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Benjamin Franklin - in the great American tradition, 1956.

BENJAMIN FRANKLIN - IN THE GREAT AMERICAN TRADITION

In honor of the 250th anniversary of the birth
of the American Statesman, Scientist and Philosopher

January 22, 1956

There are many fascinating facets and angles to the life of Benjamin Franklin. Taking all in all, he was probably the most noted - the foremost personality of the 18th Century. Certainly one of two or three of the greatest figures in American History. And the world pauses, this month, to pay homage to Benjamin Franklin on the 250th anniversary of his birth.

The years have not dimmed the light of that rare and brilliant leader of men, who had, as someone put it, "a zest for reason, such a hunger for goodness, such a passion for wisdom" and may I add, such a rich capacity for living. It is quite impossible to recount the biography of Franklin in a single address, and do justice to the depth, variety and spaciousness of his interests, his sympathies and his activities. A few years ago, Carl Van Doren, noted historian, wrote a definitive biography of Benjamin Franklin and it covered some eight hundred and fifty pages. In spite of that, much still remained to be told. The Yale University Press has undertaken the publication of the letters and the papers of Benjamin Franklin, of which some thirty thousand are known, and many more have yet to be located. The sheer massiveness of this man - the monumental quality of his life - are tremendously impressive. It seems as if, at the beginning of every great era in the development of mankind - the beginning - on the threshold of every great epoch - there appear men who are singularly encyclopedic in their capacities and in their aptitudes, who combine so many different talents within themselves, who are so remarkably many sided. Thomas Jefferson, for example, shared that sweeping comprehensiveness that many-sidedness ^{with} Benjamin Franklin. In the heroic and exciting days of the

Renaissance you find men of the same ilk - men who loom like Titans - men like Leonardo De Vinci, Michaelangelo - who combine in themselves, so many rare excellences, remarkable artistic excellences, in the case of these two whom I have just mentioned - with tremendous scientific curiosity. Men who are at the same time, great painters, great sculptors, great architects and great musicians and experimenters in physics, in chemistry, and aviation if you will, and military tactics and armament.

Benjamin Franklin belonged to this category. He was amazingly, what you might call, multi-lateral -- rich in intellectual appetite, eager to savor all life - to probe every mystery - to explore everything that is unknown - to improve upon everything that is deficient. Franklin seemed to have been indifferent to nothing. Everything around him intrigued him, aroused his curiosity and challenged him, whether it was maritime or meteorological observations or sun-spots or the origin of north-east storms or the ways of the Gulfstream or the origin of coal or the sources of rock-salt found in mines. Or whether it was the relation between lightning and electricity. Or the nature of magnetism. Or methods of inoculations for the small pox. Or studies in the common cold. Or how to make better glass, or a more efficient stove. Or how to cure smoky chimneys. Or how to make an instrument for taking books down from high shelves. Or how to bring about a reformed method of spelling and a simplified alphabet. Nothing - great or small - was beyond his ken or his scientific or mechanical interest.

And along with all this scientific curiosity, there was the philosopher in Benjamin Franklin who was pondering over the basic problems of reality. There was the politician and the statesman who led a nation through revolution to constitutional self-government. There was the successful business man, who amassed a considerable fortune, and there was the successful human being who acquired and won the love and admiration of the great and the humble, at home and abroad, on both sides of the Atlantic.

It is hard to classify or to define such a man. It is difficult, for example, to call Benjamin Franklin an idealist. The term would have seemed strange to him if anyone would have called him that. Franklin regarded himself as a very very practical man - a man of the world, as indeed he was. There was little of the dreamer or the visionary about him. His mentality is best reflected in Poor Richard's Almanac, which he published for some twenty-five years, and whose scattered proverbs and aphorisms, he collected and published in the Almanac of 1757. And the purpose of that Almanac, besides giving people information about the calendar, and seasons of the year, etc., was to "inculcate industry and frugality as the means of procuring wealth and thereby securing virtue." The dominant note of these almanacs is one of prudence and sagacity -- that men should avoid idleness -- that they should not waste time -- that they should not spend money needlessly -- that they should not run into debt and that they should be at all times careful and circumspect. Now these are all sound virtues of course, but hardly those which we associate primarily with an idealist.

