

MY PHILOSOPHY OF INDUSTRY

BY
HENRY FORD



GEORGE G. HARRAP & CO. LTD.
LONDON BOMBAY SYDNEY

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First published 1929
by GEORGE G. HARRAP & CO. LTD.
39-41 Parker Street, Kingsway, London, W.C.2

Printed in Great Britain by The Riverside Press Limited
Edinburgh

CONTENTS

I: MY PHILOSOPHY OF INDUSTRY	PAGE 7
II: MACHINERY, THE NEW MESSIAH	31
III: SUCCESS	49
IV: WHY I BELIEVE IN PROGRESS	69

I
MY PHILOSOPHY OF
INDUSTRY

I: MY PHILOSOPHY OF INDUSTRY

THERE is no denying the fact that life seems to be becoming more complicated. But is it really? Isn't it rather that we are asked to make decisions more rapidly than before? With our new forms of transportation and communication the whole outlook of man is changed. It is greatly enlarged. He travels more, sees more, comes in contact with more people, does more things. But there is a question in my mind whether, with all this speeding up of our everyday activities, there is any more real thinking. Thinking is the hardest work there is, which is probably the reason why so few engage in it. If it were possible first to teach people how to go to work to think, and then to think, there would be hope for all sorts of things.

It is easy to have ideas. But whose are they and what are they worth? Merely having something on your mind is not thinking.

MY PHILOSOPHY OF INDUSTRY

Merely wondering is not thinking. Merely worrying is not thinking. Merely listening with all intentness to catch and remember something that some one is offering out of the essence of wisdom is not thinking. We all have intelligence, for intelligence is the ability to receive; but we have little thinking.

Thinking is creative or it is analytical. Intelligence comprehends the outlines of a thing. Thinking breaks it into its elements, analyses it, and puts it together again. One feels, however, that, regardless of the fact that up to the present time everything has been about all that it could be under the circumstances, there is a sense in which from this moment forward a new era may emerge if the necessary human components of the new era decide so. Perhaps the most one can hope for now is to drive home a conviction that as a people we have not done much thinking. If we think we have been thinking, and then find out that we have not, the jolt of discovery may be of service to us.

The secrets of life are open to the thinker.

MY PHILOSOPHY OF INDUSTRY

Thinking is the work of digging to the foundation, and has the aid of higher lights. Thinking calls for facts, and facts are found by digging. He who has gathered of this wealth is well equipped for life.

Of course, in the long run we never really create anything new. We merely discover something which has already existed. We know when we have reached Truth. We are on the right road toward Truth when the things that we are doing make men a little freer than they were. We may also know when we are on the right road by examining what our motives are. Of course, mistakes may be committed with right motives, but the general direction is right when the motive is right. These are the things of which we may be perfectly sure. These principles surround the very base of Life.

Right Things in the Wrong Way

In some instances we are doing right things in the wrong way. Because the method is

MY PHILOSOPHY OF INDUSTRY

wrong, and the trouble begins presently to show itself in wrong results, people are quick to draw the conclusion that the whole thing is wrong. They want to wipe it all out. They want to overturn all the machinery of social and of political life. If that were the right thing to do, then it would be the right thing to do. We should never be fearful of the cost of the right thing.

Our discovery of Truth will be one of the great surprises of human experience. When the truth comes everywhere, it will be a great surprise to see how near we have been to it all the time without recognizing it, and to see how little are the changes to be made in our exterior mode of doing things. Our experience is a great preparation. It is a preparation to know the Truth when we meet it. Of course, there are many ways of arriving at this goal. Men have been striving for it ever since civilization began. All right activity has been contributing to the ultimate result. Books, mechanics, commerce and science, the motor-

MY PHILOSOPHY OF INDUSTRY

car, wireless, the aeroplane—all these have helped us on the way.

• Our experiences are coming faster than ever before, both in our industrial world and in our domestic life. Many people see in these changes a world constantly growing worse. I do not believe this ; I think we are headed in the right direction and that we should learn to interpret our new life rather than protest against it. We are entering a new era. Old landmarks have disappeared. Our new thinking and new doing are bringing us a new world, a new heaven, and a new earth, for which prophets have been looking from time immemorial. Much of it is here already. But I wonder if we see it.

I have no sympathy with those people who believe that the world is growing worse. Of course, we are all making mistakes, but we learn by them. It is only when we correct these mistakes, reverse our tracks, and get back on the main road that we make progress. Cars that were made fifteen years ago no

MY PHILOSOPHY OF INDUSTRY

longer satisfy. We have all progressed, our needs have changed. We demand more, we see a wider horizon, a better type of civilization; and whether you believe that we are the originators of it or that a wiser destiny has forced us to accept that which best promotes our welfare matters not. That fact is here and we must recognize it and conform our manner of living to it.

The basic things are of course very old. Nothing useful ever passes away. If a light-headed group comes along and imagines they have found a new morality, and if they draw to their books and plays and strange philosophies a following of other light-headed groups, some serious people are inclined to believe that the old morality has passed away. The good old type of goodness, they say, is gone. It is a rather foolish position to take and causes needless worry.

There is nothing new except a new appreciation, a new understanding, and this is the result of experience, and the result of

MY PHILOSOPHY OF INDUSTRY

experience can only be character. I believe that all we are here for is to get experience and form our character. Although our beginnings may be small, yet daily we are adding to our sum total of knowledge of reality—those eternalities of which real life is composed. I believe that our conscious individuality will never be lost. No matter what plane of thought we may inhabit, we shall be in full consciousness of our birthright of thinking, and by each experience we shall improve our character.

Unfortunately, there exists in our day the pretence of a curious prejudice against any view of life that presupposes moral laws or values. The word 'moral,' like many other terms, has been narrowed in its meaning so that it has been made to serve in the very opposite sense. But when one regards the moral law as merely the law of right action or of truth it becomes quite different from 'trying to be good.' The universe is set in a certain direction, and when you go along with

MY PHILOSOPHY OF INDUSTRY

it, that is 'goodness.' If you don't, you are getting an admonitory kind of experience.

There is a vast difference between a man's being merely *statically* 'good' and being *dynamically* good. In one state he is merely good negatively, and in the other he is good for something and puts that goodness into effect. He accomplishes something for mankind. We make no progress as long as we deny this. Our motive cannot be the attainment of some kind of goodness which is apart from life itself, but the attainment of inherent rightness, physically, mentally, spiritually, so that this complex instrument which we call society may efficiently function. The *right* way is the only *way*. The rightness of an attitude or method goes down through all its relations. Rightness in mechanics, rightness in morals, are basically the same thing and cannot rest apart.

Matter and Spirit

I make no difference between matter and spirit. They are different degrees of fineness