

Session II
Christianity and
the Humane
Economy

Michael Novak
Nicholas Wolterstorff
William R. Luckey
Bob Goudzwaard
Craig M. Gay

Human Dignity, Personal Liberty: Themes from Abraham Kuyper and Leo XIII

Michael Novak
American Enterprise Institute

Introductory Remarks

From their inception, capitalism and free markets have evoked outcries from individuals of all stripes. Today, we hear from those on the Right that market forces destabilize society, that they undermine tradition, and that they have a tendency to corrupt culture. Similarly, from those on the Left we hear that market forces oppress and alienate man, turning him into nothing more than a commodity that gets bought and sold on the open market to the highest bidder. Each side of the spectrum voices important concerns that may be reduced to one much simpler: the fear that market forces treat people as objects, not as persons.

A central component of Christian social teaching, and Catholic social thought in particular, is how to best avoid objectifying man, how best to maintain a social order that retains both the dignity and the liberty of every individual, so that they may have the opportunity to develop of their own accord, following in the footsteps of Christ. The effect that economic processes have on man and society is therefore a crucial inquiry. It is a concern that every good Christian has an obligation to take pause and consider.

To better understand this issue, it is essential that Christians have a firm grasp of the theological principles that ground Christian social thought, and similarly, that they may recognize the relationship that exists between these principles, the nature of man, and our economic system. The Jewish and Christian tradition planted the seed of personal liberty, which sprouted during

the age of Aquinas, needed to be nurtured during the time of Pope Leo XIII (1810–1903), Abraham Kuyper (1837–1920), and the Industrial Revolution to ensure the continued existence of a worldly order conducive to human dignity; and whose roots are, thankfully, under constant reexamination. The tap-roots of Christian life run deep into the earth walked by fallen man, and the principles of that life must flourish if the tree of liberty is to bloom.

Whatever the merits of the criticisms of capitalism and free markets offered by my friends on both the Right and the Left, it is imperative that we not forget the important distinction between markets and culture. Like any institution, the market reflects the doings of its participants. And the doings of its participants reflect the fallen state of man made manifest in culture. If an institution is founded upon Christian principles and the Christian view of man, as I intend to suggest that capitalism and free markets are, it need not follow that people acting through such an institution will always behave in a Christian manner. That is ultimately a matter of individual choice, and free beings have the capacity (and fallen man has the disposition) for faulty judgment. As Christians, however, it is our duty to pray for the grace to live a life of virtue, with respect for the dignity and liberty of our brothers and sisters everywhere. Both Leo XIII and Abraham Kuyper fixed this context firmly in our minds.

Beginning in 1891: Leo XIII

When the bishop of tiny Perugia was elected pope in 1878, he was already sixty-eight years old and many expected him to be a short-term transitional figure. Instead, he lived until 1903 and the age of ninety-three, and transformed the Church—not least, its social teaching—more than any pope had done in the previous three centuries. Whereas at the midway point in the nineteenth century, diplomats were reporting that the end of the papacy seemed nigh, Joseph Schumpeter reports in his *History of Economic Analysis* that, by the end of Leo XIII's reign, the Church had attained an unprecedented vigor. Writing about the years 1870–1914, Schumpeter observed:

The Catholic Church was on the continent of Europe the object of legislative and administrative attacks from hostile governments and parliaments.... What could not have been expected was that these attacks everywhere ended in retreat and that they left the Catholic Church stronger than it had been for centuries. Political Catholicism arose from a renaissance of religious Catholicism. Looking back, we see not merely a reassertion of the Catholic standpoint by people who had never abandoned it; we also see a change of

attitudes among people who had; around 1900 it was a common observation to make, that in a Catholic family, the old and elderly were laicist and liberal and the youngest, believers and “clerical....” Political Catholicism from the first stood for social reform.¹

In the judgment of several scholars, *Centesimus Annus* (1991) of Pope John Paul II is the greatest of all the papal encyclicals on social doctrine² and yet its very title—and its opening chapter—pay tribute to Leo XIII’s *Rerum Novarum* (1891). In *Rerum Novarum* one can already see four salient principles of Catholic social thought, which remain strong and vigorous right through *Centesimus Annus* and beyond. One of these principles is only implicit in *Rerum Novarum*, but powerfully and unmistakably present: namely, the principle of personal agency and responsibility. The other three principles flow from this fundamental commitment. They are: a spirited defense of private property, combined with a rejection of the community of goods; an emphasis on personal initiative and enterprise; and a condemnation of socialism as unjust, contrary to nature, and doomed to practical futility.

Every other animal, Leo XIII points out, lives for the day without attempting to increase its stock; *only the human being works for a better future.*

The *Socialists* ... in endeavoring to transfer the possessions of individuals to the community, strike at the interests of every wage earner, for they deprive him of the liberty of disposing of his wages, and thus of all hope and possibility of increasing his stock and of bettering his conditions in life.

What is of still greater importance, however, is that the remedy they propose is manifestly against justice, for every man has by nature the right to possess property as his own. This is one of the *chief points of distinction* between man and the animal creation.³

My aim in this essay is to show how certain tendencies in economic theory and real-world trends today vindicate Leonine principles. Having treated Leo XIII’s contributions in two earlier books,⁴ I cite here only four quotations from *Rerum Novarum*. While John Stuart Mill and other prominent liberal intellectuals were pointing to socialism as the ideal system of the future, Leo XIII practically alone denounced it as unjust, contrary to natural law, and futile. He condemned it when there were, as yet, no real-world experiments in socialism. He condemned it on the basis of principle:

The Socialists, therefore, in setting aside the parent and introducing the providence of the State, act *against natural justice*, and threaten the very existence of family life. And such interference is not only unjust but is quite

certain to harass and disturb all classes of citizens and to subject them to odious and intolerable slavery. It would open the door to envy, to evil-speaking, and to quarreling; the sources of wealth would themselves run dry, for no one would have any interest in exerting his talents or industry; and that ideal equality of which so much is said would, in reality, be the leveling down of all to the same condition of misery and dishonor. Thus it is clear that *the main tenet of Socialism, the community of goods, must be utterly rejected*; for it would injure those whom it is intended to benefit, it would be contrary to the natural rights of mankind, and it would introduce confusion and disorder into the commonwealth.⁵

Whereas many intellectuals today believe that equality in possession of the world's goods is a moral imperative, Leo XIII (like Madison in *The Federalist*)⁶ sees equality as unnatural, destructive, and tyrannical.⁷

Having had experience in a business enterprise through his family, Leo XIII also stressed the principle of personal initiative and enterprise:

Clearly the essential reason why those who engage in any gainful occupation undertake labor, and at the same time the end to which workers immediately look, is to procure property for themselves and to retain it by individual right as their very own.

If incentives to ingenuity and skill in individual persons were to be abolished, the very fountains of wealth would necessarily dry up; and the equality conjured up by the Socialist imagination would, in reality, be nothing but uniform wretchedness and meanness for one and all, without distinction.

