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# **F**REEDOM'S FOUNDATION





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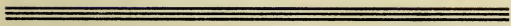
# FREEDOM'S FOUNDATION



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# Freedom's Foundation

*by*

RICHARD GINDER

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IT'S surely safe to say that no one anywhere is ever going to pin a medal on a man for being a coward, for no matter what our religion or politics may be, we all agree on a certain few basic rules of conduct. And one of those is that bravery is good and admirable, while cowardice is contemptible. We can be sure that we will never find a land or a people where those fundamental rules operate in reverse — where soldiers are praised for turning tail in battle, where traitors become public heroes, and where stinginess is held up as being worthy of popular imitation.

These feelings or convictions of ours result from a consciousness in ourselves of a certain standard of fair-play. The brave

man need not have been brave. But he did his duty under circumstances of great difficulty and so we are inclined to raise our hat to him. The traitor need not have sold out his country. He had it in his power to remain loyal like the rest of us. But he didn't. And so we view his actions with contempt.

We know these things by intuition. They're born in us — these rules of fair-play. That's why we say that they bind everyone, always everywhere. A man doesn't have to be taught, for instance, that it's wrong to murder, that he ought to treat others as he wants to be treated himself, that he shouldn't steal. We know these things just as simply and with as little effort as we know that the sky is blue and grass is green.

Philosophers have called this inborn standard of right and wrong the Natural Law, because it's natural to us, it's a part of our nature. Mind you, it isn't a matter of mere animal instinct — if only because we know that with cats and horses there is

no such thing as right and wrong. It's not just whatever happens to suit us at the moment — for that provides no explanation of the guilt feeling. Nor is it merely a matter of past training or social custom.

This Natural Law is a set of principles put in us by the Almighty God Himself for the purpose of increasing our happiness — and our own experience bears that out; for when we violate that Law we feel miserable; but when we keep the Law, we feel good and happy. We're at peace with ourselves.

### **Our Rights and Duties**

Now this idea of a God-given Natural Law is a matter of supreme importance — for if God has given us duties, it means that He has also given us rights corresponding to those duties.

A right goes with a duty the way a light-bulb goes with a socket. For instance, if we have the duty of keeping our hands off what belongs to other people, then we have the right to expect that they'll keep their hands off what belongs to us. In other

words, we have the duty of respecting other peoples' rights, just as they have the duty of respecting our rights.

But if our rights and duties spring from the Natural Law, and if that Natural Law has been put in us by Almighty God, then our rights come from God and no human power can take them away from us.

That's how the Natural Law stands between us and tyranny. It's a standard that's far above the reach of dictators. Hitler, Mussolini, and Stalin became tyrants at the precise moment when they began their silly attempts at repealing the Natural Law — silly, we call them, because they could no more do that than they could make water run uphill. And that's why every tyrant has to have a policeman to stand beside practically every person in his country — because he's trying to suppress what's natural to us and to enforce what's unnatural.

### **Our Forefathers and Religion**

Now at the time of the American Revolution, the Colonists were a deeply reli-



gious people. Harvard, Yale, Princeton, Columbia, Pennsylvania, Brown, Rutgers, and Dartmouth — all were schools started with a religious basis.

According to one who has made a study of their origins, "Harvard was founded in 1636 to save churches from an illiterate ministry. William and Mary was founded in 1693 for the same purpose. Yale in 1701 declared its aim was to prepare young men for 'public employment both in Church and Civil State.' Columbia was established in 1753 with the chief objective 'to teach and engage children to know God in Jesus Christ.' Of the 119 colleges founded east of the Mississippi, 104 were Christian and all of them were primarily for Christian purposes."

In line with this George Washington once wrote: "Of all the dispositions and habits which lead to political prosperity, religion and morality are indispensable supports. . . . We ought to be no less persuaded that the propitious smile of heaven can never be expected on a nation that

disregards *the eternal rules of order and right which heaven itself has ordained.*"

## **The Declaration of Independence**

On July 4, 1776, the Continental Congress, made up for the most part of men who had been educated in church schools, met in Philadelphia and signed the Declaration of Independence, drawn up mainly by Thomas Jefferson as a statement of their mind on the basic philosophy of government. In this document was included a forceful statement of the principles on which our government was later to be founded. We quote from its second paragraph:

"We hold these truths to be self-evident: that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain inalienable rights, that among these are Life, Liberty, and the Pursuit of Happiness. That to secure these rights, Governments are instituted among men, deriving their just powers from the consent of the governed. That whenever any

Form of Government becomes destructive of these ends, it is the Right of the People to alter or to abolish it, and to institute new Government, laying its foundation on such principles and organizing its powers in such form, as to them shall seem most likely to effect their safety and happiness.”

