

A CAPITALIST CAROL

DAVID HOLMES

**PEOPLE OF ORPHALESE, YOU CAN MUTE THE DRUM,
YOU CAN LOOSEN THE STRINGS OF THE LYRE,
BUT WHO SHALL COMMAND THE SKYLARK NOT TO SING.**

KAHLIL GIBRAN

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CHAPTER ONE: THE LIE

It had not been so very long ago, after his Christmas vision, his visit by the ghost of Marley, and subsequently the several spirits of Christmas, that Ebenezer Scrooge seemed so alive, so fresh, and so reborn. His newfound attitude had sparked not only himself, but all those around him. His old covetous self unraveled into a gleeful generosity that seemed to throw radiance (and not a few raised eyebrows) on everyone with whom he came in contact. Indeed, he was again an unthinking child, his newfound charity, the spring in his step, his way of making the sunshine beam through the dreariest of days, made him feel as though his very soul was a conduit through which flowed the very bounty Heaven itself.

Yes, Scrooge was a changed man. His affable nephew commented that he knew all along that in every man, no matter how wretchedly sinful or money-hoarding, was that one speck of gold dust that was buried beneath a pile of soot deep in the soul, that only needed stubborn stirring to find it and let it out. "Why didn't I tell you that the more I needled him with gaiety the more upset he would become until he saw at long last that it was he who was hurting himself?" Scrooge's nephew, he of the infectious laugh, started up with just that, a glorious guffaw of victory, crying, "We have brought him home, we have brought him home! The Lord's triumph is our own, and our own triumph the Lord's!"

The family Cratchit as well was touched and thankful for Scrooge's sudden reversal of spirit. Imagine, Scrooge of all people now the great benefactor of the family! They now better fed and clothed, fatter of flesh and soul. Scrooge had given Bob a hefty raise, and a monthly bonus to boot. That old lunatic of avarice, selfishness, and greed, who had once only thought of the dirty dealings of business and trade and profit, who had raised nary an eyebrow to the needs, cares, or feelings of others, now only concerned himself with the betterment of his clerks' family situation.

Especially Tiny Tim! That glorious drop of the angels' delights. The playful little one whose needs Ebenezer had so callously neglected. Neglected! That poor child! Neglect is neither the word nor the description that could give justice! Total omission from conscience was more like it. But now! Now he was better than a blood grandfather to the boy. He took him on walks, and to church, and looked after him in every subtle way. The two were inseparable. People commented on the miracle when they saw the two; Tiny Tim riding on Scrooges' shoulders as they strolled through the park on Sunday after church.

Yes! In one miraculous moment he was changed. He was as alive as a child. Marley had broken the ponderous chains he had dragged with him for so long, and that had become heavier and longer as his evil had increased with each passing day. Almost every moment he praised the divine intercession that for the first time, it seemed, had given him life. Truly, he thought, my eyes were blind to the true fabric of the universe. Truly, reality was more than cold figures on a ledger sheet, and the merciless treading over others in the unfeeling race for profit and personal gain. Truly, reality could not be measured by lifeless stone structures and evil smoke belching factories that cruelly consumed human beings for fuel. His old self was part of all that. But now his old nature was also as dead as a doornail. The world was anew! The joy of serving others and their needs! This was freedom! To give generously to all! To be one with all others! His life once again had a great colourful mystery. To see that the poor, the infirm, the outcast, those whose needs were the greatest were his goal to serve. This was his new solemn vow.

To the businessmen in the marts and at the exchange with whom Scrooge had dealt and had been revered as a sober, scrupulous and exacting man of trade, not rather, so much as heartless and unfeeling, his new posture was greeted with a more skeptical eye. "Old Scratch seems to have had his balance tipped a bit", one said quietly. "Definitely not him-self, that's for sure, seems downright giddy. I hope he gets over it, just some sort of a temporary condition, because it could hurt his reputation", lamented another. "He's gotten religion or something I heard. Those kind always let it go to their heads - ruins them. It'd be a shame too, on account of his fine past and stature", observed yet another. "Have to keep an eye on him now, you will never know what to expect, can't be willy-nilly when it comes to money", said the first. They grumbled in agreement, broke off and headed to their various appointments.

Scrooge could sense the wary thoughts, but he didn't mind. All this had less meaning to him now. What could they know of the dark hemmed in lives they led? Perhaps they too would be blessed enough to be visited by the spirits

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and learn the lengths of their chains and of the misery that they dealt upon others. Scrooge knew now what useless existences they led. Their futile pursuit for money was their only aim and god. All that selfish hoarding! While their fellow man should be their purpose. The arrogant and dignified air they displayed as if their world of gold watches, fine carriages, tailored suits, leather shoes, accounts drawn with gilded cheques, big cigars, country homes, exquisite crystal, bank drafts, important meetings, fine wines, expensive libraries, exotic foods, and polished demeanors were all that mattered or existed. He knew better. For him the glory and good of his fellow man, and the service of those in need was greater than all the contracts, stock, capital, gold, and rotten, fleeting worldly goods and desires. Feelings, love, hope, charity, and service to the suffering were now his stock in trade. The exchange and those in it were suddenly of less importance to him now. He came there less and less; and as his frequency there declined, his happiness and peace of mind increased. Not for him were all this hustle and bustle and the hectic crushing of maddening activity. And so, passing through the midst of them he went away.

Immediately after leaving the throngs and the rush of the exchange he would seek the shelter and serenity of his church. A place that he had once so sorely neglected, was now his place of refuge. He loved the feeling of infinite mystery and power that absorbed him whenever he entered. There was the humbling awe that consumed him as he tread softly over the centuries old stone floor and the intricate mosaics engraved therein. There was the powerful feeling of the vaulted ceilings that drew his spirit up into the heavens with them. There was the beautifully enigmatic light that shown through the meticulously crafted stained glass windows. All of this from merely leaving the outside world and standing transformed in a moment in the vestibule. He felt safe here. Surrounded in the protective shroud of this spiritual womb.

Entering in he tread so very carefully so as not to make a sound. Such a contrast with his attitude outside where he did not notice his negligent and disruptive movements. Here he made sure his presence did not disturb those quietly engaged in prayer, or the poor street people that slept on the benches, those being their only beds and comfort, their only peace, resting quietly in the merciful arms of Christ. These especially did Scrooge pity, so much more because of his former callous attitude toward them. Here in this place were they all as one. Here everyone was on equal footing with the Creator. He liked especially to leave some coins by their heads as they slept. Upon awakening they must surely smile and think that an angel had left them a small blessing.

"Such a difference", he mused, "between the Church and the exchange. These two places are utterly incompatible. No wonder the Lord went into such a rage and drove the moneychangers out of the temple". The blatant contradiction between the two states of mind that he had once been so blind to now became very clear. "What an unbelievable chasm I have crossed, on a bridge built by grace! The men who built this great altar to love! The centuries of sacrifice, time, skill and effort that the craftsmen gave to build this monument of eternal devotion! While in the exchange men race mindlessly in selfish lust and greed for personal desire that leads down a destructive road to nowhere. Here! A place built to serve all men in His Holy name. There! A place built to wear men down or cast them heedlessly aside. A place of quarter in contrast to a place of no quarter. Where have I been! What have I been doing, that I could not see this obvious distinction between good and evil"?

The realization of all this caused a sudden sensation of terror to take hold of him. Then pangs of paralyzing guilt began to sweep through him - He had not yet fully atoned for his sins. He could still feel the chain that he thought he was free of tug on him once more. The anxiety over past transgressions made him tremble. He dragged himself over to the nearest pew and sat down, his hands on his lap, his head resting on the back of the pew in front of him.

"Oh dear God", he whispered to himself, "I have been the blackest of the wicked. Now that my eyes are opened I see that they are only partially so. Please, please God, let me see fully what your perfect will is, let me only know and I will serve you without question, my life will be for your purpose totally. Please tell me that I will be redeemed and not suffer the hideous fate of Marley and the rest of my offensive kind. Help me break this worldly chain that I so deservedly drag. Oh God, I know so little of your way - Let me know! I prostrate my mind and body and soul to you. Chain me with your power and grace as I have chained myself with worldly desire. Dear God! Save me from myself! Dear God, I fear your wrath! I beg you God! I beg you! Take me! Use me! I am yours!"

Throughout this cathartic outpouring, his voice had steadily risen to an almost wailing shout. He had not noticed it until the end, when like one who snores too loudly and finally to awaken oneself, Scrooge realized the tumult coming from him, and looked about somewhat embarrassed. All this had also caught the attention of the pastor, who

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now came out from his lair behind the Altar for Human Sacrifice, and looked about rather curiously, searching for the source of the commotion. This was the middle of the day, in the middle of the week, normally a very quiet time. As the pastor looked about his eyes fell upon Scrooge. He knew him. Scrooges' transformation since that miraculous Christmas was well known to many, but appreciated by few as much as it was by the pastor. Scrooge was not only now a regular at Sunday worship, but more and more he was appearing at off times. The pastor also rejoiced at what a victory had been achieved by faith and God. It was not unusual for the poor, the outcast, the criminal, or even a more common man in the street to experience these transformations.