For its time, Leo XIII's condemnation of socialism seemed harsh; today, after so many socialist experiments, it seems prescient. His condemnation was based upon fundamental social principles, particularly with respect to the motive, drives, practical judgments, and rights of the human person.

To remedy these evils, the Socialists, working on the poor man's envy of the rich, endeavor to destroy private property, and maintain that individual possessions should become the common property of all, to be administered by the State or by municipal bodies. They hold that, by thus transferring property from private persons to the community, the present evil state of things will be set to rights, because each citizen will then have his equal share of whatever there is to enjoy. But their proposals are so clearly futile, for all practical purposes, that if they were carried out the working man himself would be among the first to suffer. Moreover, they are emphatically

unjust, because they would rob the lawful possessor, bring the State into a sphere that is not its own, and cause complete confusion in the community.⁸

Leo XIII began his analysis by diagnosing the existing evils of the relatively small number of capitalist countries (only three nations in the entire world could also at that time have been called “democratic”). He pointed out as well, that the economic and political theories of that generation were also deficient. He was far clearer in his own mind about the evils likely to result from socialism than about the exact mix of reforms and reconstructions that might lead, over the next few generations, to a happier state of affairs for working families. That did not prevent him from making a few well-designed suggestions, and these, as Schumpeter suggested, played a significant role in transforming European/American political economies in the early twentieth century.

It is true that Leo overlooked the creative possibilities for peaceful reform inherent in democracy. Based on his experiences with authoritarian democracy in Italy, he failed to see the power of democratic politics to place political and moral disciplines upon naked capitalism through popular consent. His vision of the evil consequences likely to flow from socialism was exact; his vision of the ways in which democratic political economies would grow in number, and be peacefully transformed by 1931⁹ and much more so by 1991¹⁰ was by contrast quickly blurred.

The Effect of Religion on Economics

In a different vein from that of Leo XIII, the great sociologist of economics Max Weber (1864–1920) demonstrated to the scholarly world that religious convictions alter economic systems. Against the Marxists, Weber showed that profound currents stirring deeply in the human spirit shake human beings from their bodily torpor in remarkably different ways, with significant effects upon economic systems. Although he is most famous for *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism* (1904), Weber examined the interplay of religion and economics among many books in the history of various cultures.¹¹ Because of the abundance of material available today on “the clash of civilizations,”¹² and because of the real-world consequences of different formations of the human spirit through religion and culture, Max Weber’s work may be more influential than ever.

Indeed, Weber’s work suggests an important angle of vision for approaching the topic of human dignity. Empirical research led Weber to the hypothesis

that Christianity (in one of its forms) and, behind Christianity, Judaism shaped human expectations in ways favorable to economic development. Stated in this general way, Weber's hypothesis has been solidly confirmed by a century of further research, although modified in important ways by other findings. For example, Professor Randall Collins has shown how, from about 1100 to 1350 A.D., the international system of Catholic monasteries put in place several important characteristics of a capitalist economy: an explosion of economically useful inventions, the rule of law, and a rationalized system of responsibilities. Economic achievements were not the main end of monastic life, obviously; they were an almost unintended by-product.

These [Cistercian] monasteries were the most economically effective units that had ever existed in Europe, and perhaps in the world, before that time. The community of monks typically operated a factory. There would be a complex of mills, usually hydraulically powered, for grinding corn as well as for other purposes. In iron-producing regions, they operated forges with water-powered trip-hammers; after 1250, the Cistercians dominated iron production in central France. Iron was produced for their own use but also for sale. In England, the entire monastic economy was geared toward producing wool for the export market. The Cistercians were the cutting edge of medieval economic growth. They pioneered in machinery because of their continuing concern to find labor-saving devices. Their mills were not only used by the surrounding populace (at a fee) for grinding corn but were widely imitated. The spread of Cistercian monasteries around Europe was probably the catalyst for much other economic development, including imitation of its cutthroat investment practices.¹³

In my own work, on the conceptual rather than on the empirical level, I have tried to show that the theological category of *imago Dei* (which affirms that every single human is made in the image of God) implies a specific kind of "calling" or "vocation" that Weber oddly neglects—the vocation to be creative, inventive, and intellectually alert in a practical way, in order "to build up the kingdom of God."¹⁴ It is not so much the asceticism of biblical teaching, as its call to creativity and inventiveness, that accounts for the dynamism of Jewish and Christian civilization, including economic dynamism.

Most economists accept the principle that "ideas have consequences." Nonetheless, it has been a convention ever since the Enlightenment to regard as less than consequential the immense explosion of theological ideas during the era 1100–1350 A.D., an explosion that erupted in the practical breakthrough mentioned above. This is a serious practical error. Scores of thousands of men

and women entered monasteries and launched highly rationalized and disciplined economic ventures. Moreover, at least five concepts crucial to the theme of human dignity and human liberty were brought to light, and polished for use, during that period: the concepts of *person*, *conscience*, *truth*, *liberty*, and *dignity*. Although some shadow of each of these terms can be found in the pre-Christian period, none was in shape to work and function as a useful concept in fashioning a new practical order, a new civilization, the new “city on the hill” that the medieval *civitas* was taught to aspire to. It was the achievement of the medieval Schoolmen to fashion these crucial tools.

In recognition of this achievement, Nobel laureate Friedrich Hayek (1899–1992), following Lord Acton, called one of these monks, Thomas Aquinas (1224–1274), “the first Whig,” that is, the founder of the party of liberty in human history.¹⁵ Many commentators have also noted that in *The Divine Comedy*, one of the greatest works of poetry in any language, Alighieri Dante (1265–1321) created both a dramatic rendition of the Thomist vision and a testament to the high importance an entire civilization attached to human liberty. Dante had absorbed into his bloodstream the fact that every story in the Bible, Jewish and Christian, gathers its suspense from the free choices that confront every human being. How humans use their liberty decides their destiny; how we use our freedom is the essential human drama. Liberty is the axial point of the universe, the point of its creation. That is the premise of *The Divine Comedy* and the ground of human dignity.

Human Dignity

What, after all, is human dignity? The English word *dignity* is rooted in the Latin *dignus*, “worthy of esteem and honor, due a certain respect, of weighty importance.” In ordinary discourse, we use “dignity” only of human persons. (But, of course, in the Bible it is also used of other special persons or “spiritual substances,” that is, beings capable of insight and choice, such as God and angels.) Both Aristotle and Plato held that most humans are, by nature, slavish and suitable only to be slaves. Most do not have natures worthy of freedom and proper to free men. The Greeks did not use the term *dignity* for all human beings, only for a few. By contrast, Christianity insisted that every single human is loved by the Creator, made in the Creator’s image, and destined for eternal friendship and communion with Him. Following Judaism, Christianity made human dignity a concept of universal application. “Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye

have done it unto me” (Matt. 25:40). Christianity made it a matter of self-condemnation to use another human as a mere means. Each human being is to be shown the dignity due to God because each is loved by God as a friend and Creator. Each has God as “a father.”

