

A close-up photograph of a hand holding a pen and writing in a notebook. The hand is positioned on the left side of the frame, with the pen tip touching the paper. The notebook is open, and the right page shows some faint, handwritten text. The background is a dark, textured surface, possibly a desk or table. The overall tone is warm and focused.

THE JOHN BIRCH RESOLUTIONS

by Robert Welch

The John Birch Society

About *The John Birch Resolutions*

This copyrighted article originally appeared in the December 1970 *Bulletin* of The John Birch Society. What you see on the next page is a recreation of how the cover of the December 1970 *Bulletin* actually appeared to those readers back then.

In this timeless essay, Robert Welch, the founder of The John Birch Society, used the occasion of a coming new year to offer some resolutions on a subject of more permanent concern — the growing confusion as to what is morally right and wrong.

Unfortunately, in the years since 1970 that confusion has increased. The need for wisdom and insight is greater than ever. Those who read Mr. Welch's essay will find new inspiration and arguments to defend traditional morality — an essential bastion of a humane, prosperous, and free society.

In *The John Birch Resolutions*, Mr. Welch did not set out to invent any new moral guidelines or preempt religious commandments. Instead, he considered the *Resolutions* to be “a recapitulation of essential elements in the recognized moral code for our Western civilization.” Furthermore, he stated that, “Our first step in carrying out that responsibility should be to provide a compendium of Christian morality, with the Judaic injunctions that have been incorporated in it.”

Moreover, *The John Birch Resolutions* helps us to understand better the motto bequeathed to us by Robert Welch: “less government, more responsibility, and — with God's help — a better world.” First, the moral code in the *Resolutions* provides guidance for how to act responsibly; and second, in the words of Mr. Welch's “imaginary but very dedicated Bircher,” this moral code provides us “standards which ... will make this a better world almost exactly to the degree that they are observed.”

THE JOHN BIRCH SOCIETY

INCORPORATED

Bulletin for December, 1970

©1970 by The John Birch Society

FOREWORD

*Woe unto them that call evil good, and good evil;
that put darkness for light, and light for darkness; and
put bitter for sweet, and sweet for bitter.*

Isaiah, V, 20

Both Christmas and a New Year will have arrived before you receive another bulletin. The period will soon be upon us when happy memories of the past, bountiful good will in the present, and noble resolutions for the future are proverbial expectations.

Let us, therefore, set aside for a few minutes our more immediate anxieties, while we give some solemn thought to a subject of more permanent concern. And that is the confusion between what is morally right and what is morally wrong, which is now being so widely and so skillfully created by behavioral pseudo-scientists and propagandists in the service of the Conspiracy.

That the problem is doubtless as old as morality itself can be surmised from Isaiah's verse, written a few years before 700 B.C., which we have quoted above. That it has been a persistent affliction is confirmed by Cicero's line in *De Finibus*: "Inability to tell good from evil is the greatest worry of man's life." Both Isaiah and Cicero, however, were writing of their own respective eras, when a vast breakdown in all moral values was visibly under way. And in both cases there were conspiratorially destructive forces helping along the movement.

Our real point is that, then as now, the confusion was not caused by any significant changes in what was honestly acceptable to the human conscience. There have been, even within the millennia of recorded history, substantial revisions, by at least some segments of the earth's population, in some areas of the moral spectrum. One was the adoption by Mohammedans of the belief

that it was a sin to drink alcoholic beverages. Another has been the gradual, if sometimes only theoretical, disapproval of concubinage in our Western Civilization. But no such basic change had taken place in the world of either Isaiah or Cicero.

What had taken place was an insidiously conducted rationalization, to befuddle the public and make sin seem merely a sophisticated fashion. Your editor does not know enough about the history of Judah in the days of Hezekiah to outline the features of that movement, or to name those whom Isaiah would have condemned – and maybe did. But there is no question about the nature or even the personnel of the conspiracy that produced the same effect in Cicero's Rome. The campaign of erosion, first made dangerous by the Gracchi, and continued under the leadership of Marius, had already been in process for a hundred years. And the fomenters of revolution who now sought to destroy all tradition, all morality, and the whole Roman system, to whatever extent was necessary for their personal power and glory, included such scheming demagogues as Sallust, Catiline, and Julius Caesar – with Caesar the chief beneficiary of this undermining program.

And these protagonists of unlimited license, coupled with unlimited government welfarism, as vehicles for their drive to power, knew exactly what they were doing. For, as Tacitus emphasized only a hundred years later, a people can “be vanquished by their vices as easily as by force of arms.” Today the same dictum applies to ourselves, just as clearly as when Tacitus wrote it nineteen hundred years ago. It is because the collectivist conspirators of all eras really learn something from history – which the rest of the human race generally refuses to do – that we have looked briefly at these episodes and epigrams from the past. For they serve as at least partial prototypes and guides for what is happening right now.

In Cicero's time the comprehensive movement to the left was still amorphous, rather than centrally controlled. The long continuing, self-perpetuating, tightly-knit Conspiracy, with tremendous organizational reach and power, which has dominated the Twentieth Century, would make Caesar's treasonous designs on Rome look like a Huey Long naive fiasco – or Robert Kennedy's fatal attempt to out-Communist the Communists – by comparison. The *Insiders* whom we oppose are infinitely smoother. But they are well aware that the elimination of all morality would remove one great obstacle to their enslavement of the human race. And they have chosen to carry out this destructive program by psychological procedures. We are being induced to “call evil good, and good

evil” – while we pat ourselves on the back over our sophistication – exactly as did those who were so “modern” in the days of Isaiah.

