

sense of self-responsibility that grows out of self-respect. This must be the message of the admonition to love one's neighbor as oneself. A truly self-respecting individual sees the wisdom of respecting others, voluntarily and unconditionally acting toward them as he hopes they may react toward him, whether or not they have so acted in the past or agreed to act in the future.

The religious or moral case for the practice of the Golden Rule ought to be sufficient, but the practice also is sound from a strictly utilitarian point of view. It pays to respect the dignity of others and their rights to property. A very wealthy businessman once expressed the wish that everyone in the world might be wealthier than he. His point was that his services would be in even greater demand in such a society so blessed with riches. And the point would stand, whether a man has accumulated vast savings of his own, or not. In any event, whether wealthy or poor, it would be to his advantage to respect the property rights of all to whom he might hope to sell his own goods and services. Their property is all they have to offer him in exchange. And unless private property rights are recognized and mutually respected among men, there is no chance for the easy way of earning

a living through specialization and voluntary exchange. It would be impossible to accumulate the savings that represent the tools and capital necessary to create job opportunities for workers. Unless property is respected as the foundation for voluntary production and trade, the only alternative is a dog-eat-dog struggle that literally leaves each person fighting for his life. That would be the hard way to live, and not many of us could hope to last very long if we tried it.

Our Daily Bread

In the vast majority of our daily affairs, most of us unconsciously follow the easy way. If we want a loaf of bread or a can of beans, we simply go to a grocer and buy them; it never occurs to us that the grocer wouldn't be there with his well-stocked shelves if we had failed to respect and uphold his rights to property. Nor will he be willing to sell to us unless he respects our right to the money (property) we offer in exchange for the bread and beans.

In contrast to this simple, easy way of life, suppose that we tried taking the bread we want through force. We'd probably organize the Amalgamated Militant Breadwinners of America in an attempt to outnumber and overpower the members of the Bakers Protective

Association — with the result that very little, if any, bread would be baked, or consumed. Not everyone would starve to death, of course; many would have died in battle. That would be the hard way of life, the penalty Nature levies upon those who will not respect life and property.

Now, it's true that we may say to the baker, "I'll give you 25 cents if you'll give me a loaf of bread." And at that stage of the bargaining or exchange process, there is a deal involved, a *quid pro quo*, something for something. But the point to be remembered is that prior to any contract of sale, each party must show unconditional respect for the other fellow's property. Would you buy from anyone what you know is not his to sell? Your inclination, in that case, would be to take what you want, just as he did. So, property rights and trade go together, and tend to disappear together when either is threatened or jeopardized.

State and Federal Aid

This principle of respect for private property is not too difficult to understand and practice at the local level among those we know and love. But distance from home tends to becloud the issue. It is far from clear to many persons why the state government should not be called upon to stand

between those who want to purchase schooling for their children and those who want to provide such education. And an overwhelming majority of the electorate can be mustered in favor of "state aid" for education. Thus, property rights are violated; property is taken from some, without their express approval, and designated for use by others who have not earned it. Lacking are both of the prerequisites for continuing peaceful exchange: (1) a *quid pro quo* or something-for-something, and (2) the prior unilateral expression of self-respect and faith — "I'll not steal." The result is a chronic shortage of educational facilities — a result that can be predicted with absolute certainty any time the government is invited or allowed to erect barriers between the willing buyers and the willing sellers of any particular commodity or service. If subsidies are offered to those in need of education, their "needs"—like any other subsidized "needs"—will expand beyond any possibility of satisfaction.

Rent control affords another example of the frustration of willing exchange. When the state or Federal government is authorized to come between landlords and tenants, setting a price too low to balance supply and demand, the result will be a housing shortage.