Those were wonderful and useful, no doubt .But they did not stir the spiritual body of the Church and the lay with any long lasting effect. But this! A wealthy, esteemed, educated man of trade turning inside out overnight was a true victory! To win over one of these! The Churches' very foundation was undermined by men such as this! Science, not faith, Earthly knowledge, not obedience to God, this was a philosophy that grew every day. The miracles of science challenging the miracles of the Bible. The argument for reason was a strong one, and at times even the pastor would have his doubts and more than a few moments of weakness. But Faith restored! I am so weak and then God turns his hand! He could not hope for such a powerful tool like this for the Lords' use if he were pastor for another one hundred seventy years. What a chance! What challenge from God to spread His message! It was a miracle and God had made him overseer of it. It was a seed planted, but it was the pastor who must water and care for it.

The pastor moved silently, swiftly, and confidently toward where Scrooge sat. As he approached near enough, Scrooge looked up, still noticeably embarrassed, and sheepishly offered, "I am sorry if I have disturbed anyone your Grace." The pastor smiled down at him comfortingly and replied, "Of course not my son. Is there something that is troubling you? After all that is why we are here in the first place. Give your cares to God my son." "It is a guilty conscience that weighs upon me", said Scrooge. "It is true I have learned the evil of my past ways, but it is only now that I see how grievous my errors were. I have been asking God to show me the path and teach me; perhaps He has sent you to me for that help. "So it may be, my son. For it is written that one only needs ask and he shall receive. Prayer is a powerful thing when earnestly applied", the pastor replied.

Scrooge became more at ease now and requested, "Surely since you are a man of God you can tell me what it is that he would have me do." "No, actually I can't. What I mean to say is that, you must understand that no one knows what the Father's will is. You see, He is the perfect, all knowing being and Creator, and no mere mortal can know his true will. It is beyond the pitiful capacity of our fallible minds and hopelessly sin tainted natures to possibly even glimpse at the Mysterious Majesty that is God", the pastor explained.

"Then what are we to do?" exclaimed Scrooge. The pastor continued, "Because we sin and disobedience is innate in us, our Father in Heaven sent us His Son Jesus the Christ, that through Him we may have a chance to be saved from our hopeless condition. Without Christ's Grace we would all be doomed because of our irretrievable condition of original sin. It is only through Him that we may overcome our arrogant pride. Men think that their knowledge is great, when actually it is nothing. Or, if it has any value at all, it is only valuable as a tool for Satan, who uses it to deceive us and turn us against Lords' purpose. Why look around you at this Babylon of science! It is means' burgeoning arrogance and pride, fueled by Satins' desire to separate us from God. But man's feeble reason and Satan's lust is useless compared to the power of God. These pitiful monuments to mans' ability will come crashing down around him! We know nothing! Except how to injure ourselves and others.

"But through Jesus the Christ we have a way out. He is our saving link. But, it is not easy. Fortunately our Father has given us a great gift: Free will. When we hear the Word of Jesus' message we must make a choice. As it is written, many are called but few are chosen. Even you were aware of the Truth, but chose not to follow."

"There is no doubt of that", Scrooge whispered remorsefully. The pastor continued, "But by enlightening Grace you have seen the light, and now you must relearn the teachings of our Master. It is especially important for you, my son, being a well known businessman of great reputation, to set a high example in this task. If you fail, then your failure is greater than just to yourself, because so many eyes are upon you".

"Then you will teach me?" Scrooge pleaded.

"I can only guide you, my son, the road is yours to follow", the pastor replied.

"Please, please then, guide me!" begged Scrooge, the sense of his responsibility growing in him and with each

increase proportionately greater anxiety.

"You must relearn the teachings of our Savior. Therefore you must read the Bible that contains them. Before you begin however I will tell you what you have probably already learned. "You have learned that personal earthly pursuits and goals will never make you happy. You have learned that your knowledge and logic are useless in the face of the infinite, unknowable almighty God. You have learned that your foolish personal desires are meaningless. You must learn to quit thinking of yourself and your life and instead depend on Faith in God to show you the way. You have learned that you are no different than other men; that all men are the same under God's Dominion. You have learned that everything you have, including yourself, comes from God. It is a gift. You have learned that your personal passions and values are worthless and destructive since your conscious mind is flawed. You have learned that the selfish hoarding of material goods and wealth is a sin. Your evil lust for these things is used as a tool for Satan."

"Instead, you must share. You must give. You must sacrifice for the needs of others. You must give! The more you give the more you will receive. This is the basis upon which Christmas, that great day of the birth of He who died in agony for our sins, sacrificing all so others might live-rests. Remember, it is a far greater thing to give than to receive! That the hoarding and taking for personal gain is against the order of God's Dominion, and can only make you unhappy - Or worse: Destroy you. It can only make you happy on earth, but not in Heaven, where God, who owns your spirit, lives."

"As you must by now have already discovered, it is Faith, Hope, Charity and above all - Love of fellow men that is your real stockpile of wealth; and the emotional and spiritual feeling that you seek. Read the teachings of Jesus, my son, and they will give you true peace and prosperity.

"Thank you pastor, I will", replied Scrooge.

"I will leave you now, Ebenezer, to your task. Mind you, read your bible and keep it with you always. It will be the source of comfort and guidance. If you want to discuss anything with me, I am always here." With that the pastor walked away with his hands folded in front of him, and his shapeless black frock flowing upon the stone floor back towards his lair, receding from Scrooge like a mysterious, somber specter.

Scrooge sat action-less for a time. Slowly his thoughts crept back to him. He looked down beside him and saw a Bible. Never being one to procrastinate from beginning any task, he picked it up and began leafing through it.

"The very word of God", he thought. "An answer in a world where there are no answers. But where do I begin?"

Then he remembered a passage from his youth and started turning pages eagerly until he located it. "Here it is!" he exclaimed with the excitement that comes to any Human who searches and subsequently discovers something. Then he added, "I've found it!"

He began reading that which he had not read or thought of in so very long a time:

"And he lifted up his eyes on his disciples, and said: 'Blessed are you poor, for yours is the kingdom of God. 'Blessed are you that hunger now, for you shall be satisfied. 'Blessed are you who weep now, for you shall laugh. 'Blessed are you when men hate you, and when they exclude you, and revile you, and cast out your name as evil, on account of the Son of Man! 'Rejoice in that day, and leap for joy, for behold, your reward is great in heaven; for so their fathers did to the prophets. 'But woe to you that are rich, for you have received your consolation. 'Woe to you that are full now, for you shall hunger. 'Woe to you that laugh now, for you shall mourn and weep. 'Woe to you, when all men speak well of you, for so their fathers did to the false prophets. 'But I say to you that hear, love your enemies, do well to those who hate you, bless those who curse you, pray for those who abuse you. To him who strikes you on the cheek, offer the other also; and from him who takes away your coat do not withhold even your shirt. Give to everyone that begs from you, and of him who takes away your goods do not ask them again. And as you wish that men would do to you, do so to them. 'If you love those who love you, what credit is that to you? For even sinners love those who love them. And if you do good to those who do good to you, what credit is that to you? Even sinners lend to sinners, to receive as much again. But love your enemies, but do good, and lend, expecting nothing in return; and your reward will be great, and you will be sons of the most high; for he is kind to the ungrateful and the selfish. Be merciful, even as your Father is merciful. 'Judge not and you will not be judged;

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condemn not, and you will not be condemned; forgive and you will be forgiven; give, and it will be given to you; good measure, pressed down, shaken together, running over, will be put in your lap. For the measure you give will be the measure you get back."

Dumfounded by this terrible indictment upon his life, Scrooge looked up and cried, "How great was my sin! I have lived in the exact opposite my entire life!" The all consuming terror of a man facing eternal damnation in hell gripped him like an iron fist. He looked down at the book in his hands, and then up at the altar with its' figure of the pain wracked body of Christ nailed to it, the very life and blood pouring out of it. He forced his eyes back down to the page, and with swollen eyes read:

"Every one who comes to me and hears my words and does them, I will show you what he is like: He is like a man building a house, who dug deep, and laid the foundation upon rock; and when a flood arose, the stream broke against that house, and could not shake it, because it had been well built. But he who hears and does not do them is like a man who built a house on the ground without a foundation; against which the stream broke, and immediately it fell, and the ruin of that house was great."

"The ruin of my life", thought Scrooge, "because my house was built on greed."

He read on and on. He read many things that frightened him, and many things that comforted and enlightened him in his newfound philosophy. But the passage that he read that gave him his greatest conviction, and sent him running out of the church with swarming emotion was:

"And he was setting out on his journey, a man ran up and knelt before him, and asked him, 'Good teacher, what must I do to inherit eternal life?' And Jesus said to him, 'Why do you call me good? No one is good but God alone. You know the commandments: do not kill, do not commit adultery, do not steal, do not bear false witness, do not defraud, honor your father and mother.' And he said to him, 'Teacher, all these I have observed from my youth.' And Jesus looking upon him loved him, and said to him, 'You lack one thing; go, sell what you have, and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in Heaven; and come, follow me.' At that saying his countenance fell, and he went away sorrowful, for he had great possessions. "And Jesus looked around and said to his disciples, 'How hard it will be for those who have riches to enter the Kingdom of God! And the disciples were amazed at his words. But Jesus said to them again, 'Children how hard it is to enter the Kingdom of God! It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter the Kingdom of God.' And they were exceedingly astonished, and said to Him, 'Then who can be saved?' Jesus looked at them and said, 'with men it is impossible, but not with God.' Peter began to say to Him, 'Lo we have left everything and followed you.' Jesus said, 'Truly, I say to you, there is no one who has left house or brothers or sisters or mother or father or children or lands, for my sake and for the Gospel, who will not receive a hundred fold now in this time, houses and brothers and sisters and mothers and children and lands, with persecutions, and in the age to come eternal life, but many who are first will be last, and the last first.' "

"The code is so clear!" said Scrooge. "The charge so certain. To receive I must give! The more I give the more that I and others will receive. The joy I feel will increase the more I sacrifice. I must no longer be my self! I will be a slave to Christ and the servant of others! My newfound faith shall replace all my past knowledge!"