To forestall this incredibly evil intent, it would be immensely helpful to have more of the American people understand better the nature and the relative permanence of basic moral principles. Therefore, as poorly qualified as we are for creating this understanding, we hope you will bear with us while we continue this sincere and earnest attempt. And please do not get mad with us if, in doing so, we must trespass once or twice on religious landscapes where there is some divergence of views even among our members. We seek only to establish conclusions and purposes concerning which all of these shades of religious belief are entirely compatible.

II

We begin by quoting once again, from Froude, that “*morality, when vigorously alive, sees farther than intellect.*”

There are many thousands among our members who believe this is because divine wisdom has been directly expressed in so many of the bases and components of our moral convictions. Examples would be the tablets which Moses brought down with him from the top of Mt. Sinai, or the recorded admonitions and exhortations which Jesus gave His disciples in the “sermon on the mount.”

Etymologically, however, the word morality means simply the body of manners and customs – the *mores* – of a people or of a civilization. So there are also many thousands of our members who believe that our moral codes are basically a distillation of all of man’s previously acquired wisdom and experience. They feel that over many long ages our ancestors, learning slowly and laboriously, with many tragic setbacks in their climb towards a more noble and humane civilization, have been gradually weeding out mistaken courses of conduct which were fully accepted in the past, and arriving at ideals which were more soundly based.

There are still other thousands – perhaps the largest part of our membership as a whole – who see no conflict between these two points of view. They feel that man is surely being inspired and guided in an “upward reach,” which is itself derived from the plans of a Divine Creator; that he must be responsible enough to learn from his transgressions, mistakes, and successes; and that even literal

instructions given him more directly are merely a part of this divine guidance and inspiration.

We take no part in any argument over these or other views. For to do so would lead us into the realm of theology where we do not belong, and where we make no slightest claim to leadership. It is a cardinal principle of The John Birch Society that every man's religious beliefs constitute a personal matter which is outside of our area of influence or involvement. It has been, and is, our great undertaking to bring into one body – for the first time in human history – truly good men and women of all sects, denominations, and creeds, who will work together with tolerant good will for those spiritual ideals and noble purposes which they do hold in common.

So, as stated in the Blue Book a dozen years ago, our concern is with morality itself, and not with the teleological foundations on which it rests. We simply believe that, however varied or profound may be the explanations underlying our sense of moral values, those moral values have a more universal authority and experience behind them than the pretentious conclusions of any particular intellect, or of even any vast coterie of contemporary intellectuals. We believe that basic principles, painfully and gradually drawn from the wisdom, the suffering, the aspirations, and the prophetic religious teachings, of countless centuries before us, are more trustworthy than supposedly brilliant but ephemeral fads and fashions in behavior which are inconsistent with these commandments or with all of this past experience.

Of course morality sees farther than intellect. Especially so when intellect is represented by nefarious “geniuses” who profess to believe that “God is dead.” Or who act as if God had abdicated in their favor. Today we have misguided children picketing their high schools in support of a claim that they are better able to decide what they should be taught than their parents, teachers, and school administrators. And we also have older and more evil children, in professorial robes and high positions, telling us that the so-called “situation ethics” which they have concocted is superior to the composite conscience of mankind.

All such combinations of audacity with ignorance would be supremely ridiculous but for one consideration. Cruelty is never funny. And your militant iconoclasts of all ages, who want to destroy what Kipling called “the gods of the copybook headings,” always have a streak of cruelty which enables them to find pleasure in their destructiveness. To enter into philosophic disputations with such childish (or deliberately evil) smart alecks is both foolish and futile.

It is far better to rest your case, and be governed in your actions by those moral principles which are deeprooted in the multiple faiths, the long experience, and the accumulated common sense that have supplied the spiritual foundation of our great Western Civilization.

III

Morality, *when vigorously alive*, sees farther than intellect. But morality is not only *not* vigorously alive today, it is so debilitated, confused, and brow-beaten that both its force and its foresight have become pitifully inadequate to the need. Amid all the babel of false tongues around us, even the basically good people sometimes find it hard to know what is right and what is wrong in a given situation. The sophistries of an evil Conspiracy have been presented so impressively and so cleverly that men with the most honorable intentions waver between the alluring promises of a completely phony “new morality” and the sound dictation of their own consciences.

So the time has come – in fact it is long overdue – when many of the moral uncertainties of today, most of which have been introduced into our contemporary world by this satanic Conspiracy for its own evil purposes, ought to be swept away. This guidance should be provided, of course, by our great religious bodies. But too many of them are now merely adding to the confusion, or fighting with each other (or even within themselves) over matters of dogma and doctrine. And it is imperative under present circumstances that *somebody* should put down in unmistakable language the primary features of a moral code to which all good people can readily subscribe.

