of religion. Real religion demands that everyone without exception be considered one's neighbor. Thus to enjoy the privilege and fulfill the responsibility of freedom of worship, we must respect not only the rights of God but also those of our neighbor, for he, too, is a creature of God and made to God's image and likeness.

There is another aspect of freedom of religion which must be considered. Freedom of religion,

or worship, does not mean freedom from religion. Freedom means to do what is right. When freedom ceases to mean just that, it ceases to be freedom. Thus we must necessarily exercise freedom of worship in the right way. This freedom really means freedom for religion. We must worship God. A misinterpretation of this freedom of worship might suggest that worship of God is a matter of personal choice, something one is free to do or not to do.

We cannot be indifferent to God—not because God might then become indifferent to us, not merely because He might punish us for our neglect—but because we are His creatures, made to serve Him in this world and to help others do the same. It may be difficult for us to realize this fact, for we belong to a world that until quite recently labored under the delusion that it did not need God.

The prevalent philosophy of our times has been that God was not very important. That it was very nice, and quaint perhaps, that people really believed in God, was the reaction of many. They were indifferent to God. They were quite convinced that they were self-sufficient. Fifteen years ago they couldn't believe otherwise. Those who believed in God, did so merely because they wanted to get to

heaven. But our prophets of that day assured us that heaven was here upon earth. We were also assured that the greatest achievement of the twentieth century man would be that he could enjoy heaven upon earth.

Something happened, however, for heaven didn't materialize. Instead things began to become progressively worse rather than better. First there was a world-wide economic collapse. Then there followed a growing political collapse. Then came rumors of war. Finally there was war itself. Twentieth century man with all his ability and all his achievement will go down in history as having done nothing better than that he tried to destroy himself.

Now we are starkly and grimly aware that of ourselves we can do nothing, that without God we will achieve nothing. So with the help of God we now fight for our survival. With His help too we can rebuild our world. But this time we must realize and benefit by the past instead of having to learn again the hard way that we need God. Our freedom of religion guarantees us the easy way of learning that lesson.

During this period of trial it is not too difficult to remember God, for we know that with Him we can

do everything. But when peace and prosperity, security and serenity, are ours again, we may forget God. Or if we don't forget Him,

we may challenge Him either by our indifference or by our ungodly religious excess. In other words if we refuse to worship God or if we hinder others in their worship of Him, we are spurning His goodness and inviting His wrath.

This will not happen, however, if we readjust our lives and build them on the bases which the Four Freedoms provide. Truth and religion are two of these, so irretrievably linked that it is difficult to

consider them separately. They have put us on God's side, they will keep us on God's side, and with God we need fear no enemy.

If we remain on God's side, and use freedom of speech to speak the truth, freedom of religion to worship God according to the dictates of our conscience, we will have two instruments to effect a worthwhile post-war world. With these two we'll make America greater than it ever was before, and we will show the rest of the world an ideal to be attained—peace among men of good will and good will among men of peace.

FREEDOM FROM WANT

(August 20, 1944)

Fifteen years ago a great many other depression. So we may be thought we were a people economically secure. Within a year we knew we were a people dangerously insecure. Within that year our whole economic perspective had so changed that we could refer facetiously to the previous years of plenty as the years B. C., the years before the crash. Most of us still remember those terrible dark days during the fall of 1929 when the bottom fell out of the market, as the saying went. Millionaires were reduced to penury. Fortunes which had been made over night, vanished more quickly. Despite it all, we still retained our sense of humor. It was mordant humor on occasion, so much so that when an apparently affluent guest registered at a hotel in those days, we could wonder whether he was engaging a room for sleep or suicide.

Now we as Americans should not fear the future. Nor should we fear another depression. In fact, we should expect a reassuring future. There is no need for a depression in our land or among our people. We not only can prevent such a disaster, but we must. We were once told that we had a rendezvous with destiny. This indeed is our destiny.

Our beloved land should never again force its citizens to beg for their bread. Our sidewalks should never again see our fellow Americans selling apples that they might survive. We should never again have to destroy our livestock and our food supply to achieve an economic balance. The lyric, *Brother, Can You Spare a Dime*, should never again characterize our times. So today we must prepare and be vigilant lest tomorrow we have to beg for our daily bread, sell apples that we might survive, resort to questionable economics in a desperate attempt to save ourselves.

With understatement we called the era which followed the collapse, the depression. We would have been more accurate had we termed it the devastation. But we struggled through those depression years and once again we gained at least a semblance of economic security. Of course, we have yet to count the cost. But we wouldn't welcome an-

We saw our fellow Americans starve while they were being assured that prosperity was just around the corner, that everyone would have a chicken in his pot and two cars in his garage. These promises were made in good faith while our people suffered. But promises, whether made in good faith or not, do not solve the problem of hunger or need. Such was our history. It is a history that must not be repeated.