And with hope for gain in life replaced by hope for that which is in the hereafter, and so that all would have hope for the hereafter; Scrooge rose and walked through the silence of the ancient air that filled the Church. Upon reaching the outer door to the world, he thrust it open and was suddenly awash in the atmosphere and sounds and reality that was London. He paused for a moment to let his eyes and mind adjust to the sudden light of it; then strode forward with Bible underarm bursting with newfound fortitude and the joy in a heart that now ruled the mind - and a heart now ruled by God.

Immediately the world was filled not just with people, but with brothers and sisters and fathers and children. He greeted them at random with the instant cheer that came from his overflowing heart. At once he saw a beggar on the opposite side of the street. He crossed without heed through the busy traffic and skipped delightfully up to the man. "Brother!" he cried. "The needy are our closest kindred!" The poor man reeled back in bewilderment, but before he knew what was happening, Scrooge was on his way and a shining gold coin decorated his begging tin.

This was his demeanor all the way to the office. He tipped his hat in "Good-day" to everyone coming in his direction, then patting every little child he met on the head, sent them away a coin richer. Upon reaching his office

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he paused...And looking at it he mused, "What a prison I have built around myself."

Immediately he turned the door-knob, flung the door aside and attacked the room. "Cratchit!" Bob Cratchit!" he cried. "Come forth my good man!"

Cratchit was already finished for the day and was putting on his coat when Scrooge burst upon the scene. He was getting used to Scrooge' new behavior, but today Scrooge was more effervescent than usual. Cratchit was also becoming used to Scrooge spending less and less time at the office, but today he had been gone since before noon and this had caused him some concern.

"Yes sir", said Cratchit, carefully emerging through the door of his cell, as if not quite sure what would come next. No one was happier with the new Scrooge than he, but he had become somewhat unpredictable. Bob Cratchit, being a man with an extremely marginal propensity for coping with spontaneity, originality, or change of any kind, had begun to approach Scrooge as one would an explosive.

It was useless of course. Scrooge, face a gleam, wrapped both arms around him and hugged him as a father would a lost son. This of course nearly frightened Cratchit to death.

"Cratchit my good man! I have had the most enlightening afternoon! And in the course of it I have come to a most glorious decision! But, I shan't tell you now what my surprise is! It shall wait until dinner tonight with your whole family gathered about!"

The clerk, recovering somewhat, thought it was his duty to inform Scrooge of the days affairs. "Sir", he said, after Scrooge had paused for a breath, "several of your clients were here today for their appointments and..." "What of them!" cried Scrooge? "They can wait! I don't suppose it was Lords and Jameson again!?" The clerk nodded in the affirmative. "Those sons of avarice!" Scrooge cursed. Then he hesitated. "No, no, I am sorry. My sin was as great as theirs", he reflected. The clerk was somewhat worried at the missed appointment, for Mssrs. Lords and Jameson were among Scrooges' oldest and best business associates and they had also become somewhat leery of Scrooges' unpredictable behavior. The clerk had made whatever excuses to them that he could, but being a man of limited invention, was running short of them in both quantity and quality.

Scrooge looked about the dingy counting house and declared, "Well passed time to leave this place of narrow purpose. Let's be off my good man and see what culinary wonders your delightful bride has concocted for us this blessed day."

By the time they reached the threshold of the Cratchit dwelling, Bob was becoming rather winded by the forceful pace that the energized Scrooge had set. As Scrooge opened the door, Mrs. Cratchit and her daughters were busy setting the table for the evening meal. As they turned toward the opening door they were beat to a welcoming greeting by Scrooge. "Tis the joy of a happy family I see! Good evening! Good evening all!" he effused. "Its father and Ebenezer", Mrs. Cratchit sang out. Everyone came running from all corners of the house, with Peter carrying Tiny Tim on his shoulders. Tiny Tim usually made it a habit to greet 'Uncle' Scrooge and his father first when they came home at days end, but tonight they were much earlier than usual. Mrs. Cratchit put down her work and gave Scrooge a hug, and then Bob as he trailed in. Scrooge walked over to Tiny Tim, perched high above on Peters' shoulders and gave him an especially tight squeeze. "Tis a special night tonight all", Scrooge announced. "Dear Mr. Scrooge has a surprise for us tonight", Cratchit explained to his wife. "What is it? What is it?" she asked. "A very great one", said Scrooge. "But it shall have to wait until after dinner. I am famished from my exciting day and the smell of it is enticing to no end."

Other than Christmas dinner, the Cratchit faire had been a plain and meagre event. Now, through Scrooges' good charity, they were bountiful and varied. Indeed tonight was no exception. They sat around a table that was enticing with succulence. Spreading outward from the glazed brown turkey were flowers of decoration, bowls of fresh fruit, a platter of hot homemade bread, butter and jams, bowls of steaming soup, pudding and brandy, all lovingly prepared and arranged. And from it all rose a sensual blend of irrefutably delicious aromas that permeated the air, the nostrils, the palate, and the stomach. The good cheer of those partaking of the opulent spread detracted not a bit.

Before so much as lifting a fork. however, Tiny Tim, as was custom, said the grace. "Thank you Father for what we are about to receive. For you are the source of all merciful charity and goodness." They ate with glee. And not

without some excited apprehensions as to what secret lay locked in Scrooges' heart waiting to be revealed.

Finally they had finished, the table cleared, and they were gathered about the hearth. "Pray what is it that you have to share with us!" Mrs. Cratchit directed at Scrooge. Scrooge looked down at Tiny Tim, who as usual was seated next to him, his newfound benefactor and object of delight. "It is true that the spirits of love have touched me and opened my heart", he began. "But that was only the beginning of a long road toward my salvation. I have found a heart that I did not know existed, as I shut out the hearts, pain, and feelings of others. I have looked at the world for the first time with clear eyes and have grown to understand how great my neglect was. I have seen the hypocrisy of my colleagues at the exchange. They go to church on Sunday and then resume their hedonistic ways on Monday as if they had never been there. But I shall show them. I am going to set an example for everyone. I will work for every charity. I shall give to the Church and to the poor. When I was rich I was miserable and alone. Money! All I knew was business and money and deals and transactions. My burden of misery was in direct proportion to the amount of money I had. The more money I had the more I wanted and the more miserable I became. The futility of my pursuits! The evil! The self corruption!" He was now rising to a rather fevered pitch. Then he quieted. All eyes around were fixed upon him. They stared at him blankly out of the void of their minds.

"Bob", he said almost meekly, "I know that my property is not mine. All I have belongs to others, as all that any man has comes from our Almighty Father. Property is the domain of everyone, not just one man. It must be shared for the good of all. Especially when there are so many helpless poor and suffering people, like good Tim there.

"Since I will spend my time helping to lessen the pain of others, I will be spending precious little time with the secular affairs of business. It is my penance to God to sacrifice for humanity. Therefore, Bob, I am going to make you full partner in my business and Master Peter can be your assistant.

"B-B-but Sir", Cratchit stammered, "I-I know almost nothing compared to you. I would not know what to do." "Nonsense!" countered Scrooge. "You are a good man, a hard worker. Have faith my dear friend. Believe in the Lord and all things are possible. You only need the faith of a mustard seed and with Gods' help you will move mountains. Have faith my dear man and just see how we shall all prosper. We will show them all." "And I will help? You will give me a position?" Peter asked eagerly. "Yes I shall", said Scrooge. "I shall see to it that the sign over the door be changed tomorrow. From Scrooge and Marley, to Scrooge and Cratchit." "B-b-but, I do not know sir, I...I..." Cratchit attempted to question. "None of it! I will have none of it! It will be a blessing and we will all be blessed abundantly! All the misery in this world is caused by this selfish money grubbing. What has it brought us but smelly factories and useless gadgets? All at the expense of the poor! Mine is a solemn but happy duty. You will see! Just let it work!" said Scrooge. "Giving is the road to happiness and salvation and Heaven It is what God wants. It is his law. It is the order of the universe. It is what Christmas is all about. To give is greater than to receive! The more you give of yourself to others and to God the more you will receive! And not just material things. Love. We need to give love and compassion. What do businessmen know of love and compassion? Why, just look at what had become of me! Worry not my dear man, the Lord will light your way. You have never been a man of thought; you have always been a man of great heart. Of love, of compassion. God will see to you - Has not he always?" said Scrooge. "Perhaps you are right sir", Cratchit said with little conviction. "Of course I am! You will see!" cried Scrooge. Scrooge looked down at Tiny Tim and put his hand on his shoulder, smiling at him warmly. Tim looked up and returned the same. "You have taught me so much, little angel. You are a blessing to us all. To carry you're suffering with such dignity and joy. Your suffering is such a blessing, an example for us all. A blessing. A blessing", whispered Scrooge.

