

FREE THOUGHT, FREE SPEECH, FREE PRESS.

Free thought, free speech and a free press constitute the inalienable and invulnerable necessities to individual and national prosperity and an advancing civilization. Civilization comprises all customs, laws or institutions which have tended to foster or are advancing man's ability to survive in the struggle for existence. The most civilized nation is not that having the most cultivated people, but the one the institutions of which produce the greatest number of individuals maintaining themselves by their own efforts. Greek and Roman culture attained its greatest ascendancy at the time that national degeneracy was well advanced. Culture does not make civilization. It may aid it, however. A civilized nation is one which produces and is ruled by the greatest number of independent thinkers among the people.

Free thought is the basis of free speech and a free press. The three constitute the only "holy trinity" known to man. Here we have one in three and three in one, free from mystery. He who comprehends the nature and relations of his own thoughts is made in the image of God and is the very incarnation of divinity. He is the mightiest, the most subtle, the most profound manifestation of the eternal and all embracing energy.

So vital is the "holy trinity" of free thought, free speech and a free press to individual prosperity and national solidarity that the fathers felt impelled to engraft them in the constitution as "rights of the individual" beyond the limits of government interference. It should never be forgotten that Sam Adams, "the last of the Puritans," was as doggedly obstinate in advocating these "rights" as was the "free-thinking" Jefferson, who was falsely maligned as an Atheist, as was Paine also. According to the constitution it is an obligation of the government to defend the "free-thinker" in religion or politics, against the machinations or despotism of the majority that may disagree with him. Here is a case where the will of the majority can only prevail to its own injury or destruction. Cowardice is invariably self-destructive. Never is it more so than when manifest as fear of the workings of the human brain. Fear of ideas is social suicide. In the religious, political and social sense the majority is often false to the constitution. Whoever persecutes or seeks to limit the expression of opinion is guilty of high treason. The mugwump is the "voice of God." The tongue of the "back-slider" is often appropriated by the truth.

Ecclesiasticism denies the right of free speech and would, if it could, stamp out independence of intellect in the people. Robespierres would guillotine the independent in politics or strangle his life

out in the coils of the machine. The boss denies the right of independent citizenship to positions in the public service. An ignorant and subservient majority pulls the cords of intellectual strangulation at the bidding of the boss. The ecclesiastical and political boss is conceived in ignorance, begotten in sin, and born in corruption. The independent is alone incorruptible. Society ostracizes the independent and draws its pharasaic and superstition-polluted robes about it as he passes by. The press, which is granted the utmost license and carries abuse to anarchistic disregard of freedom, lends its aid to guillotining the intellectual independence of the nation. It is the subservient tool of the ecclesiastical, political and social magnates. Fear of independent thought is the curse of humanity. Fear is the infallible evidence of self-conscious weakness. Truth is the bete noir of the coward. Cowardice is the child of ignorance. The greatest of all cowardice is

The Fear of Free Thought.

Free thought! What is it? What is its nature? Not possessing it the majority know nothing about it. For the same reason they fear it. For like reason the majority "fear God." They are not "made in the image." Man fears not that which he knows. The fear of ignorance may be blissful but it lacks the confidence of the wise. All wisdom is self-knowledge. Ignorance is weakness. To the majority free speech and free thought are identical. They are mistaken. Free thought and free speech are not necessarily related. No one speaks more freely than the liar. No one is permitted more freedom in speech. The truth speaker alone is gagged. Free thought is a rare intellectual gem in individuals. Free thought is not a right. Free thought is not only beyond the control of others, but outside of self-control. Nothing but death can alienate it from him who is so born. It is not even an "inalienable right." Even the despot has no power over the thoughts of the imprisoned martyr. The fagots of the inquisition may destroy the body but the thought of the martyr is the eternal and indestructible energy. Thoughts may be transient, but thought is eternal and unchangeable as the truth.

Free speech (not speech) is a right guaranteed by each individual member to a social compact to every other member, hence written in the bond, as self-evident necessity to individual safety. While several people have arisen to this conception in the abstract sense, and recorded it in the letter of their constitutions, not one is civilized enough to live up to its spirit and give speech unrestricted freedom in the practical sense. The ecclesiastical and political boss in the United States is as malignantly dangerous to free speech as William the

bombastic is in Germany. The social tyrant is far less restrictive in Germany and France than in England and America. The people there do not fear speech half as much as the bosses do. In the United States the bosses have stamped the intellects of the people, who know not what wolves they are, though making most lamb-like pretensions.

As intimated but few know the nature of free thought. Colonel Ingersoll was generally looked upon as an example of a free thinker. Free speaker, he certainly was, but he never arose beyond the dignity of a free thinker, "limited" to use a commercial expression. But the most limited number of those occupying chairs of philosophy in educational institutions are free intellectually. Scarcely one is a philosopher. Most of them are students of philosophers. Philosophy is the study of the reactions in one's own mind. Only such as have "minds of their own" can be philosophers. He who is but the phonophonic repeater of the intellectual reactions of dead ages cannot be a philosopher. He may be learned; he is not educated. Thomas Paine was a free thinker par excellence. He cast tradition and precedent behind him as something polluting to the free and independent mind. Thomas Jefferson was another. Unrestricted free thinkers are the rarest gems among the Kosmic stars, even on the horizon of science. Traditional limitation pollutes the lustre of nearly all the most radiant intellectual gems.

The Nature of Thought.

No one knows what thought is except that it is one of the manifestations of the universal force. It is enough if we can understand the nature of our thoughts. Thought is a phenomena of mind, as mind is a complex of force manifestations. There being no such thing as freedom, in a personal sense, it should be evident that free thought is impossible. Freedom is an individualistic condition possible only in the presence of other individuals. Freedom is a mutual concession of people aggregated together for self-preservation. When the individual's actions do not encroach on those of others, so as to necessitate their limitation, he is said to be free. Such freedom implies self control. Self-control implies restraint. Restraint is not liberty. Nevertheless self-control is necessary to freedom in the social state. Self-control implies consciousness of power. Power gives freedom. Weakness is slavery. In the individualistic sense this is a very profound idea of freedom. On the other hand there is a far more subtle and profound conception. This may be defined as unconscious subjectiveness; unconscious living without limitation; the unconsciousness of consciousness. The last is paradoxical; nevertheless it is the only