From his hard-working, tallow chandler and soap-boiling of a father, who was himself something of a mechanical genius, and from his own severe discipline as a printer's apprentice, Benjamin Franklin learned to be very practical and very pragmatic. His feet were always on the ground. What needs to be done - what had to be done - should be done in the best and the most practical manner - not because abstract ideas call for it, but because of the urgent necessities of the situation -- because life demanded it.

Later on in life, during the great political struggle of the Colonies for independence, Benjamin Franklin never argued or reasoned from eternal principals, from positive or natural law, from the position of any political philosophy, as Thomas Jefferson was inclined to do, and many of the intellectuals of his day, both here and in France, but Franklin argued from present needs for the improvement of the life of the country from the actual economic needs or the political needs of the people and from their just demands.

He was a very practical man, and yet it would be a great mistake to think of him merely as a practical man, as a very cautious, prudent citizen or materialist, or a conservative -- not at all. He had a fine sense of human values. He believed in human progress, and worked for it. He knew what was real in life, and what was worthy, and durable, and what was unworthy and sham, ephemeral. In one of his very charming bit of writing, he has a story about a whistle, and he writes,

"When I was a child of seven years old, my friends on a holiday filled my pocket with coppers. I went directly to a shop where they sold toys for children; and, being charmed with the sound of a whistle that I met by the way in the hands of another boy, I voluntarily offered and gave all my money for one. I then came home, and went whistling all over the house, much pleased with my whistle, but disturbing all the family. My brothers and sisters and cousins, understanding the bargain I had made, told me I had given four times as much for it as it was worth; put me in mind what good things I might have bought with the rest of my money, and laughed at me so much for my folly, that I cried with vexation; and the reflection gave me more chagrin than the whistle gave me pleasure.

This, however, was afterwards of use to me, the impression continuing on my mind, so that often, when I was tempted to buy some unnecessary thing, I said to myself, Don't give too much for the whistle: and I saved my money.

As I grew up, came into the world, and observed the actions of men, I thought I met with many, very many, who gave too much for the whistle.

When I saw one too ambitious to court favor, sacrificing his time in attendance on levees, his repose, his liberty, his virtue, and perhaps his friends, to attain it, I have said to myself, This man gives too much for his whistle.

When I saw another fond of popularity, constantly employing himself in political bustles, neglecting his own affairs and ruining them by that neglect, He pays, indeed, said I, too much for his whistle.

If I knew a miser, who gave up any kind of a comfortable living, all the pleasure of doing good to others, all the esteem of his fellow-citizens, and the joys of benevolent friendship, for the sake of accumulating wealth, Poor man, said I, you pay too much for your whistle.

When I met with a man of pleasure, sacrificing every laudable improvement of the mind, or of his fortune, to mere corporal sensations, and ruining his health in their pursuit, Mistaken man, said I, you are providing pain for yourself instead of pleasure; you give too much for your whistle.

If I see one fond of appearance, or fine clothes, fine houses, fine furniture, fine equipages, all above his fortune, for which he contracts debts, and ends his career in a prison, Alas! say I, he has paid dear, very dear, for his whistle.

When I see a beautiful, sweet-tempered girl married to an ill-natured brute of a husband, What a pity, say I, that she should pay so much for a whistle!

In short, I conceive that great part of the miseries of mankind are brought upon them by the false estimates they have made of the value of things, and by their giving too much for their whistles."

Throughout his life, Benjamin Franklin, deliberately, in a deliberate system of self education and training, tried to discover the real value of things and to devote his energy and all the gifts of his mind to the things worth while.