Immediately he was up and at the door. "I am off! We have much to accomplish in the new day. Well, tomorrow then." "Yes sir, tomorrow then", echoed Cratchit.

After he had gone, Mrs. Cratchit turned to her husband and said, "A changed man. The Lord has certainly made a miracle. It is hard to believe his great new goodness."

"Indeed", said the clerk as he turned towards his bedroom, straining to make the sense of it filter through his meagre mind.

The clerk and his son had been in the office for three whole hours and Scrooge still had not arrived. Used to be that Scrooge was first in and last out. Finally he breezed in through the door, flung his coat and scarf on a chair and exclaimed, "Good morning my dear men!" "And a good morning to you sir", returned the clerk. "It is going be a

busy day men, a busy day. Has the painter arrived yet?" "Painter sir?" "Why yes, they are to be here this morning to add your name to the firm, above the door." "I see", said the clerk. "Sir I really don't think..." Nonsense my good fellow. A little faith Bob. Have a little faith. There is nothing to it. You will fall right into it. And good Peter here can do your old job, and all will be fine. I have to make rounds to several charities and of course to the church."

"Sir do you remember that you have an appointment at noon with Mr. Jameson in his office at the exchange?" said Cratchit hopefully. "He was very anxious that you close this latest business as soon as possible. He has been in twice already this week. I tried to do my best to..." "Business! Bah! Humbug! The old geezer. He would sell his own mother for a schilling. Bah! I will get to him soon enough. Better still, why don't you go meet with him. It would be a good time for you to start. Good experience. Go on Bob. See for yourself. Go to the exchange, and watch how those covetous animals run in purposeless circles like rats in a maze. Business. Bah! Economics. Humbug! Inventions of the devil! What does it ever get anyone? What does all that have to do with life? The love of money is evil. It is an affront to God. Do not worry Bob, you will do it well. You will have no problem, because your great heart is filled with God. Let him work through you, and you will be more than a match for them. Now get on with those contracts. I've got to be off." Scrooge looked about the office for a moment and said, "Business! Bah!" And before Cratchit could utter a sound, Scrooge was out the door and gone. He didn't even stop to get his coat and scarf.

Well past the appointed hour of the meeting, Cratchit sat stupefied at Scrooges' desk trying to make heads or tails out of the work in front of him. Scrooge had started the documents weeks earlier, but had never finished them. To the now elevated clerk, who had never advanced beyond sending letters and copying figures; trying to make sense out of the complex accounting and legal wording so meticulously and diligently constructed by Scrooge's superlative effort, was all 4th century B.C. Greek to Bob Cratchit.

He had long since sent Peter on his way, as it was pointless for him to stand around with nothing to do. The painter had arrived and was busy outside, but Cratchit was oblivious to him as he hovered over the desk trying to move a mountain of complex mathematics with a brain the size of a mustard seed.

Still hopelessly engaged, he did not notice Mr. Jameson, who stood lingering outside the door staring up at the painter's now finished handiwork, mouth agape, and looking for all the world as though he were watching a pink elephant tap dancing on the roof. Somehow, he managed to reach for the doorknob and entered the office. He stopped again two paces inside and gazed upon Cratchit sitting at Scrooge's desk, head down into his work. He looked for a moment at the predicament in front of him, then started forward again, then stopped in his tracks again as though he had come to the precipice of a volcano... Again, he moved slowly forward with eyes fixed upon the desk as surely the closer he went... Finally, the reality of the situation grasping him, muttered, "I am quite sure that good Mr. Scrooge has completely vacated his senses."

At this the clerk looked up to see the horrified Mr. Jameson glaring down at him incredulously. "M - Mr. Jameson sir, I was just trying to finish up and was on my way over and..." stammered the clerk.

"Where the hell is Scrooge!?" Jameson burst out with barely controlled furor. "And what the hell are you doing with my account?" "Well sir, you see, he put me in charge of it and..."

"He's gone completely mad. Let me see that", Jameson grabbed the papers out of the clerks hands and examined them. "This is barely half-finished! This should have been finished weeks ago! Do you know what this will cost me you idiot?!!" "Well, yes sir, but you see Mr. Scrooge felt that it was only business and that his charitable works deserved more of his attention..." "ONLY BUSINESS!! What the hell do you mean charity?! I'll have him give to my charity at the magistrate's bench when I sue the bastard for breach of contract! Then he'll need all the charity he can get when my solicitor is finished with him."

At that he threw the papers at the clerk, turned and stomped out the door, leaving a trail of noxious fumes in his wake.

Seemingly in another dimension, Scrooge was across town enjoying a far different attitude. The gentleman who received him was ear to ear abeam in smile. Scrooge had of late been sending regular checks to the gentleman's organization; a home for the poor and destitute. He knew that something special must be in the wind because Scrooge had asked to see him in person.

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Both men crossed the grimy floor between lines of ragged men waiting for food. Each had a welcoming hand outstretched and both were engaged in a grinning contest.

"Ebenezer my friend! How can I be of service to you today?!" "Alfred, how are you?" said Scrooge, shaking his hand and clasping him on the back. "Good! Good!" returned Alfred. "Alfred, because Christmas will come before we know it I wanted to make a special gift to you and these unfortunate souls here." "That is very gracious, but did you not just send us a check last week?" "Yes I did, but I am sure that it was not enough, especially with holidays fast upon us, and so I thought this to be of special importance." Scrooge reached inside his vest pocket and produced a check which he handed to Alfred.

"FIVE HUNDRED POUNDS STERLING!!! I don't know what to say! Good Lord Ebenezer! You have know idea what this will mean to our work! We will have a Christmas like no other!" "Indeed you shall! Indeed you shall! cried Scrooge. "But now, Alfred, I have many things to do, and I must be off. Pray excuse me."

Instantly he was gone, leaving the gentleman standing in the middle of the room holding a bounty the likes of which he had never imagined.

Alfred was grateful for the money, but it would not go entirely to the hungry clamoring about him. Part of it would go to the political group of which he was a member. A group with a new vision of the future that met at the British Museum. They were socialists, and they were inspired by the teachings of a new philosophy: Communism.

Alfred, like his German idol, was an atheist. He liked Scrooge in spite of his religious fervor, and thought that in time he could interest him in attending some of the meetings. After all, were they not both interested in the downfall of the selfish, enslaving capitalism? Were they not both interested in the welfare of the exploited masses? Were they not both interested in freeing the poor laborers from the decadent and destructive machinery of their greedy oppressors? "Well, perhaps in time. Perhaps in time", he thought to himself. He pocketed the check and headed straight to the bank.

Scrooge, meanwhile, headed for his favorite lunch spot. On his way he passed out coins to beggars and children at random. Any outstretched hand connected to a pleading face was quickly rewarded. By the time he arrived at the eating establishment and was about to order, he discovered that he had no money left for himself. He had fed everyone else and had forgotten himself. This truly pleased him. "I am truly becoming unselfish", he mused. So he went hungry until dinner. This did not bother him either, because he felt he must learn to feel the pain of others, to feel the cleansing action of pain and sacrifice would put him nearer to God. And therefore to eternal life.

And so it went. Donations to every sort of home, mission, needy cause or the Church. All the money flowing from Scrooges' bank account. So that as it got smaller his account in Heaven must surely be growing. Scrooges' wealth was indeed extensive. A product of years of hard work and accumulation. In and of itself it could support a great deal of philanthropy, provided that his income kept up with that which went out. This of course, with Scrooge almost totally absent from the office and Cratchit at the controls, was blatantly impossible.

Poor Bob Cratchit. He soon learned, very painfully, that manna did not flow from Heaven: Or from the devastatingly destructive combination of inexperience and incompetence. Scrooge had not been around for weeks, even for family meals. He had, instead, been taking his sustenance with the poor in the bread lines. Instead of going to the exchange, he spent business hours in prayer at Church. Not that it mattered. Cratchit soon had nothing to consult him on anyway: Scrooge had no clients left. Word had spread like wildfire through the business community of his new attitude toward commerce and the gentlemen there engaged. No longer did they beat a path to his formerly scrupulous door: Unless they were beating it down with lawsuits and overdue bills, many of them with Cratchits' name on them.

All of this culminated into rapid disaster. This Scrooge found out one morning when he happened to drop in on his office. Upon turning the corner and strolling merrily up the walk, his insouciant state of mind was rudely turned about. He did not even see the notice posted on the door frame until he had tried the door, only to find it locked. Not really knowing what day it was, and thinking perhaps it must be a Sunday, he tried his key in the lock. It did not work. This was when he finally looked at what was posted beside him: EVICTION NOTICE - CLOSED BY ORDER OF THE MAGISTRATE. Somewhat stunned and confused at the same time, Scrooge checked to see if he had the right address. He did.

Bewildered, he stumbled slowly backwards away from the door. Not knowing what to make of it all, he stood still, simply staring at the building and the notice. He then turned and hurriedly, if unsteadily, made a bee-line for the Cratchit residence.

