

Eternal Vigilance

By David J Perkins

"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" -John Philpot Curran.

As a free people, we have the power to elect our leaders and decide the conditions upon which we are ruled, but we also bear the burden of safeguarding our freedom by keeping an ever watchful eye on those to whom we appoint the duty of leadership. We are the night watchman of freedom. This is what Curran described as eternal vigilance. It is and always has been the people's responsibility to preserve freedom. When we demand an oath of office from our leaders, we are demanding that they swear to preserve, protect, and defend the constitution. It is the people's job to hold them to their oath. If we do not, we will surrender our freedom and take up the chains of oppression.

In our country, we have failed our duty. The vast majority of us are completely ignorant of the everyday abuses of power by our government. As our hold on our government has slowly weakened, we have forfeited the people's power held in our elected representatives and have bestowed powers to those whom we cannot hold accountable. Without the presence of the people, the government has trampled our constitutional rights. Our presidents make arbitrary laws through executive orders, without the approval of the people. Our elected congress has relinquished its constitutional authority over our currency to a private bank, bankrupting our government and our people. We allow the president to take us to war without a lawfully required declaration of war by congress, recently resulting in the wars in Afghanistan and Iraq, costing 3 trillion dollars and nearly 7000 American soldiers dead.

Government can be a poison, deadly to the freedom of a people, and yet vital to its existence. This poison only becomes stronger over time, until it extinguishes the light of freedom completely. The antidote to this poison is the eternal vigilance of the people; it slows and combats the spread of corruption that is inherent to government. But the watchmen's eyes are easily moved from their post, and it seems we may be doomed to continue to hand over our freedom.