What he saw to be wrong he despised, and set about destroying it. For example, slavery. Early in his life, like most men of his day, Benjamin Franklin owned slaves and sold slaves. But as far back as 1751 he called the attention of his countrymen to the economic waste and economic disadvantages of slavery. In 1758 he suggested the establishment of the first school for Negroes in the city of Philadelphia. In 1764 he became interested in the Abolition Movement and in 1787 he became the President of the first Abolition Society which was founded by the Quakers. He signed a Memorial to the First Congress of the United States to abolish Slavery, but the committee to which this memorial, or this resolution, was referred, reported that Congress had no authority to interfere in the internal affairs of the States. And so, for nearly three quarters of a century thereafter, the issue of slavery bedeviled the political life of America and ultimately led to a bloody civil war. Had the insight of Benjamin Franklin, and his advice, prevailed, our country might well have been spared the tragedies of generations and the cost of many precious lives, and a problem which has not been solved to this very day. One month before he died he wrote a bitter diatribe, *"On The Slave Trade"* by which he likened American slavery, ~~to~~ the slavery of the negro in America, to the Christian slaves which were then held by Algerian pirates, and he said he saw nothing to choose between the two.

In a day when war was commonplace, Franklin regarded war as theft and murder.

"Justice" (he wrote) "is as strictly due between neighbor nations as between neighbor citizens. A highwayman is as much a robber when he plunders in a gang as where single; and a nation that makes an unjust war is only a great gang."

And at the close of the American Revolution, when the Treaty of Peace was finally signed with Great Britain, Benjamin Franklin wrote:

"We are now friends with England and with all mankind. May we never see another war! For in my opinion, there never was a good war or a bad peace."

I wish some of the statemen of our day would keep this remarkable statement in mind:

"there never is a good war -- there never is a bad peace"

Franklin was an advocate of universal Suffrage; of popular education. He founded the first public library in the city of Philadelphia.

He believed and advocated strongly, Freedom of Speech and Freedom of the Press. He wrote:

"Without freedom of thought there can be no such thing as wisdom:
And no such thing as public liberty without freedom of speech:
Which is the right of every man as far as by it he does not hurt or
control the right of another: and this is the only check it ought to
suffer and the only bounds it ought to know..... whoever would over-
throw the liberty of a nation must begin by subduing the freeness of
speech; a thing terrible to public traitors."

And again he wrote:

"Men have many opinions, and printers print them as part of thier
business *****

he was critized at times for printing articles and communications which went
contrary to the opinion of the majority of his readers.

"They are educated in the belief that when men differ in
opinion, both sides ought equally to have the advantage of
being heard by the public: and that when truth and error
have fair play, the former is always an overmatch for the
latter."

he had confidence in the ultimate triumph of truth over error, provided truth had
full opportunity to have its say in public.

Franklin was, of course, one of the great leaders of the American Revolution,
and yet by temperament, he was not a revolutionary. For years, as the Colonial
agent, so-called Ambassador of the Colonies ^{to} of the mother country in England, he
spent 16 years on this mission in England, on two separate occasions, Benjamin
Franklin tried in every way, especially as a gifted political journalist, pamphleteer,
to explain the Colonies to the mother country. To explain the mood and temper of
the Britishers in the New World. He argued with the leaders of Great Britain, not to

drive the Colonists ~~and~~ ^{to} demand separation from the mother country. That the American Colonies were not opposed to the British Crown - they were not opposed to Parliament - they did not challenge the right of Parliament to make laws, but that the Colonies insisted that laws made should be applicable to them, especially laws involving taxation, that they too should have the right of representation in Parliament.

But when all arguments and persuasions failed, he returned home and became a leading champion of Independence. Together with Thomas Jefferson and John Adams and Sherman and ~~Lin~~ Livingston, he drafted that Declaration which has become known as the Declaration of Independence, one of the mortal documents of mankind.