It is not an easy task, nor a modest one. It is so presumptuous as well as difficult that any sensible man recoils from the attempt with fear and trembling. In fact your editor, on three occasions during the last few years, has embarked tentatively on this undertaking. Each time he has given up in due course, and thrown away all that he had written. In the present instance, however, because of so great a need, we hope to have fortified our courage with adequate resolution. And this determination has been made easier by the limitations which we have placed upon our effort.

We certainly do not approach this problem with the voice of a prophet. There is nothing created or added by ourselves in this long and fully accepted moral code which we shall be trying to outline and record. And we have no intention of setting forth rules of conduct for all mankind, under threats of punishment

in either this life or hereafter for those who fail to follow *our* interpretations of what is good against what is evil. For while we believe that the strictly moral attitudes of all our great religions, and hence of all the peoples of the earth, are slowly but gradually converging towards one fundamentally uniform body of belief, we are well aware that vast differences do still remain – especially with regard to the personal relationships between men and women, for one outstanding example.

So the first limitation of our objective is to a recapitulation of essential elements in the recognized moral code for our Western Civilization. Then we narrow our field immensely further, by codifying only those moral principles, even of our western world, which are or clearly should be accepted and observed by those millions of good people who – whether they realize it or not – are in basic agreement with the views of The John Birch Society. And finally, we make even this exposition easier by simply setting forth the principles of conduct on which we believe almost all Birchers would readily agree, and which they would consider *in toto* as the ideal for their own behavior.

We propose, therefore, to let some imaginary but very dedicated Bircher speak for us all, so far as such unanimity of views on anything will stand up or is possible. Since he certainly would not be issuing “thou shalt not” edicts to others, we shall have him express his moral convictions in the positive form of “I shall.” And we still try to make clear the much broader sweep and deeper reach intended for his pronouncements, than would normally be expected of any such mere set of personal resolutions, by letting our spokesman have a few prefatory paragraphs to explain his aim and his hopes. That preface follows. And if there is repetition in his remarks of some things we have already said above, it is because such repetition is needed for clarity and emphasis when we are treading so dangerous a field.

IV

To many friends, both known and unknown, wherever you may be, I submit these thoughts for your solemn consideration. As a member of The John Birch Society I am dedicated to a noble purpose. The final goal of that purpose is to bring about – with God’s help – a better world. Unless you share that constructive hope, there is no need for you to hear me further.

In The John Birch Society we believe that both less government, and a greater sense of responsibility by all groups and individuals, will automatically help

to produce a better world. But we also believe that each of us can accomplish most, towards making this a better world, through the example which he sets in his own life and actions. We further believe, therefore, that our actions and reactions in all circumstances should be determined by an honest answer to this basic question: “If everybody else on earth should think and act as I do, would this become in fact a better world ?”

We fully realize the extent, the variety, and the continuity of human weaknesses. We do not belong to the holier-than-thou species, and sanctimoniousness is not usually one of our faults. We make no claim to unbroken adherence to even our own rules of conduct. In this effort our reach often exceeds our grasp. But let us set up standards, nevertheless, that we strive to maintain; and that we hope others will find useful as goals or guides for themselves. They are standards which, we hope, will make this a better world almost exactly to the degree that they are observed.

The John Birch Society has been founded in a time and place where the people are – or were – predominantly Christian. The Society was named in honor of a man who nobly exemplified a great many Christian virtues. It is natural, therefore, that we should lean most heavily on the moral customs and beliefs which are associated with Christianity, and with the Judaic commandments and traditions that preceded it.

But our confidence in the wisdom and righteousness of our moral precepts lies deeper and goes much further than simply recognizing the widespread acceptance which they did command – until quite recently – in the western world. For we believe history clearly shows that there was a victory march of Christian ideals well on the way towards acceptance by all peoples everywhere; and that a civilization based on these ideals does provide, or would provide – in fact, in the United States itself for a comparatively brief period did provide – a more productive, a more hopeful, a more truly humane, and a happier environment for human life than man had ever achieved before on any sizable scale.

We believe that the Communist movement is determined to destroy every religion, primarily by infiltration within its ranks. But that Christianity is – or was – the Communists’ most automatic and implacable enemy which, from their point of view, they must destroy more surely and more completely than even the temporal governments that stand in their way. And they are succeeding. The evidence is overwhelming. Two recent items, out of thousands available, were the reported announcement by the best known Protestant preacher in the world that he no longer took any position with regard to Communism, either for or

against; and the installation of a Catholic archbishop whose sympathies and activities have long been so openly in tune with the Communist program that he was reported to have said he did not object to being called a Communist. And we have heard no disclaimer in either case.

To prevent the Communist success in destroying real Christianity from being carried further is the duty of the preachers and lay Christian leaders who still hold the faith – many of whom are working tirelessly and valiantly at the task. And we certainly say, “more power to them.” But that is not our specific job. Instead, we have taken on the assignment to preserve the moral principles arrived at through many centuries of Judaic and Christian experience and thought.

So let us not be afraid of the task. Our first step in carrying out that responsibility should be to provide a compendium of Christian morality, with the Judaic injunctions that have been incorporated in it, in such concise form that he who runs may read. Also to try to show, without hesitation, how the basic principles of this morality really apply to specific developments and situations in our complex modern world, about which there has been so much “confusion worse confounded” by the self-serving sophistries of our Communist enemies.