Perhaps from experience we are skeptical of the assurance that in the postwar world we shall enjoy freedom from want. We want freedom from want and we look to our leaders to provide it. But our leaders will be helpless and freedom from want will not be attained unless each of us realizes the responsibility such a quest places upon us. The attainment of freedom from want demands concern for one's neighbor. Real Christian and religious thought considers every one without exception as one's neighbor. So, whether we know it or like it, we are our brother's keeper.

Poverty and destruction are our common enemy as much as are the totalitarian forces which threaten us. We can no more ignore them than we can the enemy which confronts us on our military battlefield. Poverty and destitution are

as much an enemy to our national security and integrity as are all our other enemies, past, present, and to come. As a member of the family of nations we must assist other nations overcome with poverty and destitution. But we must first be concerned about ourselves, for unless we are secure, we cannot help others to become secure.

The attainment of national security is proving costly; but ours will be a hollow victory if all our sacrifice and all our effort result in a world in which there will be widespread hunger and need amidst plenty. Should this happen, then we will have broken faith with our heroic maimed and dead. Their sacrifice, whether great or small, was made that economic insecurity might never again harass their fellowmen.

Of course there will always be some poverty among the peoples of the world. There are some people who are incorrigible paupers. Perhaps it was they, as well as those who were simply innocent victims of misfortune, whom Christ had in mind when He assured us that the poor would always be with us. Toward them we can at least be kind and patient. But we are not responsible for their irresponsibility.

However, there is no justification among civilized and religious peo-

ple for enforced poverty. The man who is willing to earn his livelihood should never be denied that right. It really becomes a horrible indictment of our society or any society that the right to livelihood be denied any honest and responsible man. If freedom from want means anything at all, it must at least mean that every man who is willing to earn his economic security, be allowed to do so.

Some will insist that all this is solely an economic problem, one which only economists can solve. But primarily justice is at the root of the problem of destitution. Good economics, of course, will put justice in action. But economics without justice will effect nothing worthwhile or enduring.

If there be injustice among us, it is not the fault of our government, but our fault, for we make our government what it is. If vested interests and economic royalists can exploit and victimize us, again we are guilty, for we have failed to control such exploitation and victimization. Unless we control them, we are tolerating a condition which was a contributing factor in the ruin of Europe. We must guard the just social gains which we have achieved in the past dozen years. These gains will be effective only insofar as we as a people make them effective.

Vigilance for the security of our neighbor is our obligation. When we fail to fulfill this obligation we are like to those who would victimize or exploit us, for we then become like they, selfish. We, like they, have failed to be our brother's keeper. Mere civic pride, mere decency alone, will not be sufficient to keep want from prevailing among us again. We must be motivated and prompted by something greater. We must be conscious of the fact that we are part of God's created world, that He has given us an opportunity to work out our salvation or ruination, that He has endowed us with an intelligence to equip us adequately for that task, that He has given us talents, five or two, or merely one. We must use them not solely for ourselves but for our fellow men as well, not solely out of love of man but more so out of love of God who made man. He expects a return on those talents, not merely the return of the talents.

Freedom from want, then, has particular pertinence for us, for it is a corollary of the freedoms of speech and religion. Freedom of speech demands respect for truth, freedom of religion demands respect for God. Neither is narrow; both are universal. In themselves they *should* be sufficient to assure a worthwhile post-war world.

They are, however, general; whereas freedom from want and freedom from fear, which are their consequences, have to do with the specific relationship which we have with our fellow-man. In respect of freedom from want, we consider man as an individual; in respect of freedom from fear, we consider him as a member of society.

In other words, these four freedoms are concerned with man and his nature. Because he is an intellectual or rational creature, he should be free to speak the truth. Because he is a creature of God, he should be free to worship God according to the dictates of his conscience. Because he has to work out his material and spiritual salvation here on earth, he should be free from anything that might menace such a destiny. Because he is a social animal, he should be free from all the fears that any person or any group might inflict upon him that would prevent him from taking his place in society and contributing to its well being.

The structure of these four freedoms is quite basic and essential, something that can and should integrate man's whole life. No one of them is more important than the other. They all demand for their fulfillment the exercise of the charity of Christ—that love of God for His sake and love of neighbor for

the sake of God—which someone once observed should begin at home but should not remain there.

Freedom from want is perhaps the easiest to achieve. Ironically, a national disaster shows us the way of achievement. When we went to war in 1941 our President assured us that we would win the war and that we would win the peace. Thanks be to God we are well on the way toward winning the war. With God's help and our own good will, we can win the peace too. But when we entered the war there were peoples in other lands who didn't think we could win. They referred to us contemptuously as plutocratic democrats. They assured us that they, the master races, would be supreme for at least a thousand years. They thought that we were soft and effete. But despite our plutocracy and democracy, our softness and effeteness, quite suddenly we proved ourselves to be hard and tough. The reason we became so strong and sturdy was because we became a united people, engaged in an all-out effort to conquer a common enemy.