And during the war, he became his country's commissioner to France. When they undertook a dangerous but a most momentous diplomatic mission to France, to obtain financial aid from France for the poorly equipped Colonies, and to achieve if possible a military alliance with France. And Franklin, by his skill, and by his political sagacity, as well also by the fame and the popularity which he had already achieved, before he went on this mission, carried through his mission with remarkable success, and so saved the Revolution. And it was he who helped to fashion the Treaty of Peace with England.

It is interesting to ask ourselves what the religion of Benjamin Franklin was. Nominally, of course he was a Presbyterian, or what was in those days the Puritan religion of New England, but actually he was a Christian only nominally, because he did not accept the basic Christian Theology. He was what may be called a Deist. In early life he was actually a Free-thinker - agnostic. As he became older, he abandoned his agnosticism and he defined his own religion in his autobiography. He writes:

"I had been religiously educated as a Presbyterian, and though some of the dogmas of that persuasion, such as the eternal decrees of God, election, reprobation, etc., appeared to me un-

intelligible, others doubtful, and I early absented myself from the public assemblies of the sect, Sunday being my studying day, I never was without some religious principals. I never doubted, for example, the existence of the Deity -- that he made the world and governed it by his Providence. That the most acceptable service of God was the doing good to man, that our souls are immortal, and that all crime will be punished, and virtue rewarded, either here or hereafter. These I esteem the essentials of every religion, and being to be found in all the religions we had in our country. I respected them all, though with different degrees of respect, as I found them more or less mixed with other articles, which without any tendency to inspire, promote or confirm morality, served principally to divide us and make us unfriendly to one another. This respect to all, with the opinion that the worst had some good effects, induced me to avoid all discourse that might tend to lessen the good opinion another might have of his own religion. And as our province increased in people, and new places of worship were continually wanted, and generally erected by voluntary contribution, my might for such purpose, whatever might be the sect, was never refused."

In other words, Benjamin Franklin was closer in his Theology and his code of ethics to Judaism than he was to Christianity. He was a tolerant man, broad-minded in his religious outlook and it is of great interest that when the Jewish congregation in Philadelphia, Mikva-Israel (there was a small Jewish Community in Philadelphia at the time) when this congregation had run into financial difficulties, and was in danger of losing its house of worship, when this Mikva-Israel made an appeal for support to the community at large, the list of donors to Mikva-Israel was headed by Benjamin Franklin, who contributed the largest single amount to this Jewish congregation - in those days a considerable amount of five pounds. It is gratifying to know that the same spirit of good will pervaded the Jewish community for just about the same time a Jew by the name of Aaron Levy, who founded the city of Aaronsburg in Pennsylvania, donated two considerable lots of land to the Salem Lutheran Church, upon which to erect its edifice. And here a few years ago, on October 1949, some 30,000 Americans joined with the four hundred residents of the city of Aaronsburg, to celebrate the one-hundred and fiftieth anniversary of this Church which was erected upon land given to it by Jews. There was a fine spirit of religious tolerance which pervaded not all, but many sections of the American colonies in those days.

One can, with great pleasure, continue to talk about the life of Benjamin Franklin, because there is so much of instruction and inspiration to be derived from it. But we have touched upon a few significant facets of his personality, enough to give us an idea of what a tremendous personality that was, and how fortunate it was for the American colonies - for the future of the Republic of the United States - that in those years, years decisive not only for this country but for mankind, when new systems of governments ~~of~~ were emerging, new political ideas were surging to the front, that America was privileged to have at its helm a personality so rich in wisdom and in understanding and in the love of humanity and in tolerance and in good will, as Benjamin Franklin.