I shall do this in the only honest way that I can, which is by simply setting forth those moral principles that I personally believe in; and that I personally observe and honor; whenever the occasion arises, to the best of my sometimes frail ability. But I believe that this syllabus, while far from complete, will be as objectively sound as one ordinary subjective mortal can make it. And of course I hope, therefore, that it may be of some service as a standard, or as a starting point, for many others who really want to make this a better world.

V

1. I shall always do unto others as I would have them do unto me.

This theme is stated, I believe, in one form or another, with vigorous endorsement, in every one of man’s great religions. It expresses what is probably the most universal of all moral exhortations. And it is a fundamental principle of Christianity.

2. I shall always be truthful.

It seems to me that, as Huxley stated long before me, “veracity is the heart of morality.” There is no possible justification for the argument that governments should have the right to lie to their own subjects or to other governments. The

highly placed politician who makes a habit of dealing in falsehoods, about his actions or his intentions, should be defeated or impeached for that reason alone. If all men (and women too, of course), from diplomats to drunken bums, would simply resolve tomorrow always to be truthful, about everything – to the best of their knowledge and understanding – and would then abide by that resolution, I believe that fully half of all the troubles and grief of the human race would disappear within six months.

3. I will neither kill nor injure another human being, except in such circumstances that it is morally justifiable to do so.

By almost universal custom, those circumstances include self defense on behalf of myself, my family, or any lawful group with legally clean hands of which I am properly a member. By equally strong tradition, they include combat engagements, while I am in the armed services of my country during war with a foreign nation, and am carrying out the orders of my superiors. I shall make no effort, especially in this limited space, to set forth for others the proper decision, with regard to either justification, in every conceivable set of circumstances. In this tight series of resolutions I certainly cannot refute all the errors of the conspiratorial casuists, but perhaps I can brush away some of their most deliberate and flagrant falsehoods.

4. I shall oppose, in every practicable way that I can, the widespread use or legalization of abortion, or of euthanasia.

This resolution is inserted in this spot because of its close connection, from a moral point of view, with the item just above. For abortion, in plain language, is simply murder – as any honest doctor will tell you who has witnessed the struggle of the living fetus to survive. And about euthanasia being murder there can be no argument.

Just as the killing of another human being can sometimes be justified, on the basis of self defense or even other considerations, so there undoubtedly are rare instances – very rare indeed – when even the moral factors weigh clearly in favor of abortion. But the present drive, supported by the current Administration, to make abortion commonplace, with a similar drive for euthanasia at the dictate of government obviously intended to come close behind it, is simply a part of the Communist program to make human life negligible and cheap. This is completely contrary to the moral principles of a Christianized civilization.

5. I shall always support the concept and the practice of monogamy.

This is one course of conduct on which the morality of many other religions and Christian morality sharply diverge. And I am aware that much can be said

for those other points of view. Also, I agree that we should be very hesitant about rushing in to try to impose our idea of the proper relationships between men and women on the people of other civilizations. In the first place monogamy, and the chastity outside of marriage which goes with it as a part of the total concept, require the male to rise above almost incredibly strong natural instincts, and to suppress or control those instincts for the sake of other more objective values and considerations. But I believe that this whole procedure represents a huge step forward in man's "upward reach," and that our Judaic-Christian civilization, by accepting and promoting a monogamous life as at least an ideal, has painfully advanced beyond other civilizations which have gone before it, as well as those which are now its rivals.

6. I shall not steal, and I shall oppose stealing by others, whether they be individuals, groups, or governments.

The right to own private property is much more the cause, than it is the result, of civilization. The desire to be secure and protected in the ownership of property has been one of the great motivating forces in causing men to surrender some of their individual freedom to governments. When governments then use their power for "robbing selected Peter to pay for collective Paul," or to take property from those who have pride and distribute it among those who only have votes, the thievery is just as brazen and immoral as when a burglar breaks into a house to steal the silverware. It is no accident that the admonition "thou shalt not steal" is common to all of our great religions. For without the always assumed though sooner-or-later always broken guarantees of government with regard to the private ownership of property, there would have been no huge social organizations in which any religion could flourish.

7. I shall be tolerant of other people's views. Most especially I shall be tolerant of the religion of others, while faithful to the beliefs and principles of my own; with reverence always and blasphemy never as visible manifestations of my spiritual outlook.

The evangelically minded devotees of any religious faith must be allowed the right and the opportunity to convert others to their beliefs, provided this is done entirely by persuasion through civilized procedures. My own tolerance and good will must be sufficient to encompass even intolerance in others, so long as this intolerance does not use force or coercive measures to attain its ends. The complete and fully acknowledged freedom of religious belief for all is one of the great advances and achievements of our Western Civilization. This freedom must be restored and maintained throughout the world, despite every effort of the Communists to suppress and destroy it.

8. *I shall be a good patriot of my country.*

Due to the increasing speed and reach of both transportation and communication, our world does grow smaller. And our broadening outlook into space does tend to make the total population of this earth seem more like one group of fellow toilers thrown together on a tiny island. So we should realize that eventually, perhaps in a hundred years or perhaps in several thousand years, there will come about some real federation of all nations, or what Tennyson called a “parliament of man.” But for this to be anything but the framework of a cruel tyranny, it will have to be arrived at by the peaceful and willing consent of the various peoples and their governments, much as our federal nation was formed by independent states and their people at the end of our colonial period.