There we have a clear statement of Natural Law as the basis of American democracy: God gave us certain rights — corresponding, of course, to the duties imposed by His Law. The main business of a government is to make and keep those rights safe against violation. And when a government fails to do that, it usurps its authority, becomes illegal, and no longer has a claim on the obedience of its citizens, at least as far as those unnatural laws are concerned.

Our national tradition of a God-fearing Government was again affirmed by the Founding Fathers in the Ordinance of 1787 respecting the development of the Northwest:

“Religion, morality and knowledge being necessary to good government and the happiness of mankind,” they said, “schools and the means of education shall be forever encouraged.”

Note, incidentally, how the schools are obviously meant to teach religion and morality.

Abraham Lincoln said that “It is the duty of nations as well as of men to own their dependence upon the overruling power of God; to confess their sins and transgressions in humble sorrow, yet with the assured hope that genuine repentance will lead to mercy and pardon; and to recognize the sublime truth announced in the Holy Scriptures and proven by all history, that these nations alone are blessed.”

In fact, as recently as February 29, 1892, the United States Supreme Court sitting in judgment on a particular case ruled that “The reasons presented affirm and reaffirm that this is a religious nation . . .”

## The Mind of the Eternal God

But returning to the Natural Law: now that we've had a glimpse at its tremendous importance to each one of us, let's try to fill in a few of the details so that we'll have a more complete picture of the setup.

Pushing it back as far as we can go, we arrive at the mind of God Himself — all wise, all powerful. That great and infinitely vast mind has a plan for the working of all things. Just as an architect knows precisely where everything should fit in, just as an engineer has a place for every part, from the colossal geared wheels down to the tiniest cotter-pin — in somewhat the same way God knows how every least detail should function throughout the whole of His universe. He made it. He's the architect, the engineer. And we call that plan of His (really the workings of His mind) the Eternal Law.

Insofar as that Eternal Law governs the things around us, we call it the Law of Nature; that includes the principles of physics like the law of gravity, the uni-

formity of Nature, the conservation of energy, etc. In living things, the Law of Nature comes under the study of biology and with animals particularly it expresses itself through instincts.

If the earth revolves around the sun, it does that in virtue of the Law of Nature — that is, because God, the Eternal Law, wants it to revolve around the sun. If an acorn dropped into the ground sprouts and becomes an oak tree, it does that — again — in virtue of the Law of Nature.

### **Where We Enter the Picture**

But we human beings have a spiritual side to us. Basically, we're made up of chemicals, and to that extent we're subject to the principles of chemistry and physics; but those chemicals are organized into living cells, tissue, and bone — that's where biology comes in: in fact, we are in part animal, and so we're subject to the play of various animal instincts.

But over and above all that, we have the power to think and to control our ac-

tions. That's why it's always the man who saddles a horse and never the other way round; the horse may be more powerful, but the man can think.

Well, God's will in our regard, the Eternal Law as it touches us, is called the Natural Law. It governs our free actions, and just as plants and animals are brought to the climax of their development through natural growth—that is through their unconscious following of the Law of Nature—so we human beings achieve our growth to moral perfection through our free observance of the Natural Law. In other words, just as it's normal and natural for grass to grow green, in the same way it's normal and natural for men to do good and keep away from evil.

Since the Natural Law is the will of God respecting mankind, and since God is changeless, and everlasting, it follows that this law is changeless and everlasting. As long as God is God and man is man, it will be a violation of that law, for instance, for one man to injure another. And



since all men are basically the same — made up of body and soul — the Natural Law is universal. It touches all of us.

Because we speak of it as being inborn, we mustn't think of every baby as being born with the Ten Commandments and a whole set of Supreme Court decisions stamped on his little mind.

### **We Need God's Revelation**

No, indeed! The average person can know the big laws without too much trouble: to do good and avoid evil, to worship our Creator, not to steal or murder. But when it comes to the finer points, that's when we need the help of God's revelation, and the formulation of particular standards "is not a matter for everybody, but for the wise; not for the young, but for the old," as one writer has remarked. "Among all peoples, judges and lawmakers are traditionally the wise old men" (Rommen, *The Natural Law*, p. 226).

It's been our chief purpose to point out



the fact that the rights and duties guaranteed to us by the Natural Law are anchored in God; that they'll perish when God perishes—and no sooner; that they'll change when He changes—never, in other words. The Founders of our Republic were wise in basing our Constitution on the Natural Law. The Foundation they chose couldn't possibly be firmer, for it's nothing less than the Will of God Himself!

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