WHY the common tendency to look upon work as a curse and do as little of it as possible? What is the enormous price of this error? These are the questions I wish to examine.

Conceded, there is one sense in which any given individual might properly try to avoid certain kinds of work. For instance, the work that most attracts me has to do with the freedom way of life—an ever-improving understanding and exposition of it. Thus, I prefer not to be a carpenter, a food raiser or merchant; let others be insurance or real estate salesmen, builders of autos or roads, makers of clothes or desks or pencils. The free economy tends to match jobs to persons who have special talents for them; "to each his own." The realization of my hope in my job rests on division of labor and unfettered exchange, that is, on a society in which I can exchange my specialty for other specializations. Freeing me to be me and, by the same token, releasing you to be you! This, in an economic sense, is what the freedom philosophy is all about.

While it is sound practice to avoid certain kinds of work, all will agree that work is a necessity—for the rule in reality is to work or perish. No argument! The point at issue has to do with one's attitude toward his work. Is it a fortunate opportunity or an unfortunate necessity? Were the matter put to vote, I expect the "unfortunates" would have it by a mile. Few are those who would rather work than play, who prefer being on the job to goofing off.

Today, too many individuals look upon their work not as a joyous employment of their time but, rather, as sheer drudgery—a pain in the neck, a curse instead of a blessing. And note that those who regard their work as an unfortunate necessity are not confined to any given job level. Many highly placed corporate executives are as anxious for retirement as window cleaners are anxious for a 20-hour week. This escapism from presumed drudgery seems to infect all categories of workers.

There is a price exacted for thinking of work as an unfortunate necessity, as a curse. The millions of individuals who have this attitude are vulnerable to exploitation. And there is no shortage of exploiters, of those who are ready and eager to take advantage of this erroneous way of thinking about work. This shortsighted attitude toward work underlies the coercive power over the economy exercised by labor unions. In the absence of this attitude, labor unions would possess no more coercive power than a chamber of commerce, a Ladies Aid Society, or these thoughts of mine.

What is the labor union's stock in trade? Shorter work weeks, more vacations and holidays, above-market wages; in a word, more and more affluence for less and less effort. Such tactics appeal only to those who look upon work as an unfortunate necessity, never to those who love their work. Are such persons comprised solely of waiters or dishwashers or street cleaners? Indeed, not! According to the evidence, the labor union theme appeals to policemen, teachers, engineers, electricians, plumbers, airline pilots, to a thousand and one occupations—some of them highly paid, indeed.

Above-market wages and below-market hours create unemployment. The government, under union pressure, picks up the tab by make-work projects—urban renewal, moon shots, ad infinitum—adding billions of dollars annually to the costs of government. The costs that cannot be met by direct tax levies are met by increasing the money supply: inflation. Prices rise as the dollar buys less and less. Who suffers most? The relatively poor, the very individuals these tactics are supposed to be helping!

He who deplores the ever-rising cost of living should look to the source: the ever-diminishing love of work.

THERE is yet another price we pay, perhaps the highest of all. There are those at every level who love their work. However, if theirs happens to be an occupation monopolized by labor unions, they have no choice but to join the anti-work parade or to go jobless and hungry or to go on the dole. Thus, as the repugnance for work increases, it taxes and tends to bury initiative, incentive, ingenuity and ambition under the general decadence. The exemplars of sound thinking diminish. What a price this is!

The remedy for all of this is, of course, self-respect, the pride of achievement, the urge to excel, the love of work. However, this is a problem that each individual must wrestle with personally. Whether one cultivates an attitude of love or of hate toward the things and the persons involved in his life is strictly a subjective matter. Anyone who has a modicum of self-determination can, if he so wills it, displace his hatred and spitefulness with love—including the love or glorification of work. Here is an excellent and helpful observation by William Osler, M.D.:

> Though little, the master word looms large in meaning. It is the "open sesame" to every portal, the great equalizer, the philosopher's stone which transmutes all base metal of humanity into gold. The stupid it will make bright, the bright brilliant, and the brilliant steady. To youth it brings hope, to the middle-aged confidence, to the aged repose. It is directly responsible for all advances in medicine during the past 25 years. Not only has it been the touchstone of progress, but it is the measure of success in everyday life. And the master word is *work*.

If one grasps Dr. Osler's point, and particularly if one is interested in the development or emergence of self, then work will be embraced —loved—as the means to these lofty ends. He will discover that there is no better prescription for good health and long life than joyous work.

Another distinguished physician, Dr. Hans Selye, names several famous men who lived to a ripe old age, and adds this comment:

> Of course, in their many years of intense activity, these people never "worked": they lived a life of "leisure" by working at what they liked to do.[1]

"What they liked to do"! With such fortunate ones there is no problem. They have hit upon their distinctive energies and talents, either by accident or by self-discovery. Let me illustrate.

We have a private garbage collector—a one-man, one-truck enterprise. He remarked one day while emptying a can of garbage, "Mr.

[1] See a splendid article, "But Hard Work Isn't Bad For You" by Dr. Hans Selye. *Reader's Digest*, June 1973.

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