Revised

BENJAMIN FRANKLIN -- IN THE GREAT AMERICAN TRADITION

Sermon, The Temple

January 22, 1956



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Franklin

It is hard to classify or to define such a man. It is difficult, for example, to call Benjamin Franklin an idealist. ~~The term would have seemed strange to him if anyone would have called him that.~~ Franklin regarded himself as a very ~~very~~ practical man - a man of the world, as indeed he was. There was little of the dreamer or the visionary about him. His mentality is best reflected in Poor Richard's Almanac, which he published for some twenty-five years, ~~and whose scattered proverbs and aphorisms, he collected and published in the Almanac of 1757.~~ And ~~The purpose of that Almanac, besides giving people information about the calendar, and seasons of the year, etc., was to "inculcate industry and frugality as the means of procuring wealth and thereby securing virtue."~~ The dominant note of these almanacs is one of prudence and sagacity -- that man should avoid idleness -- that they should not waste time -- that they should not spend money needlessly -- that they should not run into debt and that they should be at all times careful and circumspect. Now these are all sound virtues of course, but hardly those which we associate primarily with an idealist.

From his hard-working, tallow chandler ~~and soap-boiling~~ of a father, who was himself something of a mechanical genius, and from his own severe discipline as a printer's apprentice, Benjamin Franklin learned to be very practical and very pragmatic. ~~[His feet were always on the ground. What needs to be done - what had to be done - should be done in the best and the most practical manner - not because abstract ideas call for it, but because of the urgent necessities of the situation - because life demanded it.]~~ omit

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End here.



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The years have not dimmed the light of Benjamin Franklin, that rare and brilliant leader of men who had, as someone put it, "a zest for reason, such a hunger for goodness, such a passion for wisdom" and I may add, such a rich capacity for living. A few years ago Carl Van Doren, noted historian, wrote a definitive biography of Benjamin Franklin, an eight hundred and fifty page tome. Yet much more of the Franklin story remains to be told. The Yale University Press has undertaken the publication of the letters and papers of Benjamin Franklin, of which some thirty thousand are known, and many more have yet to be located. The sheer massiveness of this man--the monumental quality of his life--are tremendously impressive. It seems as if, at the beginning of every great era in the development of mankind, there appear men who are singularly encyclopedic in their capacities and in their aptitudes. Thomas Jefferson, for example, shared that sweeping comprehensiveness and many-sidedness with Benjamin Franklin. In the heroic and exciting days of the

Renaissance there were men of the same ilk--men who loom like Titans--men like Leonardo De Vinci, Michaelangelo--who combine in themselves, so many rare excellences, and--in the case of these two whom I have just mentioned--with tremendous scientific curiosity. Men who are at one and the same time, great painters, great sculptors, great architects, and musicians, experimenters in physics, in chemistry, and even aviation if you will, as well as military tactics and armament.

Benjamin Franklin belonged to this multi-lateral category--rich in intellectual appetite, eager to savor all life--to probe every mystery--to explore everything that is unknown--to improve upon everything that is deficient. Franklin seemed to have been indifferent to nothing. Everything around him intrigued him, aroused his curiosity and challenged him, whether it was maritime or meteorological observations or sun-spots or the origin of north-east storms or the ways of the Gulfstream or the origin of coal or the sources of rock-salt found in mines. Or whether it was the relation between lightning and electricity; or the nature of magnetism; or how to make better glass, or a more efficient stove; or methods of inoculations for the small pox; or studies in the common cold; or how to cure smoky chimneys; or how to make an instrument for taking books down from high shelves; or how to bring about a reformed method of spelling and a simplified alphabet. Nothing--great or small--was beyond his ken or his scientific or mechanical interest.

And along with all this scientific curiosity, there was a philosopher in Benjamin Franklin always pondering over the basic problems of reality. We find in him the politician and the statesman who led a nation through revolution to constitutional self-government. There was the successful business man, who amassed a considerable fortune, and there was the successful human being who acquired and won the love and admiration of the great and the humble, at home and abroad, on both sides of the Atlantic.