The attempt to use this great future hope, however, as an excuse and means for imposing on all the inhabitants of the earth, by brute force and massive murders, by trickery and terror and torture, the arbitrary and absolute rule of a one-world Communist regime, should be resisted at every turn before it is too late. Since the United Nations is visibly intended to be the initial framework for such a tyranny, with such incredibly cruel suppression to be inflicted on all who resist as was already used by the United Nations on the people of the Congo, it is crystal clear that each and every surrender of all or any part of the sovereignty of any country to the United Nations constitutes treason on the part of the rulers of that country. And the moral necessity of resistance to such treasonous acts is equally clear.

Much confusion on this point has been skillfully created by the Communists, even among many good Christians, through a seductive misinterpretation of the injunction in the twenty-second chapter of *Matthew* to “render therefore unto Caesar the things which are Caesar’s.” For the right to sell one’s country into slavery, or to impose a transitional tyranny on its people, by a fraudulent extension and expansion of the powers of government, does not belong to any would-be Caesar anywhere or at any time. As was well stated by President Theodore Roosevelt two generations ago, “patriotism means to stand by the country. It does not mean to stand by the President or any other public official save exactly to the degree in which he himself stands by the country.”

Under present circumstances, therefore, it is my moral duty, and that of every good patriot of any country, to do all he can to preserve the independence of his nation, and all those safeguards of the freedom and rights of its people which have been promised by the basic laws and government of that nation. In the United States these rights of the people and powers of the government were clearly set forth in our written Constitution. And every usurpation of power by government, in defiance of the Constitution and except through amendments arrived at according to its terms, is just as much a form of treason – and is just

as dangerous to our liberty – as is the selling of military secrets to our national enemies, or giving them aid and comfort in warfare against us. And our moral duty with regard to such treasonous acts – especially when they are visibly and deliberately designed to promote tyranny in the future – is just as firm as is our duty to keep our families from being murdered by the Mafia.

Patriotism, meaning the love of one's own country, is still a most admirable trait, as it has been for thousands of years. When manifested in proper action on behalf of the freedom of that country from conquest or tyranny or subversion, it becomes a tremendous virtue. In the United States today a patriot is usually an Americanist, as distinguished from a Communist; meaning that he believes the traditional American way of life is infinitely superior to the Communist system, and that he is willing to give his own life, if necessary, to save for our posterity the blessings which our forefathers bestowed upon ourselves.

9. I shall honor and cherish all of my family relationships and responsibilities.

The family is the structural unit of which any civilization is built. Unless these building blocks be of good quality, with firmness of form and cohesiveness of substance, the whole social structure will gradually disintegrate and crumble into ruins. This is why the Communists, using every conceivable means for their purpose, are determined to destroy the family as a body of mutual loyalties, and why every Americanist should be even more determined to maintain its virtues and its values.

10. I shall be self reliant, to the full extent that is consistent with my age, my physical condition, my sex, and my family relationships. I shall teach self reliance to our children, and encourage it in all other human beings.

This means that I earnestly support in practice, and advocate in theory, The John Birch Society emphasis on less government and more individual responsibility. The functions of government should be purely negative: To protect the good citizens from the predatory activities of the idle, the envious, and the criminal elements of every population. Without law, as the Greeks pointed out, there can be no freedom. Because each man would have to spend too much of his time and energy in protecting his family and his possessions from evil doers.

Every pioneer settlement in the wilderness is always glad to have law established, with sheriffs to enforce it. And certainly more law is needed by a complex metropolitan community than by a country village. But the minute any government starts to become a cow that supplies milk instead of a watchdog that merely supplies protection, it is on the way to converting a self reliant society into a collectivist monstrosity.

For only by the whips and bayonets and cruelties of tyrants can any social organization ever keep itself alive without private gain as an incentive for those who produce. All of the same considerations hold, and all collectivist practices have the same effect on a sliding scale, even in every so-called “mixed economy.” Because of the very nature of man, the temptingly presented road to collectivism is *always* the road to moral degradation and eventually to a stultifying spread of poverty for all. Collectivism *always* leads to an age of shoddy: To shoddy goods, shoddy services, shoddy morals, and shoddy people. Exactly as it is now visibly doing in the United States. Since such a system can only be kept in existence by the use of trickery, force, and cruelty, it also leads inevitably to the loss of all freedom. To oppose this whole process, actively and earnestly, is the *moral duty* of every good human being.

11. I shall always participate in charity for the needy, to the full extent that my resources and my other responsibilities will permit.

There are many vital differences between completely voluntary charity, as practiced by groups or individuals, and welfarism as enforced by governments. Several of them were fully indicated, though probably not intentionally so, in an angry expostulation by the Socialist Conspirator, George Bernard Shaw! “Hang the poor!” he said. “I hate the poor. What I want is to abolish poverty.” The remark is on a par with that of a plumber who says: “Lady, don’t bother me about how the water from that broken pipe is flooding your basement. I hate working on broken pipes. I’m busy trying to train water not to run downhill.”