Obviously, many students of economics are neither Christians nor even believers in God. *They*, therefore, do not hold such things or look at the world in precisely this way. This is unfortunate. Nonetheless, as a matter of intellectual history, it is of great utility to recognize where concepts come from. Conventionally, intellectual history has been undertaken from the point of view of the Enlightenment, with a certain insouciant dismissal of what went before (as part of the “darkness,” over against which the “enlightenment” is placed in contrast).¹⁶ But this is to cloud over too many deeply buried presuppositions and hidden premises. Today, as the Enlightenment recedes ever further back in history and as its own limitations and failures become clearer, the intellectual arrogance of its early generations has dissipated. Its own inadequacies, too, are under judgment.

In particular, the partisans of the Enlightenment have not weathered well the assaults of nihilists, relativists, and post-modernists, especially in the last two decades. Reason, it sometimes seems, is inadequate to its own defense. In Western universities, those who loathe the Enlightenment as an expression of “white male hegemony”—“phallic,” “patriarchal,” from the “right side of the brain,” and “oppressive”—seem to outnumber, or at least to intimidate, those who remain reason’s supporters. Even many supporters of reason today express their commitment to reason, not as a self-confident assertion of truth as of yore, but as a personal preference; they speak in the language of faith. Partisans of the Enlightenment were successful in pushing aside religious people—which they neatly did by changing the rules to “Religion within the bounds of reason alone.” They have not been successful in meeting the assault on their other flank—from those who do not share any faith in reason at all.

It is both fascinating and frightening in our time to watch the high priests of the Enlightenment being unceremoniously disestablished and mocked; fascinating, because so they had once treated the earlier establishment; frightening, because the twentieth century began with the abandonment of reason (in Nazism and socialism) and one does not wish the twenty-first century to repeat the twentieth.

Among the figures of the Enlightenment, Immanuel Kant (1724–1804) is probably the one who most clearly spoke to the concept of human dignity. He did so in the light of a categorical imperative that he discerned in the rational being, and he made famous this formulation of the principle of human dignity:

“Act so that you treat humanity, whether in your own person or in that of another, always as an end and never as a means only.”¹⁷ This is not, of course, a description of the way in which humans always (or even mostly?) treat other human beings. It is, in the Kantian scheme, a prescription, an imperative, a duty; in other schemes, it might appear as an aspiration, a good to be pursued, an ideal to be striven for.

Still, it is not difficult, I think, to see in Kant’s formulation a repetition in nonbiblical language of the humanistic half of the essential teaching of Judaism and Christianity: “Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself” (Lev. 19:18). “And this commandment have we from him, That he who loveth God love his brother also” (1 John 4:21). This interpretation of Kant seems correct, for two reasons: First, the ancient philosophers of Greece and Rome, before the contact of those regions with Christianity, did not reach this principle. Second, one must note the quiet but strong culture of Protestant pietism in which Kant grew to maturity.

From the point of view of modern history, of course, it seems absurd to say that humans are not means but only ends. In the twentieth century, more than a hundred million persons in Europe alone died by violence, often in a way they could not have foreseen even in their worst nightmares. In the twentieth century, history has been a butcher’s bench. In this century, the words *human dignity* have often sounded empty.

At the close of the last century, with the start of the Industrial Revolution, that great leap forward that now provides for us a standard of living unknown to royalty in centuries past, *human dignity* also sounded to many an empty phrase. Rapid urban growth, joblessness, the destruction in the name of free competition of the workers’ traditional organizations (such as the guilds) which provided some semblance of continuity and sense of security in the economic realm, family breakdown, poverty, and social squalor stood out as signs that the world had moved into a new age, with new problems, and in need of new solutions to secure the dignity of man.

Pope Leo XIII, addressing the large social questions that came with this new age, attempted to chart a new course in tune with the times. “He took as his master, and recommended as teacher par excellence for the whole Church, that ‘first Whig,’ Saint Thomas Aquinas, who more than any other championed a synthesis of faith and reason, grace and nature, Christianity, and humanism. And in 1891, he issued the letter to the whole world, *Rerum Novarum*, the magna carta of the Catholic vision of the ‘reconstruction of the social order.’”¹⁸ In what came to be thought of as the Catholic “middle way,” Leo’s criticism of the economic order of his day did two important things.

First, it established the idea that the Church has a social doctrine, that there is a body of social principles rooted in Christian tradition and developed through reflection upon the person and society. Second, the encyclical's internal logic was predicated upon a recognition of human dignity that flows from man being made in the image of his Creator, and the encyclical expressly stated that individuals as a result have a positive duty to join with others to change the institutions of society in an effort to uphold the dignity of man. Together, this imposed pressure upon the Church to develop a theological ethic adequate to the "new things" of modern political and economic life. Over the next hundred years, the Church took on a role as overseer, charged with ensuring that basic Christian principles are applied to the realities of the modern world.

Leo began *Rerum Novarum* with a harsh criticism of the most common alternative being advanced in his day to alleviate the dehumanizing effects of the new social order—socialism. Contrary to the claims of the Socialist International, which advocated abolishing private property and transferring the means of production to the proletariat, Leo wrote that socialism would not only harm the interests of the worker by "depriving him of the liberty of disposing of his wages, and thus of all hope and possibility of increasing his stock and of bettering his condition in life"¹⁹ [*sic*] through the creative capacity of the human mind and hard work. But also, "the remedy they propose is manifestly against justice. For every man has, by nature, the right to possess property as his own. This is one of the *chief points of distinction* between man and the animal creation."²⁰ Leo also noted that the family is so fundamentally important to man and to God's plan that the Socialist argument must be rejected outright because it would destroy the structure of the home by enabling the State to exercise control of the family, the basic cell of society. He believed instead that the State and the institutions of society have an obligation to foster and protect the family, not to undermine it, and thus, in addition to condemning socialism and predicting its inevitable collapse, he criticized the present state of capitalism (although he never used the term) and the improper demands it placed upon "working people from the cruelty of men of greed,"²¹ as well.

Leo defends the dignity and rights of every person and the obligations that are proper to that person's stake in life and role in society. The worker deserves "special consideration,"²² he wrote, and is not to be used as chattel nor can he somehow or another be equated with capital. Rather, in the relationship between capital and labor, the dignity of the worker has priority precisely because he is a human being, created in the image of God, with certain rights, especially the right to found a family. All other things need to be evaluated in

light of that principle, allowing Leo to go on to speak of the use of money, the importance of almsgiving, and of the connection of justice and charity within the vision of human dignity and family life. After suggesting that the Church must try to “bind class to class in friendliness and good feeling,”²³ and then writing of Christ, who “did not disdain to spend a great part of His life as a carpenter,” Leo stated that, “From contemplation of this Divine model, it is more easy to understand that the true worth and nobility of man lie in his moral qualities, that is, in virtue; that virtue is moreover the common inheritance of men, equally within the reach of high and low, rich and poor; and that virtue, and virtue alone, wherever found, will be followed by the rewards of everlasting happiness.”²⁴ Ultimately, it is through faith, the choice to believe, the choice to live by the tenets of truth and God’s will, and the choice to treat decently our fellow man as God bids us, that we can live a happy life in this world, and be saved in the next.

