

This Is A
Promised Land
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THIS IS A PROMISED LAND
(from a scientist's point of view)

-- H. Tracy Hall

Pleasant View First Ward Sacramento meeting, February 8, 1976.

Most of us have seen the painting of Jesus wherein he stands as tall as the slender United Nations Building on which he gently knocks but is refused admittance. The creators of ^{the U.N.} that institution held that only history and society shape the destiny of mankind. It has no place for God or for our Lord and Savior. No wonder the current gastritis of that worldly body where greedy ungrateful beggars rant and tin-pan generals snarl and howl but God's love we do not hear!

W H The overveering concept that "I am the sole captain of my soul" is firmly rooted in the minds of many. Surely, independence, confidence, and reliance are fine qualities but they must be tempered by this sure knowledge: God, exists and He has a plan for this world.

Our country, a promised land, figures in that plan. The prophets have told us so, particularly with regard to its constitution and its founders.

In this brief talk I have been asked to give a thought or two about ^{some things} what a scientist might ^{perceive} see ^{regard} in this connection.

Consider the founding father Thomas Jefferson. A leader of such stature, breadth, and vision is rarely born. Did you know that this genius' active interests included higher mathematics, mechanics, literature, geology, botany, paleontology, architecture, geography, zoology, medicine, surgery, aeronautics, and agriculture and that he corresponded with the intellects of the day on these subjects? Besides

that he had a good knowledge of Latin, Greek, French, Spanish and Italian and as a youth learned Gaelic in order to translate Ossian (Irish hero of the 3rd Century). Not only that, he played excellent violin, sang well, and was a good dancer.

Add to that statesman, philosopher (he was president of the American Philosophical Society for many years), the authorship of the Declaration of Independence and forty years of public service to the fledging nation and you have a miracle. The miracle of our 3rd President, Thomas Jefferson, who did not smoke, nor did he gamble, and his mind and tongue were pure.

The founding fathers acknowledged the existence and power of God. In his first inaugural address, April 30, 1789, Washington declared: "It would be peculiarly improper to omit in this first official act, my fervent supplications to that almighty being who rules over the universe, who presides in the councils of nations and whose providential aids can supply every human defect . . ." The last line of the Declaration of Independence reads: "And for the support of this Declaration, with a firm reliance on the protection of divine Providence, we mutually pledge to each other our Lives, our Fortunes and our sacred honor." Earlier in 1774 Jefferson wrote: "The God who gave us life, gave us liberty at the same time". Jefferson's vision encompassed limited government providing the maximum possible freedom for its people in order to unleash their creative ability. Let me repeat: to provide maximum freedom in order to unleash the people's creative ability.

On July 20, 1969, Neil A. Armstrong hovered the "Eagle" for about a minute and a half beginning at a height of 500 feet above the lunar surface. At the end of that time probes indicated onctact with the

ground. One second later the descent rocket engine was shut down and the whole world heard, "The Eagle has landed!"

Six and a half hours later on that same day we watched as Armstrong descended a short ladder to the lunar soil and, as his foot touched, proclaimed, "That's one small step for a man, one giant leap for mankind."

On that day, I had excused myself a bit early from a stake leadership meeting in order to observe this historic event on Jens Jonsson's television set. (I hope this does not presage where I will be at the Lord's second coming.) But I had read as a nine year old farm boy of the possibility of man landing on the moon and had looked forward to this event for 41 years.)

This landing on the moon succinctly symbolizes Jefferson's idea of the unleashed creative ability of the American people. It started slowly, gathered momentum and now comes in such a flood that it almost escapes attention. Polyethylene, high octane gasoline, penicillin, Boeing 747's, pocket calculators, hybrid corn, five gallon cows, 20¢ coast to coast phone calls, central heating, refrigeration, electric light, harvesting machines, textile machines, and printing at a mile a minute, I list as but a trickle in this flood.

Creative endeavors were provided encouragement in the Constitution, Article 1, Section 8, Clause 8: "The congress shall have the power . . . to promote the progress of science and useful arts by securing for limited times to authors and inventors the exclusive rights to their respective writings and discoveries." From this came the patent and copyright laws of 1790.

Today a new U.S. patent is issued every ten minutes and the total number of U.S. patents issued numbers over 3 million.

What are the greatest patented American inventions? It would be difficult to decide, but in 1940 seventy-five scientists, industrialists and statesmen were brave enough to make a selection. They chose eighteen, the earliest ^{being} Eli Whitney's cotton gin (1794) and the latest oil cracking (to produce gasoline) by William M. Burton (1913). Some in between were McCormick's reaper (1834), C. L. Sholes typewriter (1868), Edison's phonograph (1880), [by the way, Edison considered this his greatest invention], Charles N. Hall's production of aluminum (1889), and Baekeland's, Bakelite, a thermosetting plastic (1909).

Jefferson would be pleased, I am sure, for he was remarkably apt in the practical application of mechanical and scientific principles. He, himself, discovered the exact formula for mould-boards of least resistance for ploughs.

I have emphasized invention as creative endeavor because of my acquaintance with it. Nevertheless, creative endeavor in all fields has truly been unleashed as a special blessing to Americans.

Will we accept it as the sole product of history, society, and man as many intellects of this day do? The founders of the United Nations would view it this way. Or, would we accept it with the faith-in-God vision of the Founding Fathers of the United States of America who saw His will guiding the destinies of men?

Invention and other creative endeavor can be for man's good or for his destruction.

→ I place my faith for their wise use and consequently for our future in institutions where the leaders genuinely believe what we print on the money: "In God We Trust."

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