One reason poverty cannot be abolished is that it is a relative condition. The very poorest people in the United States today are decidedly well off, even by the most materialistic measures, compared with the great masses of those who live in Soviet Russia; and are actually rich in their living standards when compared with at least a hundred million of the poorest people in India. Also, if by some miracle you raised the living standards of *all* the American people tomorrow to ten times their present levels, those at the bottom could still be persuaded by demagogues that they were poor, simply because there were obviously other people who had a great deal more.

The socialists’ dream of abolishing poverty – which is mainly the demagogues’ pretended dream, as a means of acquiring more tyrannical power for themselves – is exactly as nonsensical as the scheme of the sweet old lady who wanted to avoid *all* rear-end train collisions by always taking the last car off every train before it left the station. While the socialists’ plan for improving the living conditions of the poorest elements of any population is by dividing what the total population already has. But in due course the measures required for this distribution so reduce the quantity and quality of what is to be divided that

even the poorest elements wind up having less than they had before – although they have a much larger percentage of the total. It not only would be easy, with enough time and room, to show why this must be true, but the clinching argument is simply that in all human experience it always has been true.

The history of even the first Babylonian empire, of Greece, of Rome, and of eastern Europe in this Twentieth Century, all have shown the ultimate results of government welfarism when carried to its ultimate stage. At the same time we also have the absolutely clear proof of the opposite and beneficial effect of a free-enterprise economy, on the material living conditions of all classes, in the records of the early Roman Republic; or in the history of the American Republic; or in the story of the recovery of West Germany since 1948; or in contemporary life on the island of Formosa, compared with that on the mainland of China.

And this is still a treatise on morality rather than on economics. For voluntary private charity has such tremendous advantages over government welfarism, from every point of view and for the benefit of everybody, that it is a *moral and humanitarian duty* of truly good people of all economic levels to support private charity against government doles, in all honorable ways, on all occasions, and with regard to every division of human need. Those advantages include the following.

(a) Private charity is given far more surely to those who really need and deserve it.

(b) Private charity does not involve the colossal waste – in administration, in vote-buying, in bureaucratic profligacy with other people's money, in the inefficiency of generalized procedures – which is inevitable in government welfarism. Running a government welfare operation is exactly like running a huge steam boiler of which the shell contains hundreds of holes through which the steam escapes. The amount of fuel required is out of all proportion to the energy delivered by the boiler, and the whole operation contaminates the spirit of everybody involved.

(c) Private charity does not automatically and invariably reduce the quality of what is being given to those who need it, nor the production of the total quantity of goods and services from which these charitable gifts are drawn. While government welfarism increasingly, inevitably, and fatally has the effect of reducing both the quality and quantity for everybody, whether it be of food or clothes or medical services or transportation or even entertainment and recreation.

(d) Private charity works automatically, to a very considerable extent, to cause the merely unfortunate to strive to better their own conditions so as not to need it. Government welfarism has exactly the opposite effect.

(e) Private charity, only rarely and to a decidedly limited extent, lends itself to

the use of self-seeking and self-glorifying hypocrites who are really concerned only with their own prestige, influence, or power. While government welfarism is – and through all ages has been, under all forms of government – the greatest tool of powerseeking scoundrels. This was true of the Gracchi with their promises of “agrarian reform” two thousand years before Mao Tse-tung used the same deception in China; as it had been of thousands like them in earlier civilizations, and as it is of dozens of leading lights in the Nixon Administration in this year of 1970 A.D.

* * *

It is in the area of man’s economic problems, more than anywhere else, that “morality sees farther than intellect.” It is morally wrong to take a laborer, who is himself poor, but who assumes all of the responsibilities for his own family, and force this man to work a third of his time to support those who are completely indifferent to their own responsibilities and who demand such support as a right.

There are a dozen major patterns of similar injustice in every governmental welfare system. To make the establishment or continuation of all such policies depend strictly on the *moral* principles involved would cut through the whole gigantic knot of carefully contrived confusion. It would also raise the standard of living for everybody, and would block the demagogues’ march to power before they ever got started. I resolve to do my part to have moral considerations prevail in this area, as everywhere else in human life.

12. I shall always do what I can to prevent cruelty, whether to human beings or to any living thing; and to be guided by a genuine compassion for all mental or physical suffering by man or beast.

This does not mean that I am necessarily a vegetarian in diet. The eating of animal flesh by men or by other animals is too visibly a part of the natural scheme of things, as approved by Divinity, by man’s experience, and by common sense. But having a calf killed, as quickly and painlessly as possible, to supply man food, is in a different spiritual world from breaking the wing of a bird to see it suffer, or from deliberately stepping on a sleeping kitten out of indifference. While the torture of any human being for any reason – as is now so widely practiced by the beasts who call themselves Communists – is morally far worse than even cold-blooded murder.

13. I shall always recognize my responsibilities for the physical, mental, and moral training of children entrusted to my care as parent, teacher, or guardian.

These responsibilities, on the part of a parent, include the giving to each child of a happy home, with adequate food, shelter, clothing, education, and

entertainment. It is the fulfillment of these obligations and of others that justifies the description of the family as “the noblest work of God.” But on behalf of parent, teacher, or guardian such obligations also include giving each child the love and attention and inspiration and praise and discipline which clearly are a part of their total duties.

