TEXT. GALATIANS III 28.

'There is neither Jew nor Greek; there is neither bond nor free; there is neither male "UNDER GOD" nor female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus.

Sermon preached by Dr. George M. Docherty, New York Avenue Presbyterian Church, on Sunday, February 7, 1954.

The famous city of Sparta was once visited by an ambassador from another kingdom. He expected to find this great city surrounded by thick protecting walls; he was surprised when he saw no battlements at all.

"Where are the walls to defend the city"?, he asked of the King of Sparta.

"Here are the walls of Sparta", replied the king, showing him his army of first line crack troops.

Had this ambassador visited our United States today, he would also be surprised to find no wall around our cities. (I should think, as a matter of fact, it would be extremely difficult, even for American know-how, to build a wall around Los Angeles!) And if our visitor were to ask the question, "Where is the defense of the nation?", he could be shown something of the awesome power of the mighty American Army, Navy and Airforce; not to mention the enormous Economic potential of the Country. But the true strength of the United States of America lies deeper, as it lay in Sparta. It is the spirit of both military and people - a flaming devotion to the cause of freedom within these borders.

At this season of anniversary of the birth of Abraham Lincoln, it will not be inappropriate to speak about this freedom, and what is called "the American way of life"/

I Freedom is a subject everyone seems to be talking about without seemingly stopping to ask the rather basic question, "What do we mean by freedom"? In this matter, apparently, we all are experts.

The world of Mr. Lincoln's day is unbelievably different from this Modern Age. Yet there is a sense in which history is always repeating itself. The issues we face today are precisely the issues Lincoln spent his life seeking to

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resolve. In his day, the issue was sparked by Negro Slavery. Today, it is sparked by a militantly atheistic Communism that has already enslaved 800 million of the peoples of the earth, and now menaces the rest of the free world.

Lincoln, in his day, saw this Country as a nation that "was conceived in liberty and dedicated to the proposition that all men are created equal". And the question LINCOLN asks is the timeless, and timely, one - "whether this nation or any nation so conceived and dedicated, can long endure".

I recall once discussing the "American way of life" with a Newspaper Editor. He had been using the phrase rather freely. When asked to define the phrase, "The American Way of Life", he became very wordy and verbose. "It is live and let live; it is freedom to act" and other such platitudes.

II

Let me describe what "The American Way of Life" is. It is going to the ballgame and eating pop-corn, and drinking Coca Cola, and rooting for the Senators. It is shopping in Sears & Roebuck. It is losing heart and hat on a roller coaster. It is driving on the right side of the road and putting up at motels on a long journey. It is being bored with television commercials. It is setting off fire crackers with your children on the Fourth of July. It is sitting for seven hours to see the pageantry of the Presidential Inauguration.

But, it is deeper than that.

It is gardens with no fences to bar you from the neighborliness of your neighbor. It is the perfume of honeysuckle, and the sound of katydids in the warm night air of summer, when you go out into the garden, the children long ago asleep, and you feel the pulse and throb of nature around you. It is Negro Spirituals and Colonial Architecture. It is Thanksgiving Turkey and pumpkin pie. It is the sweep of broad rivers and the sea of wheat and grass. It is a view from the air of the conflux of muddy rivers and neat little excavations and columns of smoke that is the mighty Pittsburgh. It is canyons of skyscrapers

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in New York, and the sweep of Lakeshore Drive that is Chicago. It is the lonely proud statue of Lee on Gettysburg field. It is school girls wearing jeans and school boys riding enormous push bikes. It is color comics. It is the Sunday New York Times. It is sitting on the porch of a Sunday afternoon, after morning church, rocking in a creaking wicker chair. It is a lad and lass looking at you intently in the marriage service. It is sickness; and a home empty, quietened and stilled by grief. It is the sound of the bell at the railroad crossing, and childrens' laughter. It is a solitary bugler playing taps, clear and long-noted, at Arlington.

III

And where did all this come from?

It has been with us so long, we have to recall it was brought here by people who laid stress on fundamentals. They called themselves Puritans because they wished to live the pure and noble life purged of all idolatry and enslavement of the mind, even by the Church. They did not realize that in fleeing from tyranny and setting up of a new life in a new world, they were to be the Fathers of a Mighty Nation.

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These fundamental concepts of life had been given to the world from Mount Sinai, where the moral law was graven upon Tables of Stone, symbolizing the universal application to all men; and they came from the New Testament where they heard in the words of Jesus of Nazareth, the Living Word of God for the world.

This is the "American Way of Life". Lincoln saw this clearly. History for him was the Divine Comedy, though he would not use that phrase. The providence of God was being fulfilled.

IV

Wherefore, Lincoln claims that it is 'UNDER GOD' that this nation shall know a new birth of freedom. And by implication, it is under God that "government of the people, by the people and for the people, shall not perish from the earth".