Liberty and Truth

Jews and Christians explain human dignity by pointing to human liberty. For Christianity and Judaism, human liberty is an absolutely fundamental datum of God’s revelation to humans—or, if you prefer, an absolutely central datum of Jewish and Christian philosophy. It is less central to Islam because key Islamic philosophers of the early Middle Ages such as Avicenna (980–1037) and Averroes (1126–1198) developed concepts from Aristotle in a way that gave God total initiative and power over human intellect and, thus, over the human will; they pictured the will of Allah as all-mastering. The essence of their theory was that in human understanding it is not the human subject who understands but, rather, the one Agent Intellect in creation, that of the Almighty.²⁵ This seemed plausible since we often experience as a surprise and a gift an insight that we have for a long time struggled to attain.

In the thirteenth century, many Christian philosophers and even theologians at the university of Paris and elsewhere first encountered Aristotle via these Arab philosophers (many of the original Greek manuscripts had been lost for centuries), and were swayed by the Arab interpretation. Not Thomas Aquinas. He understood immediately that human liberty was at stake. He was also fortunate to have in his hands, via his teacher Albert the Great of Cologne (Albertus Magnus, 1200–1280), fresh Latin translations from the original Greek. The fifteen-year struggle of Thomas against the Averroists—who wanted him driven out of Paris—was a decisive event for Christian humanism

and for the cause of liberty in the West.²⁶ It fully earns Thomas the title of “the first Whig” first given him by Lord Acton and later by Hayek.

Because the teaching of the Gospels is intended for Christians in every sort of culture and political system and time, Christian philosophers are first of all concerned with an understanding of the *interior* act of liberty; only in the second place with liberty, as a political and economic act. Confronted with any proposition—of fact, principle, theory, or faith—humans are responsible for the assent or the dissent they give to it. They are responsible for gathering the evidence necessary to make such judgments wisely, for struggling to understand the necessary materials, and for disposing themselves to judge such evidence soberly, calmly, and dispassionately. When they declare a proposition to be true or false, they in effect assert what is true and real. So doing, they open themselves to counterargument and challenge from others, in the light of the evidence, over which no one person has total control. In this way, each person is called to be open to the truth of things, to the whole of reality, and each is subject to criticism from those who may be more penetrating, or less one-sided, than they. When human beings reach a judgment, they reveal a great deal about themselves. They are, in effect, under judgment by reality itself, as mediated by the community of inquirers who seek the truth of things and nothing but the truth.

In conjunction with his defense of the interior ground of human liberty, Aquinas also was the first to develop a theoretical map for the concept of conscience, identifying it as a concrete act of the intellectual habit of the practical intellect called *synderesis* (insight into the universal principles of practical action).²⁷ *Conscience* is not a term of the ancient Greeks or Romans. Neither is it, exactly, a biblical concept, although many texts in the Bible show the inner conflicts that gave rise to the need for such a concept: “And it came to pass afterward, that David’s heart smote him, because he had cut off Saul’s skirt” (1 Sam. 24:5); “The spirit indeed is willing but the flesh is weak” (Matt. 26:40); and “For the good that I would I do not: but the evil which I would not, that I do” (Rom. 7:19). After Kant, it has become common for modern people to think of the moral life as a matter of duties to be observed, a kind of obedience, but in earlier Christian ages, the moral life was thought of rather as a way to be walked, a set of paths to follow (with the lives of the saints as pathbreakers), an archetype (Christ) to model one’s life upon, an image of a life to be lived out—“Whosoever will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me” (Mark 8:34).

For Thomas Aquinas, the first practical problem of the moral life is to find out what to do in the unique circumstances in which you (a unique, irrepeat-

able) person find yourself now. The moral life taxes our capacities for practical knowing. Even when we know the model or ideal we are pursuing, the right thing to do now is not always clear. Besides, we sometimes wish to evade clear knowledge, or we prefer to let passion drive us. Afterwards, after we act from passion or evasion, we sometimes see clearly what we ought to have done, and we feel the bite of remorse. This bite, too, comes from our faculty of practical knowing. Synderesis, then, is put into action in the concrete uses in which we discern the right thing to do in immediate circumstances, and by which we blame ourselves when we have turned away from this discernment—that is, failed to use the light within us. By frequent failures to use it, and by deliberate abuse of it, we can dim this light and all but extinguish conscience. We can also deceive it, and some of the stratagems by which we do deceive our own consciences are so classic in form that the great Oxford writer C. S. Lewis (1904–1963) set them forth vividly in *The Screwtape Letters*.²⁸

Abraham Kuyper, who “could see by the late 1880s that Protestants in his own country, and European Christians generally, were not adequately rising to the challenge of the growing Industrial Revolution,”²⁹ organized the first Christian Social Congress in the Netherlands, at which he delivered a very memorable speech, *The Social Problem and the Christian Religion*, only months after Leo XIII had promulgated *Rerum Novarum*. Kuyper’s speech also recognized the disruption caused by the “new things” of modern political and economic life and argued that “[r]eligion is not one thing among many that autonomous people choose to do; it is, rather, the direction that human life takes as people give themselves over to the gripping power of either the true God or false gods.”³⁰ The demands of the new age, therefore, demand nothing less from the individual than a bold stand in favor of the truth (which is Christ), and a total reaffirmation of one’s commitment to God and, by implication, a reaffirmation of one’s commitment to fellow man. Similar to Leo’s call on individuals to advance social change through measures of solidarity, to treat individuals with the respect that their nature deserves, and to recognize their duties and uphold their obligations to the poor as either employee or employer, the implication Kuyper drew from this great truth and conveyed to his listeners was that all of life must be lived for God’s sake and that with this comes “a complex manifold of vocations and responsibilities.”³¹ To bring about a just social order, Christians must not withdraw from the modern world in an effort to escape its injustices. Instead, *Christians must live with integrity and step forward to make distinctive contributions to the culture, the economy, political life, education, science, and the art of their day*—all done in the

service of God. As James Skillen makes clear in the introduction to his translation of Kuyper's speech:

The reader ... should be ready for Kuyper's repeated reference to the "organic" character of society. There is no doubt that he was influenced by the romantic and even nationalistic idealism prevalent in Europe in his day. But one should not jump too quickly to a false conclusion. Kuyper's argument shows that his opposition to liberal individualism was not built upon a collectivist or totalitarian view of human society. His use of the term "organic" was not intended to reduce individuals to an undifferentiated mass of humanity. Kuyper used the term, together with the idea of diverse spheres of society, to affirm the social character of human life, with its built-in obligations of mutual accountability, trust, and service. Kuyper's critique of socialism, in both its social democratic and State Socialist forms, [like Leo XIII's in *Rerum Novarum*] warns of the danger of reducing society to the State or the State to society. The organic character of society can be truly healthy and just only when its real diversity is preserved.³²

The diversity Kuyper was searching for can only be found in the individual, and the unique contributions that each and every member of the human race chooses to make toward achieving a better social order. An order built from a foundation of Christian principle and supported by pillars of Christian giving.