Cratchit and his wife were sitting down holding each others hand, wondering what would become of them, when they heard the ominous pounding on their bolted door. They looked at each other, not knowing if it was perhaps the constable with another summons, or perhaps Scrooge. They were not quite sure which would be worse.

Cratchit rose and moved towards the door and the incessant pounding that got more insistent the closer he went.

"Cratchit! Cratchit!" Scrooge demanded from the other side; wondering if the family still lived there. Finally the door opened and they stood face to face. "S-S-Sir. It-It is g-good t-to see you... sir. We have b-been looking all over for..." "Good God Bob! What in Jehovah's Name is going on?! Why is my office locked and I evicted like a common criminal?!" demanded a disheveled Ebenezer. "Well sir... I ...you see..." "Speak up man! Speak up!" "Well sir, all your clients and associates are upset that you abandoned them... and well... so many contracts were let go... I mean neglected... well, past the legal time set... and..." "But you were supposed to have taken care of them." said a now pleading Scrooge. "Yes sir, I did, well... I tried. Please sir, I did not know how! I prayed and prayed! I did. I tried to have faith. I asked God, but I did not understand... so many things. Please sir, I tried, please, you must forgive me. And they would not deal with me! They called me terrible things and you worse! They sent their solicitors around... and... And I tried, but I did not understand what they were saying... and all I could do was pray more; and then the constable came around."

"Those vultures!" cried Scrooge. "Those heartless bloodsuckers! They are straight from the throne of the infernal one himself! We are attacked! Don't you see Bob! We are attacked because we try to do good. Those merciless bandits!"

Then in the middle of his tirade he paused. "We must, though, forgive them as our savior taught. We must pray for guidance. Tomorrow I will go and see the magistrate myself and set things aright. Let us kneel and pray together. Bring your family together. We shall pray as one.

So Scrooge and the family Cratchit all kneeled in a circle by the hearth and prayed for guidance: "Dear Father in Heaven, we cannot give to others too much or sacrifice enough of our lives for you..., Scrooge began.

The magistrate could not have agreed more. He was determined to see that Scrooge sacrifice every last measure to those that he had injured. Despite a full court room and the amount of work to be done, he had noticed Scrooge immediately when he entered. Unbeknownst to Scrooge, he was a week late in answering even the latest of the summons. The magistrate turned to the bailiff and simultaneously pointed at Scrooge and said, "Bring him here." The bailiff did not get very far because a determined Scrooge had already forced his way forward and was quickly at the bench.

"You're Honor, what is this outrage that has been visited upon me?! I am a good and decent man with a spotless record. I am a man of God of the highest order. Yet my livelihood has been cut off, my business closed, and I am barred from my property as if I were some kind of demon. I am outraged!!"

"Outraged?" said the magistrate plainly. "Indeed, so am I. I have a list of complaints about you that has taken two of my best clerks over a week to examine. I have sent out messengers of the court to your so-called place of business several times, until finally, after no response, I issued summons to my court which you have so callously ignored. As well, the solicitors of the plaintiffs have been hounding my bench until I can barely stand it. I have heard your name so many times over the past month that I hope that I do not hear it again as long as I live. My job, sir, is to mete out unbiased opinions in the interest of justice. But in this case I must inform you that my patience is sorely tried, and that you have a most convincing explanation."

"Your Honor", returned Scrooge, "I have been about doing our Saviors' work; which is neglected to a serious degree in this evil world. I have been out in the community doing untold amount of good. So what if I have been somewhat oversightful in my business affairs? It is these sinning blackards of profit and money chasing that are the root of all this worldly suffering in the first place! And now, as I try to show them the errors of their ways they turn on me like wolves. I beg of you, good magistrate, to force them to lift their suits, and reopen my business and help

me to continue my good work. How dare they not do business with me! They should be forced to do so! Your Honor, I have seen the light as you can now clearly see, while these dogs and their solicitors wallow in the heinous blackness of their original sin!"

The magistrate stared down at Scrooge with an incredulous glaze over his eyes. It took some moments before he could integrate all this and was able to speak.

"Mr. Scrooge, I too believe in ultimate justice. You see, this is a court room, not a mystic ceremony. I am a magistrate, not a witch doctor nor a priest. In this court room we do not deal with superstition, but with reality; not in visions, but in facts. Here we try to be above savage ignorance: we deal in concrete knowledge. As a consequence, I do not base my decisions on original sin, because if guilt is innate no justice is possible. I base my decisions on *Original Innocence*. The task that I am sworn to carry out is to *objectively* examine the facts before me and determine a fair outcome based upon the standard of reality: *There is no higher standard than that*. It is by this process that we protect free men, and which protects freedom itself; and which separates and protects us from a monarch's whim, an inquisitors' rack or a mobs' democratic insanity."

"So let us look at the facts, Mr. Scrooge. You have engaged in numerous contracts of your own free will with men who have done the same. These documents of trust were entered into and signed by you with full knowledge of contractual trust and the circumstances involved. Whether out of malicious intent or plain irresponsibility, you have failed to carry out all of the obligations you had agreed to. This caused the other parties involved grievous damage in the amount of thousands of pounds.

"After listening to the cases of their solicitors, and witnessing your own unruly, disrespectful and delinquent behavior, I am inclined to judge that you have broken these agreements willfully and with full knowledge of the consequences. Unless you can come up with some more convincing argument Mr. Scrooge, I must say that in this courtroom you do not have a ghost of a chance."

"So this is how it is!" burst Scrooge. "This is how I am repaid for doing the Lords' work! I am tried just as the Savior was! You are every bit the villain that Pilate was! I am betrayed! My judgment will come from Heaven, your Honor, just as yours will! My treasures are in Heaven, and they are as great as yours are small!"

"Mr. Scrooge", returned the unamused magistrate, "I sincerely hope that you can draw a substantial draft on that heavenly sum in the very near future, because I am ordering you to pay the plaintiffs immediately the amount of seventy-five thousand pounds sterling. If you cannot raise that amount in three days I will order all of your assets and accounts seized. As for you sir, I should find you guilty of contempt and jail you; but on account of your past record I will overlook your insulting behavior towards this court. Now get out of here before I change my mind. Bailiff, next case."

Scrooge did not move. He merely looked up at the man behind the bench. After a while the magistrate noticed that Scrooge had not left, and turned to a constable and instructed, "Please help this gentleman to find the door."

Scrooge walked out of the building and went aimlessly down the street. "This cannot be", he thought to himself. It cannot be. I have done nothing wrong. Perhaps I have displeased the Lord in some way. I must have. I should have prospered by giving." Then he thought of the judgment: Seventy-five thousand pounds. He had already given away thousands and was now without the income from the now severed associations. "How much have I given away?" he thought, doing a quick mental tally. He quickly came to the conclusion that he did not even have half the amount ordered to be paid.

"I am ruined. Ruined. They will take everything. Everything I have worked my whole life for!"

Indeed, they did. When three days passed and no money had appeared, the magistrate ordered that his building, his furnishings and his bank accounts be seized. In addition, the exchange barred him from further dealings. Although that was hardly necessary, because no one there would have been foolish enough to trust their money with him anyway.

Soon he was sleeping on the bare floor in his chambers, and living on what money he had had on his person three days prior. His rent was coming due and he would soon be forced to find accommodations elsewhere.

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He found no solace wherever he went. Certainly not in the Cratchit home. Simply because they no longer had a home. Not only had the clerks' income been cut off by the closure of the business, but because he had been a partner, all his possessions had been seized.

When Scrooge finally caught up with them they were taking refuge at Scrooges' nephews' rather humble dwelling. He stood outside in the freezing weather trying to muster the courage to knock on the door. Finally he just did.

When the door opened Scrooge was met by his now not to be humored nephew. "It's about time you showed your face", sneered his nephew, he of the former good cheer. "You've put these people out in the street with nothing. I can't even come close to feeding them on what I make; let alone myself." "I never intended anything..." said Scrooge attempting a meek reply. "Bah!" shot back his nephew. "You and your crazy schemes! Just look at what you have done! Just look at my home! They can't stay here forever!" he seethed.

Scrooge stepped through the doorway into the dwelling and saw the people, the clutter, and the cramped conditions of the small room. Everyone looked up at him with helplessly accusing eyes.

"So there you are!" cried Mrs. Cratchit, half yelling, half sobbing. "Look, just look at what has become of us!"

Scrooge looked. It was not good. Bob Cratchit held Tiny Tim in his arms next to the feeble fire. He looked bad.

"Is he all right? Scrooge sheepishly inquired. The ex-clerk looked up at him, tears in his eyes, "No. No. He has gotten pneumonia and I fear for his life. He is not eating well, but then there is precious little to eat anyway. I pray and pray, we all do, but he gets no better. Please sir, we need some money, anything, or we will all be out in the street very soon, and Tim so desperately needs food and a doctor or I fear the worst. Please. Anything. Anything. Please!"

"I am afraid I have no money. I have nothing to give you. They took everything. I'm sorry."

"Get out! Get out! Get out of here you evil monster!" cried a sobbing Mrs. Cratchit."