It is hard to classify or to define such a man. It is difficult, for example, to call Benjamin Franklin an idealist. Franklin regarded himself as a very practical man--a man of the world, as indeed he was. There was little of the dreamer or the visionary about him. His mentality is best reflected in Poor Richard's Almanac, which he published for some twenty-five years. The purpose of that Almanac, besides giving people information about the calendar, and seasons of the year, etc., was to "inculcate industry and frugality as the means of procuring wealth and thereby securing virtue." The dominant note of these almanacs is one of prudence and sagacity--that man should avoid idleness--that they should not waste time--that they should not spend money needlessly--that they should not run into debt and that they should be at all times careful and circumspect. Now these are all sound virtues of course but hardly those which we associate primarily with an idealist.

From his hard-working, tallow chandler father, who was himself something of a mechanical genius, and from his own severe discipline as a printer's apprentice, Benjamin Franklin learned to be very practical and very pragmatic. Later on in life, during the great political struggle of the Colonies for independence, Benjamin Franklin never argued or reasoned from eternal principles, from positive or natural law, from the position of any political philosophy, as Thomas Jefferson and many of the intellectuals of his day were wont to do.

drive the Colonists to demand separation from the mother country. That the American Colonies were not opposed to the British Crown--they were not opposed to Parliament--they did not challenge the right of Parliament to make laws, but that the Colonies insisted that when laws were applicable to them, especially laws involving taxation, they too should have the right of representation in Parliament.

When all arguments and persuasions failed, he returned home and became a leading champion of Independence. Together with Thomas Jefferson and John Adams, Sherman and Livingston, he drafted that Declaration which has become known as the Declaration of Independence, one of the immortal documents of mankind.

During the war, he became his country's commissioner to France. And Franklin, by his skill, and by his political sagacity, as well also by the fame and the popularity which he had previously, carried through his mission with remarkable success, and so saved the Revolution. And it was he who helped to fashion the Treaty of Peace with England.

It is interesting to ask ourselves what the religion of Benjamin Franklin was. Nominally, of course, he was a Presbyterian, or what was in those days the Puritan religion of New England, but actually he was a Christian only nominally, because he did not accept the basic Christian Theology. He was what may be called a Deist. In early life he was actually a Free-thinker--agnostic. As he became older, he abandoned his agnosticism and he defined his religion in his autobiography. He writes:

"I had been religiously educated as a Presbyterian, and though some of the dogmas of that persuasion, such as the eternal decrees of God, election, reprobation, etc., appeared to me un-

One can, with great pleasure, dwell on the life of Benjamin Franklin, because there is so much of instruction and inspiration to be derived from it.



sermon 848



Benjamin Franklin
In the Great American Tradition

1) Many fascinating facts to B.F. - taking all in all probably
the greatest personality, the 18c + 19c on, two or three
greatest figures in all Am. history +

The world pauses this month to pay homage to him on
the 250th anniversary of his birth.

The stars have not dimmed the ~~glories~~ ^{light} of that brilliant,
~~radiant personality~~ ^{many} - who had such a zest for
reason, such a hunger for wisdom, such a
passion for wisdom and such a rich capacity
for love.

It is impossible to ~~recount~~ ^{recount} his biography in
a single address and do justice to the depth, variety
and ~~phases~~ ^{depth} of his interests, sympathies and
activities.

A few years ago ^{Carl Van} ~~West~~ ^{Dusen} wrote a definitive biography
of B.F. and it came to some 850 pages - never ~~the~~
much more remains untold.

The Yale Press has undertaken the publication of the letters
and papers of B.F. - of which some 30,000 are known.

Many more have not yet been located.

The sheer mass makes this man - the monumental
quality of his life - are vastly impressive.

It seems as if at the beginning of every great new epoch -
there appear men who are singularly representative

in their aptitudes and capacities - who combine so many talents in one - who are so remarkably many-sided. Jefferson ~~was that~~ showed that sweeping confessions, many-sidedness; B.F. - In the heroic and heroic days, the Pan-American - as a friend, the same etc. - To ~~these~~ like Leonardo da Vinci, Michelangelo - who combine the highest type, artistic excellence, with a remarkable scientific acumen - who are at once and the same time - painter, sculptor, architect, musician, and experimenter in physics, chemistry, aviation, & military tactics, and armament

2. B.F. belonged to this category - amazingly multi-talented - rich in intellectual aspects, lover of ~~savory~~ all of ~~the~~ things, to probe every mystery, to explore everything on ~~known~~ ^{known}, to inquire upon every ^{discrepancy} ~~inadequacy~~ about ~~things~~ ^{things}. He was indifferent to nothing! Everything intrigued and challenged him.