Kuyper warned his listeners in 1891 of the perils involved in any effort to reform the social order. He stated that, "We as Christians must place the strongest possible emphasis on the majesty of God's authority and on the absolute validity of his ordinances, so that, even as we condemn the rotting social structure of our day, we will never try to erect any structure except one that rests on foundations laid by God."³³ An informed liberty in thought and applied in action is essential to achieving and living the truth of Christ. However, the interior act of liberty—a willful faith in God and attempt at Christian understanding—and its secondary manifestation in the world, need not concur. We see this, unfortunately, every day. When that interior act of liberty is mistaken, or its application in practice flawed, whether because of simple human folly, original sin, or an outright rejection of God (a rejection of the "light and the truth"), that secondary act of liberty can lead to troubling ends—ends quite different from those contained in the lessons originally taught by Christ two thousand years ago and still true today.

Kuyper cites the French Revolution as the prime example of social reform when liberty in thought and action has been decoupled from truth and become distant from God.

In the Christian religion, authority and freedom are bound together by the deeper principle that everything in creation is subject to God. The French Revolution threw out the majesty of the Lord in order to construct an artificial authority based on individual free will. That project resembled a scaffold nailed together from odd planks and beams, which cracks and falls when the first gale rises. The Christian religion teaches us that life on earth is part of an eternal existence. The French Revolution, by contrast, denied and opposed everything beyond the horizon of this earthly life. The Christian religion speaks of a lost paradise, a state of purity from which we fell and, for that reason, calls us to humility and conversion. The French Revolution saw in the state of nature the criterion of what is normally human, incited us to pride, and substituted the liberalizing of man's spirit for the need of conversion. Springing from God's love, the Christian religion brings loving compassion into the world. Over against that compassion, the French Revolution placed the egoism of a passionate struggle for possessions. And finally, to touch on the real point that lies at the heart of the social problem, the Christian religion seeks personal human dignity in the social relationships of an organically integrated society. The French Revolution disturbed that organic tissue, broke those social bonds, and left nothing but the monotonous, self-seeking individual asserting his own self-sufficiency.³⁴

Kuyper concludes this part of his speech by blaming the "social problem" upon the significant break from the Word of God that engendered the French Revolution. In addition, he implies that a return to God and to his truth, as spoken by Christ, will go substantially toward solving the social problem, by repairing individuals broken by their separation from God and the wisdom found in the Christian tradition.

With this [the French Revolution], the die was cast. By wrenching loose everything that held life together in human dignity, it was inevitable that a profound *social need* would be born, followed by the emergence of a widespread *social-democratic movement*, and then by an extremely knotty *social question* that would confront every nation. I do not deny that the application of steam to machinery, along with faster communication between countries and rapid population growth, contributed to the worsening of social relationships. But I firmly believe that neither the social question, which now holds two continents in feverish tension, nor the social-democratic movement, which now threatens the public order in Europe and America, would ever have assumed such ominous proportions if the French Revolution had not brought about such a complete change in the consciousness of nations, classes, and the individual.³⁵

Ultimately, for Kuyper, it is the choices that individuals make and the commitments that they break that determine the social conditions we live in, and whether the inherent dignity of man will be upheld. It is up to men on earth to strive to improve the worldly order, by first striving to improve themselves through coming to know and living out the Word of God. One of the most important lessons to be learned by man, according to Kuyper, is to never treat people as objects. Instead, to begin to understand that each of us is part of a higher order and also in the service of a mutual “father.” We must direct our liberty in service to God, and in the process to serve one another. Kuyper further elaborates on this point:

Human art [or creativity and ingenuity] acts on every part of nature, not to destroy it or simply to impose another structure alongside it, but to unlock the power that lies within it or to regulate the wild power that springs from it. God’s ordinances require this. While still in paradise man received the order “to preserve and cultivate” the material world. It was created ... to be “completely perfected.” Every creature ... must [then] serve man, so that man may serve his God.³⁶

As Skillen explains, “The enduring value of the speech comes from Kuyper’s ability to appeal to deep Christian motives for action, expose the false hopes and illusions raised by secularized revolutionaries and reformers, and to envision a better future made possible not by autonomous human activity but by repentance and renewal in accord with God’s ordinances of love, mercy, justice, and compassion.”³⁷

To move from this profound concept of internal liberty to a projection of the sort of political and economic and cultural institutions that make pure human liberty of this sort frequent in human lives is a very long step, for it requires much effort on the part of individuals, and perhaps even generations of social development. It is not to be imagined that the way to building a city of true liberty is a purely rational, abstract, conceptual achievement. (Hayek quite rightly calls this “the fatal conceit.”³⁸ That conceit was the chief engine of the murderous ideologies of the twentieth century.) What it requires, as both Kuyper and Leo XIII made clear, is a culture full of individuals with a strong dedication to serving God the “Father,” obeying the Word of God as contained in the Bible, living a life in accordance with Christian virtue, and destined “to build up the kingdom of God.”

The Person

Finally, it is useful to mention that the concept of person also entered Western thought by way of sustained reflection on the Bible. For one thing, a concept was needed to name the special kind of spiritual substance capable of acts of insight and choice, such as the human being is—but not only the human being, but also God and the angels. (Physicists speculate these days about whether in other galaxies there is also personal life capable of insight and choice but not of the human species. The Bible describes creatures of that sort, but not in other galaxies, and not within space and time—in fact, many different genera and species of them—and calls them “angels” and “archangels.” The idea of many other living species is not unbiblical.)

In another context, the concept of person is also needed to express what it is in Jesus Christ, who according to the Bible, has both a human and a divine nature that remains the same. In other words, what is the principle of unity uniting these two natures? This is the historical genesis of the concept of person. Its utility lies in designating what exactly it is in humans that is the ground of their dignity and the source of their free acts of insight and choice. A person is a substance with a capacity for insight and choice, and an independent existence as a locus of responsibility. The fifth-century Christian thinker Boethius (c. 480–524) was the first to codify the definition: A person is a *substantia rationalis subsistens*. This concept of the “person” adds a significant new note to the concept of the “individual.” A cat or a dog may be utterly individual, and even manifest (in an extended sense) a distinctive “personality.” Still, cats are not held responsible for their acts—never have to choose a vocation, or a career—that is, do not qualify as persons. Human beings are persons, as other individual animals are not. (“The problem with animal rights,” a friend of mine once said, “is getting the animals to respect them.”)