"I've always hated you. You and your kind! There is never any good that comes out of the likes of you! Get out! Never show your wretched face to us again! Leave! Be gone! She was completely out of control.

Speechless, Scrooge turned toward the door. As he was about to step out into the cold night he turned to his nephew and said, "Can I trust in your charity to help them?" "I have no charity to give them! I'll be broke in a week trying to feed all those mouths! Then I'll be as bad off as they. I can't have this rabble in my home! I can't make a step without falling over someone! I'm losing my mind! It's your responsibility! You got them into this mess, I didn't! What do you expect me to do?! You help them! And you had better be quick about it the way that little one is going!

"It is all my fault. All mine", Scrooge whispered to himself as he walked away. He was so preoccupied and depressed that he did not even feel the biting cold. The weight of the guilt he felt was crushing him.

"Perhaps something good will come of this. God works in mysterious ways. Perhaps I am being taught a lesson of some kind", he thought, feeling a little flicker of faith inside him.

He began to call on those that he knew, and to whom he had of late been so generous with. He called on Belle, his sweetheart of times past. Belle would have none of it.

"I told you years ago that your lust for gain would do you no good. I left you then because I knew it would end in disaster. Now you come to me poorer than I! God has punished you for your past sins! And in your desire to make even more wealth using God's word you fooled no one. It is just like you. Now you have made even others miserable with your misguided selfishness. What? I have no money to give them! I have my children to feed. I have all I can do just trying to make ends meet and be a mother at the same time. It's your fault, you help them! But I can't, my husband who has blessed me with love and children, was let go from work just because some money-grubber like you invented a new process and he was unable to learn it. Imagine the idea! Hasn't anyone got respect for tradition anymore! Our values die out in the name of progress and good simple people of God like us are swept away. Be gone with you Ebenezer!"

It was the same wherever he went.

"No", said Alfred, "I have nothing to give you. Your money was greatly appreciated, but we have spent it all feeding these people. We are only able to run day by day on what we have... Why no, we never invest or try to turn a profit; that would be..."

All the money he had invested in the welfare of others was utterly gone. Not only had he not prospered by it, he had lost everything. It had all gone into a bottomless pit.

"All I can give you is consolation", said the pastor, and perhaps one of these benches to sleep on. Take Faith son, the Lord tests us all to make us stronger. Pray. Pray, and ask God to guide you."

The dejected and miserable Scrooge did just that. On the cold bare floor of his chambers, kneeling with one of his last possessions - his Bible. "Merciful, divine, and great God", he prayed, "what should I do? Where should I go? What have I done so wrong that you turn your face from me? Show me Thy will and I will do it! Please. Please God tell me what I should do!"

There was no answer. Except from the landlord, who was forced to evict him.

Scrooge found a filthy abandon garret in the most squalid district of London. He sat numbly in a creaking chair and stared blankly back into a life past, a horrible present, and a future that now seemed void. He would sit for hours at a time in this paralyzing, brooding trance, trying to understand what had gone wrong. Had he paid attention, he would have heard the scurrying of rats, their claws clicking on the wood inside the walls, and the somewhat more imperceptible sound of the termites boring through the foundation of the building.

It was the termites inside his mind that were doing the real damage though, by turning his mental processes and his will into so much sawdust.

He did not eat. He could not bear to go to the mission and stand in line with men that he was now like, and think of what he had once been, knowing what he had now been reduced to. Soon he could not muster the will to venture out at all: For fear of what he might face. For on his last trip out he had seen the face of a threadbare child in the cold. A child that he had once generously given coins to on a regular basis, who had come running up to him like a hungry puppy to a familiar source of food. Scrooge had had nothing to give him and less to say. He just stood there with a stony, blank expression, peering down at the pleading figure that reminded him of Tiny Tim. The child had looked at Scrooges' lifeless, apathetic, defeated demeanor; then had quietly walked away.

Nothing remained of Ebenezer Scrooge. He could only surmise that he was indeed condemned by destiny and God to be forever wretchedly unhappy. Lonely and scorned when wealthy, the same when poor.

He had caused grief to everyone. Failed everyone: himself most of all. His friends gone, his reputation ruined, abandoned by his God, his life rendered useless. He came to believe that he was a curse upon everything with which he came in contact.

"Where did I go wrong? I have become pariah even to the outcast, and wretched even to myself."

He felt old and helpless, the grotesque, formless remnant of a man.

Suicide he knew was a mortal sin. But what did that matter? He was almost certainly headed for Hell or Jacob Marley's fate anyway; and at least he would be of no further threat to those on earth. And his own earthly pain would end. His life here was finished.

He tore a bed sheet into strips and made a noose. He tied it to a rafter, stood on the chair, and put the noose around his neck. He stood facing a mirror across the room, and looking at his reflection began to weep. He heard activity down in the street below and realized it was Christmas Eve. Not being able to stand the sight of himself any longer, and unable to tolerate the merry sounds from outside, he started to kick the chair out from under him.

Suddenly a spark of rage fought its way through the anguish to the surface of his consciousness. He screamed out - "WHY?! WHY?! WHY?!! There has to be a REASON!!!"

CHAPTER TWO: THE MAN OF CHRISTMAS PAST

Suddenly Scrooge saw a light flash in the mirror in front of him. Whirling around to see what was behind him was too much for the rickety old chair beneath him. It gave way, sending its' legs outward in four different directions, leaving Scrooge dangling by his neck from the ceiling; but not for a fatal lapse of time. The termite infested beam above him gave way under the weight, and Scrooge fell down to unceremoniously greet the broken chair seat lying on the floor. Scrooge sat on the floor brushing himself off, kicking pieces of wood away from himself and then looking up at the split beam above; all the while mumbling to himself that nothing ever went right. Then it caught him: He remembered why he had so adroitly placed himself in this position to begin with...

He ever so carefully turned his head around and up into the reflective glass, uncertain but curious, as one does in a dark room when one hears a strange noise, thinking, a ghost? A burglar? I want to know, but maybe not. At any rate, curiosity won out over uncertainty. He found himself face to face with the image, which to his shock was still there. He sat petrified, not only at the reflection, but at the thought that if he turned around he might have to grapple with the fact that it was grounded in something real.

He did. It was.

When his eyes met it they were filled with a light so penetrating that it dazzled him to the very core of his being. The driven energy of it sent vital electricity rushing to every cell of his nervous system. Without even noticing it, the power of it gave him the strength to rise from the floor in one smooth, fluid motion. He stood wire-eyed facing it, basking in the warmth of it as one would in the sun after a long cold winter.

As brilliant and radiant as it was, it was not a blinding light. The presence of it did not blind nor make him want to fall down before it in terror. In fact, for the first time in his life he felt completely devoid of fear.

As he acclimated to the situation, he felt a certain serene tension prevail throughout him. Becoming

accustom to this, he noticed that the light did not merely exist on its own. This light had a source. He focused through the light and saw the source from which the light emanated. There, floating at the other end of the room was an oblong spherical object of intertwined soft grey substance that seemed at once both vulnerable and all powerful. Sparks of blue-white electricity flashed and danced on its surface, then ran inward into the mass and then outward again to the surface. *Alive.*

He surveyed it for a moment, thinking that perhaps he had in fact died, gone to heaven, and was now facing some creature from the other side. Then he remembered: It was Christmas Eve. He then muttered jadedly to himself: Oh no, not again.

Finally though, it struck him what it was. He had seen illustrations of this very thing in medical manuals long ago when he had considered a pursuit of medicine as a career, before he had settled on finance. No, there was no doubt; this mass of energized grey matter in front of him was a Human brain.

He felt no apprehension, nor fear of the object or its' fiery light that filled the room, nor was there any menacing attitude emanating from it. He began to speak very calmly and directly to it. "What exactly are you, where did you come from, and what would you have with me, pray tell, my unlikely visitor?"

"I am exactly was you surmised me to be. I am you and you are me. We do not exist, one without the other."

"Go on, please explain", said Scrooge.

"I am merely the reflection of your own conscious. I am the engine of your life, your passions, and your desires. I am the very meaning of your existence. I am what have been moving you for your whole life, but that which you have never fully understood or allowed to be fully released. *I am.*"

"Then tell me", inquired Scrooge, "why are you now released?"

"Because for the first time since many years you said the word that brings me alive."

"And that word would be?" Asked Scrooge.

"Why".

"Indeed, Indeed", said Scrooge, "the word of inquisition".

"The word of being that acknowledges its' own identity and seeks to identify the environment in which it finds itself. The word that is uttered by a self-determining entity that is hungry for the knowledge that it innately craves. The word that follows the questioning 'what', then gives the merely quantitative a conceptual and abstract value. It is the word and unique perception that has made Man master of the Earth. It is the perception that cannot be cheated for any length of time. If the word is correctly answered then there will be progress.

"And what is your role in all this?" asked Scrooge.