Lest hunger and destitution again threaten us as common enemies, we must remain a united people, engaged in an all-out effort to conquer both. We have shown ourselves how tremendously

great and unselfish we can be dur- to God for them. We will not neg-
ing war. We need to be equally lect them, and we will fulfill our
so during peace, lest our fellow men responsibility to God if we are de-
suffer. We are too great and too terminated that never, through our
fortunate a people to neglect our fault, need any man beg for a crust
fellow men, for we are responsible of bread.

Patriotism is not enough to preserve freedom from fear. Patriotism can be and has been, as a jocose lexicographer once defined it, the last refuge of a scoundrel. Both Hitler and Mussolini appealed to their peoples' patriotism to further their own evil schemes. Because their peoples succumbed to the plea of patriotism, they soon found themselves enslaved, for they sacrificed, in the name of patriotism, their rights as citizens. Had they been less concerned with a greater Germany or an imperial Italy, and more concerned about maintaining a government that would serve them and satisfy their legitimate needs, they would not be the unfortunate peoples they are today.

It is the precious heritage of Americans to enjoy a government of the people, by the people, and for the people. Such a government will not rule by fear. Such a government instead will preserve every citizen from a regime of fear. Such a government, of course, requires political machinery, but it has no need of unscrupulous political machines. If there is one danger which Americans must guard against, it is the unscrupulous political machine. Most of us are acquainted with them. Some, we know, are ruled by petty tyrants; others by benevolent despots. In either case the hold upon the individual voter is due to

fear of reprisal. Fear for security, fear of violence have been the means of gaining votes in American communities and building up political machines. This should not be.

The happy medium which freedom from fear should achieve is the consciousness that the administration we have chosen is our servant; that it holds a position of responsibility to us. If it fails to satisfy us, then we can by due democratic process elect another administration to govern us. If it succeeds in satisfying us, insofar as any ruling body can succeed in satisfying its citizens, it is our right and privilege to determine whether we wish to continue such an administration or choose another. Always we must remember that *we* have chosen our government.

The responsibility of good government then is ours. Freedom from fear imposes that responsibility upon us. If we shirk the responsibility, we spurn the freedom. As a consequence we may invite a regime of tyranny. We do this often by the abuse of our citizenship, either by excess or defect.

We need not be, of course, like the omniscient critic who believes and preaches as a first principle that the government cannot do right. He has a prejudgment to

the effect that the government is always going to do wrong. We should be critical of the government when it fails to serve our interests; but we have no right in justice or otherwise to criticize the government merely because it is the government. Our government has made mistakes, is making mistakes right now, and will make mistakes in the future—because our government is human. So are we, and even you and I make mistakes. But we do not immediately conclude therefore that we can do nothing else but make mistakes. Nor should we conclude that our government does nothing else but make mistakes.

This type of carping criticism is unjust and not worthy of a people who believe in a democratic form of government. It tends to make many of our less discerning and more impressionable fellow citizens lose confidence in the government, believe that all government officials are either knaves or fools. Such thinking eventually leads to distrust of democracy, and prepares the way for a far less enjoyable and less beneficent form of government.

The most common sin against the responsibility that freedom from fear imposes on us, consists in an indifference to the government, and as a consequence to one's country. There is a certain type of citizen,

hardly worthy of either the distinction or the name, who believes that the government is hopelessly corrupt, absolutely unregenerate, and that there is nothing at all which he can do to remedy the situation. Now this is not true of our government. Nor is it true that this type of citizen is so helpless that he can do nothing to provide and further good government. As long as the right to vote prevails in our republic, we Americans if we so desire can have the best government possible among men.

Today we conclude the consideration of the Four Freedoms. They admit of many interpretations. The one which I proposed during these four talks is not mine. It is instead an interpretation based on sound religious thought and tradition. Perhaps we will never achieve all its idealistic implications. But if we are religious and just, we must try to do so. As creatures of God and brothers of our fellow men, we have the responsibility to do our utmost to have religion, honesty, humanitarianism, and patriotism prevail in this world of ours.

Honesty in itself will not be enough. Neither humanitarianism nor patriotism will be sufficient. Real religion with the true God for its object must determine our con-

cern for our fellow man, and for than saved. But when we say, "In our country. If not rooted in God, God we trust," and mean it, we humanity and country will be left are not entrusting our destiny to to the caprice of men, for not only men. Instead we are regaining our have they been in the past, but they freedom not only in time but also may once again be enslaved rather in eternity.

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