For Lincoln, since God was in his heaven, all must ultimately be right for his Country.

Now, all this may seem obvious today, until one sits down and takes these implications of freedom really seriously. For me, it came in a flash one day sometime ago when our children came home from school. Almost casually, I asked what happened at school when they arrived there in the morning. They described to me, in great detail, and with strange solemnity, the Ritual of the Salute to the Flag. The children turn to the Flag, and with their hand across their heart, they repeat the words:

> "I pledge allegiance to the Flag of the United States and the Republic for which it stands; one nation, indivisible with liberty and justice for all".

They were very proud of the Pledge; and rightly so.

I don't suppose you fathers would have paid as much attention to that as I did. I had the advantage over you. I could listen to those noble words as if for the first time. You have learned them so long ago, like the arithmetic table or the Shorter Catechism, something you can repeat without realising what it all really means. But I could sit down and brood upon it, going over each word slowly in my mind.

And I came to a strange conclusion. There was something missing in this Pledge, and that which was missing was the characteristic and definitive factor in the "American Way of Life". Indeed, apart from the mention of the phrase, the United States of America, this could be the pledge of any Republic. In fact, I could hear little Muscovites repeat a similar pledge to their hammer and sickle flag in Moscow with equal solemnity, for Russia is also a Republic that claims to have overthrown the tyranny of kingship.

Russia also claims to be indivisible. Mr. Stalin admitted to Sir

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Winston Churchill that the uniting of the peasants was the most difficult of all his tasks. (He did not mention the massacre of the three million Kulak farmers in this blood and iron unification).

Russia claims to have liberty. You will never understand the Communist mind until you realise this aberration of their judgment. Karl Marx, in his dialectic, makes it clear that the Communist state is only an imperfect stage towards World Socialism. When that day comes, the State will wither away and true Socialism will reign forever. Utopia will have dawned. Until that day, there must be personal limitations. As the Capitalist state limits freedom in the day of war, so must the workers of the world accept this form of restricted freedom. Besides, claims Marx, trouble arises when you give men their unrestricted freedom. Human freedom always degenerates into license and gives rise to greed and war. They might claim that their "servitude is perfect freedom".

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Again the Communists claim, there is Justice in Russia. They have their law courts. They have their elections with universal suffrage. When pressed to the point, they will admit there is really only one candidate because the people are so unanimous about that way of life!

They call their way of life "Democratic". One of the problems statesman find in dealing with Russia is one of semantics, of definition. Russia says she is Democratic and we are Fascist; we claim to be Democratic and call Russia Communists.

VI

What, therefore, is missing in the Pledge of Allegiance that Americans have been saying on and off since 1892, and officially since 1942? The one fundamental concept that completely and ultimately separates Communist Russia from the democratic institutions of this Country. This was seen clearly by

"One Nation

Lincoln. UNDER GOD this people shall know a new birth of freedom, and "UNDER GOD" are the definitive words.

VII (b) Now, Lincoln was not being original in that phrase. He was simply reminding the people of the basis upon which the Nation won its freedom in its Declaration of Independence. He went back to Jefferson, as he did in so much of his thinking. Indeed, Lincoln acknowledges his debt to Jefferson in a famous speech delivered at Independence Hall in Philadelphia on February 22, 1861, two years before the Gettysburg Address. "All the political sentiments I entertain have been drawn from the sentiments which originated and were given to the world from this hall. I have never had a feeling politically that did not spring from sentiments embodied in the Declaration of Independence".

Listen, again, to the fundamentals in this Declaration:

> "We hold these truths to be self evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their creator with certain unalienable rights, that among these are life and liberty and the pursuit of happiness".

At Gettysburg, Lincoln posed the question: "Now we are engaged in a great civil war, testing whether that nation, or any nation, so conceived, and so dedicated, can long endure".

That is the text of our day and generation also.

The tragedy of the Nineteenth Century Democratic Liberalism, when nation after nation set up parliamentary forms of government, was that two world convulsions shattered the illusion that you can build a nation on human ideas without a fundamental belief in God's Providence. Crowns in Europe toppled, not because of authcracy, but because the peoples had lost the vision of God.

(a) We face, today, a theological war. It is not basically a conflict

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between two political philosophies - Thomas Jefferson's political democracy over against Lenin's communistic state.

(b) Nor is it a conflict fundamentally between two economic systems between, shall we say, Adam Smith "Wealth of Nations", and Karl Marx "Das Capital".

(c) It is a fight for the freedom of the human personality. It is not simply, "Man's inhumanity to man". It is Harmageddon, a battle of the gods. It is the view of man as it comes down to us from the Judao-Christian civilization in mortal combat against modern, secularized, godless humanity.