"I am the source of all things Human. I am the very engine of all Human life. I am the source of all thought, of all passion, of all action. I am the builder of all buildings. The designer of bridges. I am the inventor of architecture, of physics, of chemistry, of metallurgy and of medicine. I am the inventor of philosophy, of ethics, of values and of ideals. I am that which naturally and necessarily seeks happiness. I am that through which happiness is achieved. I am the relentless seeker of knowledge, achievement, gain and glory; which are the infinite tools I use to bring about my happiness. I am the only living thing which holds these ideals and seeks to obtain them. Through me all things are possible, not just probable. From me comes the light, the light that shines outward from me and encompasses all things and changes them into the form of my vision. I am singularly unique. I am the first thing on this planet to direct its' own path-By the grace of being conscious. When I came into being and awoke into consciousness I broke forever the chains of chance, of probability, of instinct. I live by action: Volitional reasoned action; with passion and desire as my fuel. I am the way, the truth, and the light. I stand alone-unassailable, able to conquer all that is before me. I am the greatest, most glorious light this world has ever known: I am the Neo-Cortex of the Human Brain.

"Interesting, but it seems to me that I've heard statements like those before. You see I talked to four fellows not long ago that sounded a lot like that and now look at me," countered Scrooge.

"Exactly. Now look at you. So let's examine their plan for your happiness and that of others. Did you find that your compassion was rewarded likewise?"

"No."

"Did you find that blindly loving every single Human Being that crossed your path gave that measure of love back?"

"No."

"Did you find your measure of giving returned in kind, from those here or from the nebulous beyond?"

"I should say not!"

"Did you find that the money you gave away went to any constructive use?"

"Rather the opposite."

"Did you find that sacrificing everything you had, your fortune, your self respect, your mind, your values, and now nearly your life, filled you with any satisfaction?"

"I must say, you've got me there too."

"Did you find that surrendering reason and logic and concrete reality for blind obedience to a dictatorial supernatural being was a workable plan of action?"

"Perhaps I was unworthy."

"Really? You seemed rather worthy to me. You followed the instructions to the letter, leaving out nothing. You exuded complete faith. You were totally transformed, or should I say transfixed. You completely surrendered reason to faith. You completely replaced greed with giving. You gave away your entire fortune that you had worked your entire life for and followed the doctrine of Christianity right down the path to destruction like a lamb follows the Sheppard in bliss right to the slaughter. You utterly put aside rationality as your gage to action and replaced it with the mysticism of prayer. You totally cast aside your former personal values and judgment, for everyone and everything else's' values and judgements. You completely denounced money and worldly goods as a symbol for your dealings with other men and as a measure of your own worth and the worth of others, and replaced it with love, hope charity, and random compassion as your measure of self-worth and the worth of others. No, Ebenezer, you were not unworthy. In fact, by those standards, I would deem you the most worthy man I have ever known.

"Perhaps it was my original sin that flawed me", Scrooge pondered.

"Oh no. Don't you remember? If you follow Christ and strive in every way to be like him, they let you out of that impossible trap. Remember? Drink his blood, eat his flesh, give up everything (Especially yourself) and suffer as much pain as possible in his name and you are golden.

"Perhaps though, I will be paid back in heaven", Scrooge queried.

"Sure. It seems to me that just a moment ago you were trying to kill yourself and you know what they will do to you for that. Besides, doesn't it occur to you that a doctrine that promotes pain, suffering, self destruction (self sacrifice), death and cannibalism as the road to salvation, then what must their idea of paradise be? It seems to me that a philosophy that sucks the blood out of the living denounces Mans' goals as worthless, flawed and ignorant, just might be protecting something that is worthless, flawed and ignorant. Remember, Ebenezer, that the strongest guard is placed at the gateway to nothing.

"What could be more contradictory than a god who creates an image of himself, a being that is endowed for it's survival with the capacity to identify its' own existence, to identify the environment around it, and in so identifying to sustain itself and prosper through thought, desire, creativity, reason and action; i.e., equipped in every way to deal with reality and then tell that being that solid reality does not exist and therefore it is a sin to exist,think,desire,reason and act. A being created in the image of a conscious and creating being, then stripped of its' consciousness and capacity to create is an absurdity. Then tell that being that the only way to achieve happiness is to live in pain, commit suicide and die-or worse, to be a mindless, i.e. nonsinning, blob of unconscious protoplasm in a vegetable garden for all of eternity (Which was the condition of Adam and Eve).

"Then what about Satan? Isn't he the cause of all the real pain and suffering? Isn't it our gift of free will that determines which way our ultimate outcome is determined?" questioned Scrooge.

"Free will? Satan? You used your supposed free will and chose the so-called path of righteousness and were utterly destroyed. Yes. Yes. The tools of Satan: Money. Desire. Self-determination. Greed. Reason. All the things that make a man a man. The mystics hate it all. They hate them because they are either woefully misguided, or because they despise themselves for being men, and therefore the responsibility for their own lives. It is much easier to pass that responsibility on to the enigmatic beyond. Besides, if they acknowledge the viability of reality they loose their claim as the chosen ones and so therefore their power to dictate to others.

"As far as giving the devil his due, you must remember that Satan is neither the father nor the creator of evil. The bible states plainly that god is the creator of evil (Isaiah 45:7).

"In all the centuries past the man of the intelligent assertive mind that was repulsed by the constraints and horrors natural to religion found an alternative in Satanism in its various orders and guises. Therein seemed to be an answer and a refuge, with its bias towards the individual and more practical tenants of reason and rational self interest. In the end, however, it sinks into the same gooey glop of mysticism as its Judeo-Christian counterpart. This is because it is simply the other side of the same coin: Both are based on the same irrational asinine premise. The truly rational mind believes in neither. Remember: it is the Christian who believes in Satan, not the man of clear thought. It is the Christian who worships Satan. It is therefore the Christian who promotes the Satanic more than anyone else. Without him they have nothing else (other than themselves) to blame for the whole altruistic wasteland they have created. According to the bible, remember, Satan is an angel - Created by god."

"Free will, Ebenezer? How would you describe a situation wherein you were forced to sign a contract with another businessman who was holding a gun to your head, telling you that unless you signed he would blow your head off; and on top of that you must also slavishly love him above all other things and be subject to his slightest whim no matter how ridiculous? (Or he would still blow your head off).

"Why that would be no contract at all! That would be the very contradiction of the ethics of a contract! Any honest judge would void it on the grounds of extortion, and hurl the man into jail!" Scrooge bellowed.

"Well Ebenezer that is exactly what the Christian concept of free will is based upon. Your 'free will' consists of either loving god and obeying him without question or burning in hell forever. Some choice. Only instead of using a gun they indoctrinate you with their twisted philosophy that puts you on a hideous cosmic rack that puts your mind at odds with itself, and yanks it in two directions at once away from sanity. 'Free Will' in their terms is a contradiction. If one is inherently evil, then one has no way of making another choice."

"The love of money is the root of all evil they say, but in fact, it is the *lack* of money that is the root of all evil (real money that is). Money and wealth, understand, do not appear as manna sent from never-never land, it is produced by the creativity and energy of the Human mind applied to *action*. A system based on subjugating, denying, and cursing the independent mind as evil is necessarily the destroyer of wealth, prosperity and happiness."

"Ah, but alas, I may be bankrupt and miserable now, but I wasn't much happier even when I was prosperous", replied Scrooge remorsefully.

"Think back Ebenezer, there was a time when you were happy and full of expectation. You do know what happiness is, just go back and try to remember. I do. I remember a young Ebenezer Scrooge who once climbed a steep green hill in the summertime, filled with the eager sense of adventure, driven by the need to know what was at the top. I remember the struggle up the steep incline, going foot by foot. The going was hard, you were nearly out of breath, the summer sun and your own exertion made you perspire. You fell and cut and bruised yourself on the rocks that lay hidden in the tall grass. Exhausted, but undaunted, you pushed on only to find that all of a sudden you were at the top. Do you remember what you did next?"

"Yes. I turned around and looked out. I had never been so high up before, nor had I ever seen so far before- I could see for miles. I stood alone- alone in the triumph of my achievement and looked out with elation at the panorama of wonder and beauty that stretched out from my eyes out beyond the horizon. The miles of blue-green water and the foam that danced on the tips of the waves. The sky of deep rich blue that flowed out before me and up into infinity and then down again to kiss the water that reflected it, then back to me and through me. I saw distant green islands that I could never make out well from below, now belonged to my imagination as they floated magnificently in the sparkling sunlit water." Scrooge with eyes closed reminisced.

"And what was it that you felt?"

"I felt the sensation of *pure joy*", he whispered with eyes closed. "I felt the whole of life for the first time. That I was *alive*. That I was *My-Self*... That I was part of life yet distinct amongst it. I comprehended that I was part of the earth; but at the same time able to reach out my hand to command it all. I felt a glorious sensation that I could do anything. That no matter what obstacles lay in front of me I could overcome them and be rewarded with joy like this. Anything was possible in a world like this, and I could be the master of it. I went down from that place to find people who shared my view. I never found them", Scrooge whispered remorsefully, eyes still shut.

"Do you remember how old you were?"

"Seven", Scrooge replied.

"I will tell you what you did find. You found people, the very people who were supposed to guide you on your road up the heights of life. They took, as they still take, young fearless minds, and filled it with confusion and horror. People who never so much as looked under a rock to see what was there for themselves. People who passed on time worn myths and lies, without ever considering discerning for themselves their meaning, their background, their validity (or their own meaning, background, and validity). They gave your mind tools for dealing with your

existence that fit nothing. They passed on to you unworkable superstitions and irrationalities that they had learned by rote, then executed them with no more thought than an insect does instinct."