Acquiring this concept of *the person* was a crucial step for the modern age, for it led directly to the first declaration of human rights in history, when the Spanish missionaries argued that the Indians encountered in the New World were persons of full human dignity, not some inferior species. The missionaries argued that it is sinful before God and contrary to natural law to offend the dignity of the Indians, as many of their compatriots were obviously doing. They pressed their suit at the Spanish Court to urge the monarch to rule accordingly.³⁹ The suit was argued successfully by theologians of Salamanca, the same school of theologians to whom Joseph Schumpeter (1883–1950) and Friedrich Hayek have given credit for many of the pioneering insights into the distinctive features of economic action, as well.⁴⁰

This successful suit helps to explain why, outside the United Nations building in New York, there stands a statue of one of the greatest of these theologians, the founder of international law, Francesco de Vitoria (1486–1546). The public recognition that oppression of the Indians was sinful and the public declaration of their rights, alas, did not prevent terrible concrete abuses. This is another indication of the power of the observation by James Madison (1751–1836) in the United States that mere declarations of rights are not enough. Rights are never sufficiently defended by “parchment barriers”⁴¹ but only by internalized *habits* and *institutions* that incorporate *checks and balances*.

Conclusion: Abraham Kuyper, Human Dignity, Personal Liberty, and the New Economics

The civilized world is already beginning to celebrate the imminent arrival of the third millennium after the birth of Christ. Since the crucial, civilizing ideas of human dignity, liberty, truth, conscience, and person have been slowly developed over the first two millennia after Christ’s birth, and since their development was given a powerful impulsion by Christ’s teaching, it is perhaps not at all unfitting that we should take note of these contributions at this crucial time.

Moreover, to pause for such reflections at a meeting dedicated to Abraham Kuyper seems equally fitting. For one of Kuyper’s most important contributions was to elaborate a theology that recognizes and glorifies man’s work on this earth. In the role that it plays in satisfying a deep human need, that it plays in allowing each of us to provide for our family and others in need, and that it plays in our efforts “to build up the kingdom of God.” His theology, like that of Leo XIII, also conditions work upon the necessity of upholding man’s dignity in the process. As humans made in the image of a Creator who endowed each of us with a certain innate worth, when we enter into our own creative endeavors, anything counter to dignity must be avoided. *Good Christians have an obligation to band together and take initiative to promote and to protect the dignity of ourselves and the dignity of our brothers and sisters.*

Although this idea was first alluded to long ago in the book of Genesis, both Kuyper and Leo’s discussion of human dignity, personal freedom, and their interrelationship in cultivating a culture able to surmount what once seemed an insurmountable obstacle, the changes brought by the Industrial Revolution, has tremendous significance for our own time of fast-paced eco-

nomic and social change. It reminds us of the important role that Christian principles must play in evaluating the propriety of change, and in guaranteeing that if change becomes improperly disruptive, Christians will stand together in opposition. It also compels us to explore the economic ideas that have developed since Kuyper's time for potential allies in the battle to keep Christian virtues at the center of our personal and societal existence. Fortunately, one of the most important contributions of the New Economics is to have focused attention on the primary importance of human capital. The concept of *human capital*, as Nobel Laureate Gary Becker makes clear, includes personal and social habits as well as the slowly and experimentally developed social practices and institutions that are decisive for economic development.⁴² It does not mean the ownership of persons, as it might sound. It means that each and everyone of us is equipped with certain talents and certain qualities that our Creator has blessed us with, which enable us to offer skills that can help to meet the needs of our brothers and sisters. As we serve the needs of each other—which capitalism and the free market fully allows—we best serve God, as he has commanded.

A second clarification contributed by the New Economics concerns the moral value of personal initiative and enterprise. Enterprise is different from entrepreneurship. Entrepreneurship describes the capacities and virtues proper to the entrepreneur. Enterprise describes the virtue used by others throughout the economy (and in other spheres of life) who enjoy deploying their intelligence to act creatively in everything they do. The pharmacist who does not merely “take prescriptions” but listens closely to customers so as to discern solutions the latter had not even thought of—who has uppermost in mind, not the routine fulfillment of whatever the customer says but, rather, the whole good of the customer—such a pharmacist is practicing the virtue of enterprise. So is the auto mechanic who attends not only to the complaints specified by a car owner but also keeps his eye open for other aspects of the good functioning of the auto. Enterprise is both an intellectual and a moral habit: an intellectual habit of creative insight and a moral habit of goodwill, open-mindedness, alertness, and intelligent execution of detail. It is the virtue of enterprise practiced by all participants at every point in the economy that infuses an economy with intelligence and a zest for good workmanship.

A third important contribution of the New Economics is to have focused on *human action* and the *human subject*—that is, on the human person and human liberty.⁴³ A fourth contribution of the New Economics is to have focused on the central role of *choice*—personal choice and *public choice*—in the

dynamics of economic life.⁴⁴ All four of these place primary importance upon treating the individual as an individual, focusing upon their needs and desires and building upon their unique strengths; and allowing the market to function as an intermediary structure for transactions enhances our ability to serve. But, make no mistake, as with every structure, choice leaves room for sinfulness and folly. As Kuyper suggested, the best that man can do is to strive to do well and to live a Christian life; and that being done, the proper structures will gradually emerge.

It is my hope that on all of these important contributions of the New Economics, the present reflections have shed some historical and conceptual light. Helping to ground the New Economics in an accurate representation of human history and culture, in a Christian tradition and thus, to engraft it into larger movements of culture, is the distinctive contribution that, I hope, this discussion helps to further.

Notes

1. Edited by Elizabeth Boody Schumpeter (New York: Oxford University Press, 1954).
2. *Rerum Novarum*, n. 6.
3. *Ibid.*, n. 3.
4. Michael Novak, *The Catholic Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism* (New York: Free Press, 1993); and *Catholic Social Thought and Liberal Institutions* (New Brunswick, N.J.: Transaction Publishers, 1989).
5. *Rerum Novarum*, nn. 11–12.
6. *The Federalist*, No. 10.
7. “Therefore, let it be laid down in the first place that in civil society the lowest cannot be made equal with the highest. Socialists, of course, agitate the contrary, but all struggling against nature is in vain. There are truly very great and very many natural differences among men. Neither the talents, nor the skill, nor the health, nor the capacities of all are the same, and unequal fortune follows of itself upon necessary inequality in respect to these endowments. And, clearly, this condition of things is adapted to benefit both individuals and the community; for, to carry on its affairs, community life requires varied aptitudes and diverse services; and to perform these diverse services, men are impelled most by differences in individual property holdings.” *Rerum Novarum*, n. 26.

In addition, Leo also says:

But although all citizens, without exception, can and ought to contribute to that common good in which individuals share so profitably to themselves, yet it is not to be supposed that all can contribute in the same way and to the same extent. No matter what changes may be made in forms of government, there will always be differences and inequalities of condition in the State. Society cannot exist or be conceived without them.

8. *Rerum Novarum*, n. 3.