Whether it was man's or unexplained observations - or sun-spots or the origin of north-east storms - or the ways of Gulf Stream - or the origin of ~~comets~~ ^{comets} - or the sciences of the relation bet. lightning and electricity - and the nature of ~~unexplained~~ ^{unexplained} or methods of inoculation for the small-pox - or studies in the common cold

or how to ~~make better places~~ ^{or a new way to make camp wheels} or a new efficient
store - or how to cure smoky chimneys; or how
to make an arrangement for taking books down from
high shelves - or how to devise a chair which with
the seat turned up, may serve also as a ladder
- or how to buy about a reformed method, spelling and grammar alphabet
nothing great or small was beyond his ken and his
scientific or mechanical interest -

3/ And along with that efficiency ^{reality} ~~efficiency~~ - was a
philosopher who was interested in the basic problems
of reality - a politician and statesman - who led
a nation through revolution to constitutional self-
government - a successful business man who
amassed a considerable fortune - and a successful
human being who achieved the love and admiration
of the great and the humble at home and
abroad - on both sides, the Atlantic -

4/ It is hard to define or to classify such a man.
It is difficult to call him an idealist - The term would
have seemed strange to B.F. - if any one offered that
term to him.
He regarded himself as a very practical man, the world -
as indeed he was -
There was little, the dreamer in the old way, about him.

"His mentality was best reflected in Poor Richards'
Almanac - which he published for 25 years - and whose
 scattered proverbs and aphorisms he collected in the
Almanac / 1757. - "to inculcate industry and frugality
 as the means of procuring wealth and thereby securing
 virtue"

His dominant note is one of prudence and sagacity -
 that men should avoid idleness - that they should not
 waste time - that they should avoid needless expenses -
~~not squander money~~ that they should be careful and circumspect.
 Sound virtues, indeed, but hardly those which claim
 priority with an idealist.

From his hard-working, tallow chandler and soap-
 maker's father; himself something of a well-chained fencer -
 and from his own severe discipline as a printer apprentice -
 B.F. seemed to be practical and pragmatic - what
 needs to be done should be done in the best and most
 practical manner - not because abstract ideas call for it -
 but because the urgent necessities of life demand it. -

Later on in life - during the great pol. struggle
 for the colonies for independence - B.F. never argued a
 case based upon external precepts of justice or natural
 law - from the position of a pol. philosophy - but from

present needs for the improvement of life ~~and from~~ ^{thoroughly} ~~consideration~~ of their needs - and their just demands (5)

5/ And yet B.F. was not a materialist - or a conventionalist. He had a firm sense of human values - behind an human progress - and worked for it. He knew what was real, worthy, durable in life - ~~and~~ what was not what was and what was not - The Whistle p. 41

6/ What he saw to be wrong - he disliked - and set about destroying it.

Slavery - Early in life, all most men, his day - B.F. and slaves and old men.

But as far back as 1751 - he called the attention, his countrymen to the econ. disadvantages, Slavery

In 1758 - he rejected the establishment, the first school for negroes - in Philadelphia

In 1764 - he became interested in abolition

and in 1787 - he became the first President, the first Abolition Society which had been formed by the Irish

~~In 1789~~ He signed a Memorial to the First Congress of the U.S. to abolish slaves - but a Comm. reported - that Congress

had no authority to interfere in the internal affairs
of the State — Civil War 16

One month before he died, he wrote a literary tractate
"On the Slave Trade" — in which he likened
American slavery to the Arabian slavers held by
Algerian pirates — Saw nothing to choose between
the two.

