

Eternal Vigilance and Oath of Office

Eternal: endless. Vigilance: watchful or alert. Thomas Jefferson admonished eternal vigilance. His contemporary said it this way, "The condition upon which God hath given liberty to man is eternal vigilance; which condition if he break, servitude is at once the consequence of his crime and the punishment of his guilt." Spoken and written in the early days of the United States this thought was shortened to, "The price of liberty is eternal vigilance". It bears reminding ourselves today of the one sentence sermon from which it comes.

So, why did Thomas Jefferson speak of eternal vigilance?" He knew, as many immigrants knew that ultimately it was each person that was the master weaver of freedom or self-binding servitude in the pursuit of life, liberty, and happiness or property. As a man soweth, in time, he reapeth. We deliver to ourselves bondage or liberation due to our choices. Choices stem from thoughts we cultivate and nurture. Like a plant that comes from a seed somewhere hidden, beneath the soil, our actions likewise stem from hidden thought that we have cultivated. As James Allen wrote "Our actions are blossoms of hidden thoughts....One does not come to jail by fate or circumstance but by the pathway of groveling thoughts and base desires. Nor does one come to serenity but by the pathway of clean thoughts and applied effort". We, indeed, are the master weavers bringing liberty and freedom to our lives, our souls, or servitude. A man or woman, boy or girl, seeking pure and beautiful thoughts results in the habits of grace and kindness, and a cheerful disposition. Thoughts of courage and self-reliance leads to habits of industry, and the fruit of freedom and plenty. Conversely, nurturing bestial thought finds habits of no discipline and sensuality producing fruit of destitution, disease. Lazy thoughts or entitled thoughts likewise breed habits of uncleanness and dishonesty and blaming. It is only the thoughtless and the indolent that view the goodness and success of others as luck, fortune, or chance (Allen).

This individual liberty to choose and to reap what one sows emotionally, mentally, or physically is the foundation of the Declaration of Independence. The Constitution was designed to preserve it. And, through the oath of office, public servants, were elected to be Sentinels for it. It's no surprise that the real freedom of a people is due to the morality of the people. Their freedom fails if they are a poor steward or poorly vigilant of their thoughts and actions. A public servant, eternally vigilant as a steward in their own life, will secure and stress the availability of those inalienable rights of their fellow countrymen thus protecting the Constitution. In addition, it reverses the effect of those who are not vigilant. Each person should be allowed the resulting liberty or servitude of their choice as long as it doesn't affect the resulting liberty of the choices of their fellow countrymen.

Scott Perrin

Cottonwood, Idaho