9. *Quadragesimo Anno*, n. 103:

But, with the diffusion of modern industry throughout the whole world, the “capitalist” economic regime has spread everywhere to such a degree, particularly since the publication of Leo XIII’s Encyclical, that it has invaded and pervaded the economic and social life of even those outside its orbit and is unquestionably impressing on it its advantages, disadvantages and vices, and, in a sense, is giving it its own shape and form.

10. *Centesimus Annus*, n. 33:

Even in recent years it was thought that the poorest countries would develop by isolating themselves from the world market and by depending only on their own resources. Recent experience has shown that countries which did this have suffered stagnation and recession, while the countries which experienced development were those which succeeded in taking part in the general interrelated economic activities at the international level.

11. See, for example, Max Weber, *The Theory of Social and Economic Organization*, trans. A. M. Henderson and T. Parsons (New York: Oxford University Press, 1947); *General Economic History*, trans. F. Knight (New York: Collier-Macmillan, 1961); and his unfinished masterpiece, *Economy and Society*, ed. G. Roth and K. Wittich (New York: Bedminster Press, 1968).

12. See Samuel P. Huntington’s controversial book, *The Clash of Civilizations and the Remaking of World Order* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1996) and the lively polemic touched off by Pierre Hassner’s review “Morally Objectionable, Politically Dangerous,” in *The National Interest*, 46 (Winter 1996/97): 63–69, with Huntington’s response, “Hassner’s Bad Bad Review,” 97–102.

13. Randall Collins, *Weberian Sociological Theory* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986), 52–58. Collins also singles out the Cistercians for other economic innovations:

The Cistercians were innovative in numerous respects. They were the first highly centralized organization, following a deliberate plan of expansion throughout Europe. They also established a new form of hierarchy within their organization, a division between the fully ordained monks and a second class of monastic laborers. The latter took oaths of celibacy, poverty, and obedience, but remained illiterate and were ineligible for advance to full

monastic rank. The Cistercians were thus divided into a managerial class and a class of manual laborers, both working under religious incentives and subject to a strong asceticism.

Collins, discussing the Catholic Church's role in promoting rule of law, continues:

If we concentrate on the Church, however, as the "real" government of medieval Europe, the citizenship elements are much wider. For the organization of the Church itself was permeated by the rights and duties of legal citizenship *in that body itself*. To be sure, these citizenship rights were not uniform throughout its ranks. But almost everywhere there was some degree of participatory rule under law. The pope himself was chosen by election, initially by the people and clergy of Rome, later by a restricted body of cardinals. Similarly, each monastic order elected its own general, or head, and many instituted safeguards in the form of a council of overseers who watched against abuse and had the power to turn him out of office. At a lower level, cathedral chapters elected their own bishops and monasteries their abbots. There was also a strong conciliar tradition within the body of the Church as a whole, which may have been manipulated by strong autocratic popes but, nevertheless, represented the tradition of collective responsibility for legislation. Powers of election and appointment shifted over time, with lay people becoming excluded and the powers of the pope increasing (50).

The Church also played a part in securing a crucial institutional precondition for the mass market: "security from robbers and military predators."

The Church held the doctrine that it was a sin to kill a fellow Christian in secular battle, and attempted to confine military action to Crusades against foreign enemies and domestic heretics. This ban was not very effective, and sins of violence were usually commuted upon payment of penances. But in the 1000s and 1100s, just as the medieval economy was beginning to develop, there was a widespread movement to establish peace. Certain days of the week and times of the year were declared "God's Truce" in the wars among the nobility. More significantly, bishops took the initiative in organizing "peace associations," whose members swore to abjure private violence and also acted to put down robber barons and brigands. Monks and especially wandering friars took the initiative in ending local vendettas. These efforts were only partially successful, and there is no doubt that the volume of trade was kept down by the unsafe conditions that prevailed. But the peace associations and the friars did pave the way in settling the atmosphere of violence, and their gains were consolidated for a while in the 1200s by the strengthening of major secular States (56).

14. See my *The Catholic Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism*, 1–14, 22–237; *Business As a Calling* (New York: Free Press, 1996), 18–40, 117–59; as well as *The Spirit of Democratic Capitalism* (Lanham, Md.: Madison Books, 1991), 36–48.
15. Friedrich A. Hayek, *The Constitution of Liberty* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1978), 457, fn. 4. Hayek notes "in some respects Lord Acton was not being

altogether paradoxical when he described Thomas Aquinas as the First Whig." Acton defined the Whigs as "defenders of liberty who defended it for the sake of religion," *Selected Writings of Lord Acton*, vol. 3, ed. J. Rufus Fears (Indianapolis: Liberty Classics, 1988), 536; Aquinas, he observed, provided "the earliest exposition of the Whig theory of the revolution." *Selected Writings of Lord Acton*, vol. 1, ed. J. Rufus Fears (Indianapolis: Liberty Classics, 1985), 34.

16. The sociologist Robert A. Nisbet noted that:

When we come to the Enlightenment, especially in France, it is fair to say that amid all the diversities of opinion and value in that complex age, there was one conviction on which all the philosophes found unanimity: disdain for revealed or institutionalized religion of any kind....

There were, to be sure, differences among the *philosophes*, but they were united by the conviction that revealed religion is a collection of superstitions supportable only so long as man remains ignorant of the truths vouchsafed by modern science and philosophy. The *philosophes* did not see religion as a force proceeding from the very nature of the soul or, for that matter, from the nature of society. They saw religion solely as a set of intellectual propositions on the universe and on man; and since these were manifestly false propositions, their eventual liquidation could be confidently prophesied (and helped along!) through the propagation of faith in reason.

The Sociological Tradition (New York: Basic Books, 1966), 222–33.

17. Immanuel Kant, *Foundations of the Metaphysics of Morals*, trans. L. W. Beck (New York: Library of Liberal Arts, 1959), 429. For Kant, "man, and, in general, every rational being exists as an end in himself" (428).
18. Novak, *The Catholic Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism*, 37.
19. *Rerum Novarum*, n. 3.
20. *Ibid.*
21. *Ibid.*, n. 33.
22. *Ibid.*, n. 28.
23. *Ibid.*, n. 18.
24. *Ibid.*, n. 20.
25. For selections see Ralph Lerner and Mushin Mahdi, *Medieval Philosophy: A Sourcebook* (New York: Cornell University Press, 1972).
26. An accessible treatment of this struggle can be found in chapter 3 of G. K. Chesterton, *Saint Thomas Aquinas: The Dumb Ox* (New York: Image Books, 1956), 66–96. More recently, consult Ralph McInerney, *Aquinas Against the*

Averroists: On There Being Only One Intellect (Purdue: Purdue University Press, 1993).

27. On the Christian understanding of conscience, see Eric d'Arcy, *Conscience and Its Right to Freedom* (New York: Sheed & Ward, 1961). Brian Davies describes Aquinas's teaching on conscience:

First, he says, we start with principles grasped by virtue of *synderesis*. Then we add judgements about what sort of actions we are thinking about on any given occasion. We might, for example, judge that such and such an act is a case of theft. Finally, we draw a conclusion concerning the goodness or badness of the act in question. This drawing of the conclusion is what Aquinas means by "conscience" (*conscientia*). For him, therefore, conscience consists of applying general principles to the case in hand and with recognition of what kind of action we are dealing with. The work of conscience is to use principles grasped by *synderesis* to determine what is to be done, or whether what we have done is right or wrong.