7. B.F. regarded War as Theft and murder.

"Justice is as strictly due bet. neighbor nations as between
neighbor citizens. A highwayman is as much a robber when
he plunders in a camp as where single. And a nation that
makes an unjust war is only a great gang."

At the close, the Revol. War — when the Treaty of Peace was
signed — he declared:

"We are now friends with England and with all mankind.
May we never see another war! For in my opinion there
never was a good war or a bad peace."

8. B.F. was an advocate of Universal Suffrage; of popular
education — Founded first public library

9. Believed and advocated Freedom, Speech Press (Inde)

10) Lead Am. Revolution - and get by sempiternum not (7)
a revolutionary - ^{'evangelical'}

① For years - as colonial agent in England - 16 yrs in fact
he lived in every way - esp. his craft as political journalist
and pamphleteer - to explain the move + demands to
colonists to another country. - not opposed to Parliament etc.

② But when all argument + persuasion failed - he
became a leading champion of Independence. Together
with Jefferson and Madison John Adams and Sherman
and Hayden - drafted the Declaration -

③ Became his country's ambassador to France - the
most momentous diplomatic mission - Financial
and aid and subsidy abroad -

And his skill - his power - his popularity - his pat.
loyalty earned his mission with success and
ended the Revolution.

(4) And he negotiated the Peace Treaty with England.

11) Religion - not a Christian and usually Deist
Early in life almost a Free Thinker - agnostic
(Irish)

17. B. F. and Jews - led many Jews - in 18c - sizable 8
community in Philad. 1102, 11/11 -

1788 - in financial difficulties - appeal - B. F. had 2
5 pounds

18. Ind. will - on both sides - ~~2 years prior~~ - about same time -

Ramon Levy - founder of Manhasset in Pa -
donated two lots, land to Salem Lutheran
Church - upon which to erect its edifice

on Oct. 23. '49 - 30,000 Americans - joined 400
is "lets" - celebrating 150th Amer. - Dem. + Tobacco

WITHOUT FREEDOM OF THOUGHT THERE CAN BE NO SUCH THING AS WISDOM:
AND NO SUCH THING AS PUBLIC LIBERTY WITHOUT FREEDOM OF SPEECH:
WHICH IS THE RIGHT OF EVERY MAN AS FAR AS BY IT HE DOES NOT HURT OR CONTROL
THE RIGHT OF ANOTHER: AND THIS IS THE ONLY CHECK IT OUGHT TO SUFFER AND THE
ONLY BOUNDS IT OUGHT TO KNOW.....WHOEVER WOULD OVERTHROW THE LIBERTY
OF A NATION MUST BEGIN BY SUBDUING THE FREEDOM OF SPEECH: A THING
TERRIBLE TO PUBLIC TRAITORS.

MEN HAVE MANY OPINIONS, HE SAID, AND PRINTERS PRINT THEM AS PART OF THEIR
BUSINESS. THEY ARE "EDUCATED IN THE BELIEF THAT WHEN MEN DIFFER IN OPINION,
BOTH SIDES OUGHT EQUALLY TO HAVE THE ADVANTAGE OF BEING HEARD BY THE PUBLIC:
AND THAT WHEN TRUTH AND ERROR HAVE FAIR PLAY, THE FORMER IS ALWAYS AN
OVERMATCH FOR THE LATTER. ~~HENCE THEY CHEERFULLY SERVE ALL CONTENDING WRITERS
THAT PAY THEM WELL, WITHOUT REGARDING ON WHICH SIDE THEY ARE OF THE QUESTION
IN DISPUTE.....IF ALL PRINTERS WERE DETERMINED NOT TO PRINT ANYTHING TILL
THEY WERE SURE IT WOULD OFFEND NOBODY, THERE WOULD BE VERY LITTLE PRINTED."~~
AND THERE ARE MORE BAD AND FOOLISH THINGS LEFT UNPRINTED THAN ARE EVER
PRINTED.