VIIa The only point I make in raising the issue of the Pledge of Allegiance is that it seems to me to omit this theological implication that is inherent within the "American Way of Life". It should be "One nation, indivisible, Under God," Once "Under God", then we can define what we mean by "liberty and justice for all." To omit the words "Under God" in the Pledge of Allegiance is to omit the definitive character of the "American Way of Life".

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Some might assert this to be a violation of the First Amendment to the Constitution. It is quite the opposite. The First Amendment ~~states~~ is concerned with the question of religion.

~~VIIIa~~ "Congress shall make no law respecting the establishment of religion".

Now "establishment of religion" is a technical term. It means Congress will permit no state church in this land such as exists in England. In England, the Bishops are appointed by Her Majesty. The church, by law, is supported by tiends or rent. The Church, therefore, can call upon the support of the law of the land to carry out its own ecclesiastical laws. What the Declaration says in effect, is that no state church shall exist in this land. This is separation of Church and State; it is not, and never was meant to be, a separation of religion

and life. Such objection is a confusion of the First Amendment with the First Commandment.

VIII If we were to add the phrase, "Under the Church", that would be different. In fact, it would be dangerous. The question arises, which Church? Now, I could give ~~you~~ good Methodists an excellent dissertation upon the virtues of the Presbyterian Church, and show ~~you~~ how much superior John Knox was to John Wesley! But the whole sad story of Church history shows how of all tryants, often the Church could be the worst for the best of reasons. The Jewish Church persecuted unto death the Christian Church in the first decade of Christianity; and for 1200 years, the Christian Church persecuted the Jewish Church. The Roman Church persecuted the Protestants; and the Protestants, in turn, persecuted the Roman Church; the Presbyterians and the Episcopalians brought low the very name of Christian charity, both in Scotland and America. It is not for nothing that Thomas Jefferson, on his tombstone at Monticello, claimed that one of the three achievements of his life was his fight for religious freedom in Virginia - that even above the exalted office as President of these United States.

No Church is infallible; and no Churchman is infallible.

VIII Of course, as Christians, we might include the words 'Under Jesus Christ' or 'Under the King of Kings'. But one of the glories of this land is that it has opened its gates to all men of every religious faith.

The word of welcome to these shores is epitomized on the Statue of Liberty:

"Give me your tired, your poor,
Your huddled masses yearning to breathe free,
The wretched refuse of your teeming shore,
Send these, the homeless, tempest tossed to me:
I lift my lamp beside the golden door".

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There is no religious examination on entering the U. S. A/ - no persecution because a man's faith differs even from the Christian religion. So, It must be "UNDER GOD" to include the great Jewish Community, and the people of the Moslem faith, and the myriad of denominations of Christians in the land.

What then of the honest atheist?

IX

Philosophically speaking, an atheistic American is a contradiction in terms. Now don't misunderstand me. This age has thrown up a new type of man - we call him a "secular"; he does not believe in God; not because he is a wicked man but because he is dialectically honest. He would rather walk with the unbelievers than sit hypocritically with people of the faith. These men, and many I have known, are fine in character; and in their obligations as citizens and good neighbors, quite excellent.

But they really are "spiritual parasites". And I mean no term of abuse in this. I'm simply classifying them. A parasite is an organism that lives upon the life force of another organism without contributing to the life of the other. These excellent ethical seculars are living upon the accumulated Spiritual Capital of Judaio-Christian civilization, and at the same time, deny the God who revealed the divine principles upon which the ethics of this Country grow. The dilemma of the secular is quite simple.

He cannot deny the Christian revelation and logically live by the Christian ethic.

And if he denies the Christian ethic, he falls short of the American ideal of life.

In Jefferson's phrase, if we deny the existence of the "God who gave us life", how can we live by "the liberty he gave us at the same time"? This is a God fearing nation. On our coins, bearing the imprint of Lincoln and

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(WB, omit maestoso)

Jefferson, are the words, 'In God We Trust'. Congress is opened with prayer. It is upon the Holy Bible the President takes his oath of office. Naturalized citizens, when they take their oath of allegiance, conclude, solemnly, with the words "so help me God".

This is the issue we face today: A freedom that respects the rights of the minorities but is defined by a fundamental belief in God. A way of life that sees man, not as the ultimate outcome of a mysterious concantenation of evolutionary process, but a sentient being created by God and seeking to know His will, and "Whose soul is restless till he rest in God".

In this land, there is "neither Jew nor Greek, neither bond nor free, neither male nor female", for we are one nation indivisible under God, and humbly as God has given us the light we seek liberty and justice for all. This quest is not only within these United States but to the four corners of the globe wherever man will lift up his head towards the vision of his true and divine manhood.

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