I subscribe to the Biblical injunction, which is supported by ages of human experience, that to spare the rod is to spoil the child; and I believe that in some cases and some situations corporal punishment is clearly dictated by the love for the child who deserves the punishment. I stress the point because to confuse such action based on affection with torture as discussed above is to abandon all common sense; and because carefully considered discipline during the years of early training is so important in preparing any boy or girl to lead a happy and useful life.

To put it bluntly, I believe that at least ninety percent of all the hippies, young criminals, and heartbreaking misfits, who are now ruining the wonderful minds and bodies and opportunities for permanent happiness which nature gave them, would never have fallen for the cleverly deceptive and cruelly destructive Communist line if parental authority had seen that they were given pats on the back, often enough, hard enough, and low enough while they were still at the right age for such discipline.

14. I believe, emphatically and earnestly, in justice as an ideal which every social organization should strive to provide, through its laws and customs and attitudes, for all human beings. The only deviations from justice should be on the side of mercy, in situations where mercy is dictated by a humane public conscience.

It should be noted, as a plain and tragic historical fact, that the human race has not known any reasonable degree or dependable certainty of justice except in fortunate areas, under unusual circumstances, for comparatively short eras. But the *expectation of justice* is strong enough in most human beings, especially throughout their early years, to be one of the great driving forces towards the formation of a truly civilized national life. And we should do all we can to promote the fulfillment of this divinely inspired hope and ideal.

15. I shall never accept the satanic sophistry that the end justifies the means. Nor the parallel and equally fraudulent theory presented as “situation ethics.”

Not all of the moral principles we are recording here have yet reached such universal and longtime acceptance that they can be regarded as absolutes. But many have, and they are not to be mocked at the whim of transgressors. Nor can any of the others be sacrificed to merely convenient excuses. For then morality

ceases to be vigorously alive, and loses its value in determining the future happiness of a people.

It is quite common today to hear parents express themselves as follows. “Five years ago, what our youngsters are now doing, or many actions which they are urging us to accept as suitable conduct, would have seemed to me to be grossly immoral. Now I do not know.” Such parents should face up to the reality that any such yielding on their part is a combination of blindness, weakness, and nonsense. The truth is that this confusion has been deliberately planned and contrived by evil forces to serve their own nefarious aims. *What was morally wrong five years ago is just as wrong today.* And every intellectually honest person knows it.

As to the end justifying the means, who is to decide what end is noble enough to justify means of what degree of foulness? Why, the person who wishes to commit the foul deeds, of course. And who is to decide what otherwise clearly immoral act is to be reassessed as morally all right under some particular circumstances, as permitted by “situation ethics”? Why, the person in those circumstances, of course, who wants to commit the immoral act.

So what happens when either escape from moral limitations is accepted or condoned? The answer is obvious. A whole system of morality rapidly disappears, and is replaced by nothing more than a miscellaneous, inconsistent, and undeterminable aggregate of *individual value judgments*. There simply is no morality left, and its supposed substitute is utterly useless as a guide for civilized conduct. This is the basic reason why the pretense that the end justifies the means is, and always has been, utterly indefensible; and why the moral trap known as “situation ethics” is a deliberate fraud contrived for the very purpose of destroying morality.

16. I shall not yield to any of the specific forms of immorality which the enemies of God and man are now trying to get widely practiced and accepted, especially by our young people, as fashionable, or “modern.” And I shall do my utmost to have all of these grossly immoral practices understood, resisted, and made the object of deserved contempt by young and old alike.

Most flagrant among the bestialities to which I refer are: (a) Sexual perversion; (b) sexual promiscuity outside of marital ties; (c) the use of narcotic drugs which seriously damage either the mind or the body (or both) of the user; (d) the flaunting of dirty hair and dirty clothes over dirty bodies; and (e), the stupid and sometimes criminal manifestations of rebelliousness against an inherited civilization of which these rebels do not have the slightest understanding.

17. I shall always be industrious.

The devil not only finds too much mischief for idle hands to do, but increasingly in our contemporary world he causes idle minds to turn inward on themselves. There is no time and little temptation for those who work hard on their jobs and their responsibilities to engage in vandalism, arson, or similar recreations of contemptible parasites. And for those who are objectively concerned with producing or supplying what the world needs most in goods and services and construction, and in scientific or spiritual progress, there is no opportunity for active minds to develop such subjective ills as neuroses, psychoses, and other manifestations of “mental illness.”

A primary cause of the problems and troubles which beset us today is the vacuum that has been left for man’s (and women’s) energies by the accomplishments of our forefathers in conquering so large a continent and creating so great a nation. To the fullest extent that my own age and health will permit, I shall remain occupied with the world’s work to be done as long as I live. And with whatever leisure hours and spare energy I do have left, I shall be equally busy at legitimate and respectable hobbies which I have always loved, and for which I have never had sufficient time.

18. I shall try hard to preserve a sense of moderation and balance with regard to all of my appetites, desires, and expectations.

The intensity of my urge to learn, to see, to do, to understand, and to experience all that life has to offer, will always be kept under control, to the best of my ability, by all of the common sense, sound judgment, and weighing of conflicting considerations that I can muster for the occasions when they are needed.

19. I intend always to maintain a spirit of sincere humility concerning my own position and deeds and influence, in connection with all organizations, undertakings, and activities of which I am a part.