The Thought of Thomas Aquinas (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1992), 235. For Aquinas, conscience could even tell us to deny Christ, yet still must be respected (*Summa Theologiae*, 1a2ae, Q.19, a.5.):

Not only may what is neutral take on the character of good or bad, but good can take on the character of evil, and evil the character of good, and all this because of the way an object is apprehended by the mind. Take an example: To avoid fornicating is good, yet the will is not set on this course save insofar as it is recommended by reason as good. If a mistaken reason presents it as bad, then the will pursues it as wearing the aspect of evil. The act of will, then, will be bad, since it is willing evil, not indeed what is evil in itself, but what is evil by another factor, namely the reason casting it in that part. Take a similar example: To believe in Christ is good in itself and necessary for salvation; all the same this does not win the will unless it be recommended by reason. If the reason presents it as bad, then the will reaches to it in that light, not that it really is bad in itself, but because it appears so because of a condition that happens to be attached by the reason apprehending it. That is why Aristotle speaks of a man being directly incontinent when he abandons right reason and being indirectly incontinent when he abandons reason even when it is wrong-headed.

See *Ibid.*, 1a, Q. 79, a.12 for an explanation of *synderesis*.

28. C. S. Lewis, *The Screwtape Letters* (New York: Barbour & Co., 1985).
29. James W. Skillen, "Introduction," to Abraham Kuyper, *The Problem of Poverty*, trans. James W. Skillen (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Baker, 1991), 14.
30. *Ibid.*, 17.
31. *Ibid.*, 18.

32. Ibid., 20–21.
33. Ibid., 64.
34. Ibid., 43–44.
35. Ibid., 44–45.
36. Ibid., 30.
37. Ibid., 22.
38. See his book *The Fatal Conceit: The Errors of Socialism*, ed. W. W. Bartley III (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1988), 21, 27, 49, 75, 83. Hayek defines the fatal conceit tersely as “the idea that the ability to acquire skills stems from reason.” In fact, Hayek argues, “It is the other way around: Our reason is as much the result of an evolutionary selection process as is our morality” (21). Hayek is seeking to undermine what he calls the “constructivist fallacy”:

The errors of constructivist rationalism are closely connected with Cartesian dualism, that is with the conception of an independently existing mind substance which stands outside the cosmos of nature and which enabled man, endowed with such a mind from the beginning, to design the institutions of society and culture among which he lives.

Law, Legislation and Liberty, vol. 1 (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1973), 17.

39. Arguing vigorously to the Spanish Court for the humane treatment of non-Europeans faced with forced conversion, the Spanish missionary Bartolomé de las Casas (1474–1566) wrote:

What love, affection, esteem, reverence, would they have, could they have for the faith, for Christian religion, so as to convert to it, those who wept as they did, who grieved, who raised their eyes, their hands to heaven, who saw themselves, against the law of nature, against all human reason, stripped of their liberty of their wives and children, of their homeland, of their peace?

“Human Dignity Before Hobbes and Locke: A Condemnation of Abuses Against Natural Law,” *Crisis*, May 1994, 38. This text was drawn from Bartolomé de las Casas, *The Only Way*, ed. H. R. Parish, trans. F. P. Sullivan, S.J. (New York: Paulist Press, 1992), 208.

40. See Schumpeter, *History of Economic Analysis*, where the author notes “The very high level of Spanish sixteenth-century economics was due chiefly to the Scholastic contributions,” 165; Hayek, in turn, observes that the tradition of “liberty under the law”

... by the end of the sixteenth century ... had been developed by some of the Spanish Jesuit philosophers into a system of essentially liberal policy, especially in the economic field, where they anticipated much that was revived only by the Scottish philosophers of the eighteenth century.

New Studies in Philosophy, Economics and the History of Ideas (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1978), 123. See also Douglas A. Irwin, *Against the Tide: An Intellectual History of Free Trade* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1996), 21–25, and Alejandro A. Chafuen, *Christians for Freedom: Late-Scholastic Economics* (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 1986).

41. Evoking the need to respond with institutional protections to the “encroaching nature” of power, which, if unchecked, tends to concentrate into an “overruling influence,” Madison writes in *Federalist*, No. 48:

Will it be sufficient to mark, with precision, the boundaries of these departments in the constitution of the government, and to trust to these parchment barriers against the encroaching spirit of power?

James Madison, Alexander Hamilton, and John Jay, *The Federalist Papers*, ed. I. Kramnick (New York: Penguin Books, 1987), 309.

42. For Becker, consult his *Human Capital* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1993). There he offers this definition:

I am going to talk about a different kind of capital. Schooling, a computer training course, expenditures on medical care, and lectures on the virtues of punctuality and honesty are capital, too, in the sense that they improve health, raise earnings, or add to a person’s appreciation of literature over much of his or her lifetime. Consequently, it is fully in keeping with the capital concept, as traditionally defined, to say that expenditures on education, training, medical care, and so forth, are investments in capital. However, these produce human, not physical or financial, capital because you cannot separate a person from his or her knowledge, skills, health, or values the way it is possible to move financial and physical assets while the owner stays put.

In his 1992 Nobel lecture, Becker picked up the theme again:

Human capital analysis starts with the assumption that individuals decide on their education, training, medical care, and other additions to knowledge and health by weighing the benefits and the costs. Benefits include cultural and other nonmonetary gains along with improvement in earnings and occupations, whereas costs usually depend mainly on the foregone value of the time spent on these investments. The concept of human capital also covers accumulated work and other habits, even including harmful addictions such as smoking and drug use. Human capital in the form of good work habits or addictions to heavy drinking has major positive or negative effects on productivity in both market and nonmarket sectors.

“Nobel Lecture: The Economic Way of Looking at Behavior,” in Gary Becker, *The Essence of Becker*, ed. R. Febrero and P. S. Schwartz (Stanford: Hoover Press, 1995), 640.

43. See the great work of Ludwig von Mises, *Human Action: A Treatise on Economics* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1949).
44. On public choice, a representative work is James M. Buchanan, *Cost and Choice: An Inquiry in Economic Theory* (Chicago: Markham Publishing, 1969). Michael Beaud and Gilles Dostaler define public choice in a recent survey of economic thought:

As the theory of human capital had done for the choices of the individual in his private life, the theory of public choice uses microeconomic tools to study the behavior of individuals in administration and in political life, as citizens and decision makers, and to analyze public finances and public economics. As in the goods market, agents (who may be interest groups) for example, meet in a political market, each trying to maximize their private interests, here with governmental means.

Economic Thought Since Keynes: A History and Dictionary of Major Economists (Aldershot, U.K.: Edward Elgar, 1995), 121.