

in a socialistic manner to interfere with the creative activities and voluntary relationships among peaceful persons. This is how governments behave when they are constituted or organized upon the contractual and unrealistic principle of "I'll respect your life if you'll respect mine."

We are not saying that this is necessarily the foundation for government or that government has to be socialistic and disruptive of peaceful human affairs. Among peaceful persons who have individually recognized the morality and wisdom of volunteering unilaterally not to kill, not to steal, not to injure another deliberately, there would be no need for government if everyone were capable of living according to his good intentions. Yet, within a society primarily comprised of property-respecting, peaceful persons, individuals make mistakes; and there is a place for an organized agency

of force with sufficient power to suppress or discourage any errant threat to life or property. One may solemnly pledge not to break the peace himself and yet consistently advocate a government police force strong enough to overcome and subdue him if in a moment of rashness he should forget or violate his pledge. Self-control is a most difficult thing; a properly limited government is a form of organized self-control and may be helpful in that limited role. But when government exceeds that very limited purpose and begins placing barriers between willing buyers and sellers, it then becomes the positive evil we know as socialism and all of its variations.

When anyone tries to make a deal to respect your life if you'll respect his, tell him to forget it — but respect his life anyway, because it is the right thing to do.

IDEAS ON LIBERTY

Good all the Way

AS MORAL GUIDES, the Golden Rule and the Decalogue are not evil and dangerous things, like a painkilling drug, to be taken in cautious moderation, if at all. Presuming them to be the basic guides of what is right and good for civilized man, one cannot overindulge in them. Good need not be practiced in moderation.

F. A. HARPER, *Morals and the Welfare State*

A MORAL CODE FOR RATIONAL MAN

WILLIAM HENRY CHAMBERLIN

LONG a sturdy and consistent champion of the free economy, with the free market and the profit system as its foundation stones, Henry Hazlitt in *The Foundations of Morality* (D. Van Nostrand, 398 pp., \$9.95) brings the familiar gifts of his felicitous writing style, lucid exposition, persuasive logic, lightened by a good sense of humor, to the subject of the moral rules which should govern human conduct. What he offers is a system of practical ethics, not bound to but also not excluding any specific religious commitment.

Modestly admitting that it would be presumptuous for any writer to claim very much originality in a subject that has engaged the earnest attention of the

Mr. Chamberlin is a skilled observer and reporter of economic and political conditions at home and abroad. In addition to writing a number of books, he has lectured widely and is a contributor to *The Wall Street Journal* and numerous magazines.

world's greatest minds over 25 centuries, Mr. Hazlitt takes his stand pretty definitely in the tradition of the British utilitarian moralists, beginning with Hume and proceeding through Adam Smith, Bentham, and Mill. There is also a dash of pragmatism, suggestive of Benjamin Franklin and William James, in his view that there is seldom a clash between morality and happiness — that, in his own words, "immoral action is almost always shortsighted action."

Mr. Hazlitt sees in generally accepted rules of moral conduct an instrument for eliminating clashes between individuals and also between the individual and society. Believing that the word utilitarianism has perhaps outlived its usefulness, he calls his own ethical system by a new term, co-operatism.

Rejecting extremes of egoism