This will be simply because I have so much to be humble about. It will not be because of, nor indicated by, any weakness in the face of opposition, lack of confidence in tackling any task for which I am equipped, or undue restraint in battling for what I believe to be right. My underlying, continuous, and very real humility will be more deeply rooted in my realization of how little I can possibly know and do in all the vast areas of knowledge and of need which loom so overwhelmingly over and around all intelligent men of good will and good conscience, at this stage of our western civilization.

20. I shall always try to have, and to demonstrate, the courage that can properly be expected of me, in all situations where courage is required.

This promise, to myself more than to others, is made in full realization of a most important fact about courage, in the kind of struggle which engages us all today. Courage on a battlefield, with the constantly clear and present danger of being killed, is an admirable and much needed trait for any patriot. But it must be recognized that this form of courage is helped by the excitement of tense action, and usually has to be sustained for only a limited period. So please permit me to appropriate and paraphrase one paragraph from the JBS November Bulletin.

“The slings and arrows of outrageous fortune,” which the Communists and their dupes and allies can turn so massively, insidiously, invisibly, viciously, and damagingly on the lives, the families, the businesses, and the reputations of anybody who really fights against them, constitute a steady and unceasing menace to be faced in all of one’s wakeful hours over many years. The brand of courage called for on the part of anybody who remains unwavering in his long drawnout and tireless battle against these enemies may demand even more permanent strength and dedication than hand-to-hand combat on a more conventional field of battle. And it is my resolution to remain faithful to my duty under both, and all other, sets of circumstances.

VI

If you have now read these resolutions of a dedicated Bircher, please allow your editor to make some final comments. We wish to point out that this transcription of our contemporary moral code – or of what was our generally accepted moral code until the Communist termites started gnawing at it – while incomplete, informal, and having no authority except its own inner strength and conviction, is not intended as something purely ephemeral, for a year or a decade. It is true that this recitation and reminder of these basic moral principles has been provoked by, and in some places takes specific note of, the evil forces now at work under the banner of Communism. It is also true that a self-perpetuating, organized, would-be permanent Conspiracy of such evil forces, which has already lasted for some six generations, is something new in human history.

But the morally evil purposes based on, and supported by, the theory of collectivism, we have had with us for thousands of years, and probably shall have, in varying degrees of strength and organization, for thousands of years to come. It is only a morality which is vigorously alive that can keep these evil forces sufficiently scorned and suppressed for the good men and women of all religious faiths gradually to make this a better world. This can never be done by permitting the erosion of the moral principles that are needed.

As stated in *The Blue Book* a dozen years ago, for half a century we have been living in an age that was dying, while a new one was coming to birth. It was easy to see that we were at one of the great crossroads of human history. This will become even more obvious in the years just ahead. And we cannot run away from the opportunity given us by accident, or the responsibility assigned to us by Providence, as the case may be. For beyond all doubt the nature of this new age can be tremendously influenced by the actions, the example, and the leadership of the members of The John Birch Society during the whole period of turmoil and transition that is now upon us.

We must, therefore, remain true to our beliefs, our ideals, and our aspirations, under all pressures and throughout every storm. And the very core of our dedication to the future must lie in the maintenance, by our lives and thoughts and labors, of the moral principles that we have inherited from the past. For it is our measure of success in this undertaking that will eventually make the difference – for our children and their children, throughout generations and perhaps even centuries to come – between chaos and sanity, between slavery and freedom, between a resigned despair and a gloriously confident hope.

This copyrighted article appeared originally in *The John Birch Society Bulletin* for December 1970. Additional copies of *The John Birch Resolutions* are available, 1-9/\$1.95ea; 10-24/\$1.25ea; 25-49/\$1.00ea; 50-99/\$0.70ea; 100+/\$0.50ea; plus shipping and handling.

Order from: The John Birch Society, Appleton, WI 54912-8040 or ShopJBS.org.

About Robert Welch

And so, we now ask, what sort of man is Robert Welch as individual, as human being?

As you meet him in his quiet office at Belmont, or as you see him in public at a meeting or a John Birch Society dinner, you feel a power. It is not what we call today “charisma.” Robert Welch does not have that as (on different levels) a John F. Kennedy did, or a Theodore Roosevelt, or a Patrick Henry. There does not at first seem to be a flair, a personal magnetism, a something that reaches out and grasps you. It is a quiet power. It affirms and insists, through convictions, through an amazing knowledge, through a goodness and integrity that seem almost to be tangible. It is not oratory. He is not a spell-binder. He writes clearly, often brilliantly or eloquently; he writes better than he speaks. Yet somehow, something fundamental in the mind and the man, a grasp of things as they are, a sincerity and integrity flow out of him and into his audience. His power lies in his goodness and his truth. I have felt this, I have seen this, and I bear sober witness to it.

And no one can know him, under the weight of the world and the stress of his enemies, without reverence for his courage. Strong, I would say — stubborn, his enemies might say — in his conviction, his knowledge, his passionate desire to serve and save his country, he dares the cost and faces the danger fearlessly.

— E. Merrill Root, “Introduction,”
The Life and Words of Robert Welch, 1975

THE JOHN BIRCH SOCIETY

770 N. Westhill Blvd.
Appleton, WI 54914

1-800-JBS-USA1
(1-800-527-8721)

www.jbs.org