"They told you that both you and your world were transient, whimsical mirages brought into existence by a mysterious creature who could wipe it out by means of another whim. They told you that you were the absolute abject slave of this invisible tyrant. Oh yes, it loved you they said, but don't cross it or it would blow you away. They told you that the way to deal with life, the way to accomplish your goals was to appease this nebulous being. They told you that ultimately, reason; logic, achievement, and your sensation of self-uniqueness were not only wrong, but useless. Any action you took by these methods was pointless because the great green hobgoblin in the sky controlled and decided everything. They gave you the fallacious and ignorant premise that 'reality', 'identity', people and life were determined by the savage rituals of prayer, drinking blood, eating flesh, and sacrificing your individuality and self-worth to every other person. These cannibalistic concepts they called good: and they teach this to... *children*."

"Then they coerced you into following these precepts by telling you that the alternative was another mysterious, powerful being that was in conflict with the former mysterious, powerful being, who wanted you to do the opposite: Be yourself. On earth. If you were happy being yourself on earth, however, something must be wrong. You were obviously in the control of the evil one and were being deceived. If you did not obey the orders of the first, the other would grab you (after you were dead of course) and torture you for all of eternity. Therefore, you must spend all the precious days of your life preparing for death: which is the premise of their entire philosophy. This 'social control' is the ultimate form of terrorism - And they teach this to.... *children*."

"They filled your young mind with an invisible realm inhabited by gods, devils, angels, demons, spirits, and, oh yes- ghosts. Then they wonder why children have nightmares and are afraid of the dark."

"These entities were out of your control and beyond your sight. They, however, could see you and had full and total control over you. This, they explained, was because you were an inferior being to these elusive shadows- A mortal. Some of the imperceptible shadows were evil, some were not. If you used the proper appeasement of prayer the good ones would protect you from the bad ones-maybe."

"Now with a completely disarmed mind, your only recourse was to either refute them at the risk of being ostracized or go along blindly believing it, because being young and needing direction you trusted them (since nothing you perceived through *your* senses was deemed to be valid), or be quiet and try to muddle through as best you could, grasping at every charlatan point of view that came your way trying to mix and match them somehow for a clear understanding of life. A life where the first are last, definition is malleable, judgment flawed, and independent thought a sin."

"Then they took you to church. There a man who arrogated to himself understanding of this world beyond and declared himself an intercessor between you and the unseen, pointed to a blood soaked, cut up human figure dying from self-wrought excruciating violence from being beaten and nailed to a tree- and said this was the example by which one should *live*. This is the ultimate outcome of altruism- complete self-destruction. As well, altruistic self-sacrifice is the complete destruction of values. If one has no value for ones'-self, then one cannot value anything or anyone else. Contempt for ones' self is contempt for everyone else's self. Hate is the standard. Then they use a mind-subverting slimy contradiction that suicide is a sin: unless you die for the 'glory' of god. Faith, Altruism and nihilism are a true trinity: They are all defined by their lack of definition. All erase the concepts of identity and value. ***Reducing individual value to value only to others or to a higher power is sanction for genocide.***

"This is the ultimate form of child molestation. To take a child innocently looking to its' elders for guidance, then given a twisted and horror filled view of the universe that fills its' imagination with terror and fear. Telling it that from the beginning of the existence of humanity people were wretched, "foul, bespotted, creatures" (Augustine) that did not deserve to be saved from their horrible fate because they dared defy this awesome god by using reason, logic and desire and because they sought knowledge to create a world for themselves, and must atone for these capital crimes by mindlessly prostrating themselves before this almighty thing, begging to be forgiven for being conscious and alive. What kind of vicious misanthrope would inject this neuro-toxic filth into the mind of an *innocent* child?"

" As Elihu Palmer (1764-1806) observed in Principles of Nature "God is supposed to be a fierce revengeful tyrant, delighting in cruelty, punishing his creatures for the very sins he causes them to commit and creating numberless millions of immortal souls that could never have offended him for the express purpose of tormenting them to all eternity."

"He observed further, "The grand object of all civil and religious tyrants has been to suppress all the elevated operations of the mind, to kill the energy of thought, and through this channel to subjugate the whole earth for their own special emolument."

"Consider how much anguish and death has been caused by the insane concept of mystical abandonment to god of self-responsibility and self-determination whether that god is Allah, Yahweh, Isis, your ancestors, or the good of society. There is no dictator so supreme, no oppression so crushing, or so difficult to dislodge than that power which is claimed through *any* of these enigmatic deities, be it divine right of kings, inspired dictator or prophet when that power is applied to an ignorant and superstitious person or people. Before Muhammad could move the armies of Islam with their blood thirsty swords of conversion, before dissenters are burned alive at the stake by mobs screaming heresy, before slaves are bound and whipped, before holy men sit and stare at the sun until their eyes are burned blind, it is the conscious mind that must first be conquered."

"Understand, Ebenezer, that this is the great principle behind all mysticism. That is- *Suspend the laws of causality and identification and replace them with an inexplicable unknowable beyond the possibility of explanation and call it holy- Then call yourself a Holy man.* To act against people and have power over them, physical threats and coercion are nothing compared to the ability to neutralize the very source of their defense- Their mind. To act against people one must take away their ability to return action. When they can no longer act for themselves, they will act for you. Take away from them that which makes them free in the first place- Identity, self -validity, consciousness, reason, and self-determination."

"In the whole of human history not one shred of credible evidence has ever been offered for the existence of a god or any supernatural realm of any kind. Any time a supernatural explanation for existence has been put in place of a natural explanation catastrophe has been the result. Every time. Not only has there never been actual evidence, there has never been a credible *argument* for the existence of the supernatural. The greatest arguments ever given on this subject were put forth by Thomas Aquinas in 1265 as the opening for the greatest theological work ever written- Summa Theologica. This was Aquinas' attempt to combine Aristotelian reason with Platonic mysticism (Revelation). He asserted the primacy of reason over faith, and therefore thought he could reason the existence of god. But the posit, *Does God exist?* ; is an invalid, fraudulent question pulled out of an intellectual vacuum. That is, unless your name is Friar Tom, and you teach the self-negating contradiction of theological at a 13th century seminary. The argument then has a preset conclusion that goes in search of a premise. The 'arguments' simply use reason as a vehicle to establish the unreasonable. Aquinas uses a mask of Aristotle to hide the face of Plato. Logic + illogic = illogic = 0. So in sum Aquinas inadvertently proved that god does not exist.

That said: *any* advocacy of reason by the 13th century was like a hurricane of fresh air. A hurricane that blew away the feudal system and opened the door to the Renaissance.

A thousand years earlier a much more honest assertion of god and Christianity was put forth by "The Father of the Latin Church" Quintas Tertullianus (155-230 AD). When confronted with the absurdities of Christian doctrine he established the creed of the psychotic by saying: "The Son of God was born: there is no shame, because it is shameful. And the Son of God died: it is wholly credible, because it is inappropriate. And, buried, He rose again: it is certain, because impossible." Thank you Quintas for clearing that up. Perhaps I can help: $1 - 1 + 1 - 1 + 1 - 1 = 0$.

The same type of intellectual short circuit shows up in the 17th century in a much more subtle form when Rene' Descartes (1596 - 1650) declared: "Cogito ergo sum." I think, therefore I exist. This is fundamentally wrong. It is literally backward, and so is any thinking based upon it. Properly it should say - I exist, therefore I think. One cannot think one's self into existence. One must first exist to be able to think, and then to act. The fundamental primary axiom is: **Existence exists**. Anything that is outside of existence does not exist. A non-entity cannot affect an entity. A non-entity cannot combine with an entity. $1 + 0 = 1$. That is, entity plus non-entity equals entity only.

Then come fun and games. The mystics will retort with self-negating statements such as - "Everything you know is wrong." Or, "God is unknowable." Really. If god is unknowable, then how can they possibly know that? *Equals Zero*.

Eternity. Infinity. That which has no beginning or end. Or middle. Or dimension. Or definition of any kind. No mass. No energy. That which is out of existence; with no relation to anything in reality. Nothing. *Zero*.

The higher power, higher cause, supernatural 'God Concept' is self-eradicating. Because if there is a god, it must be part of existence; and therefore subject to the immutable laws therein, and therefore cannot wave its' magic wand to change those laws. Matter cannot be destroyed or *created*. Energy is matter changing state. The truly good news is: ***Existence exists***. And to a conscious entity able to grasp that fact, it is simply there for the taking.

"Now let us explanation who brought western civilization (as well as you my friend) to its' knees, both literally and figuratively. Remember, the unemployed carpenter from Nazareth did not write a single word of the New Testament. *Not one*. Is this, as some scholars have suggested, because the population in which he allegedly lived was 97% illiterate? No, the reason Jesus never wrote anything down is because he never existed. As well, the town of Nazareth did not exist until long after he supposedly lived. Nothing comes from nothing. Jesus is total myth. As Ken Humphreys www.jesusneverexisted.com points out: "The cost to humanity of fifteen centuries of Christian savagery - of hundreds of millions of lives brutalized and truncated, sacrificed to war, torture, pogrom, burning, pestilence and plague - is incalculable. Christianity is the worst disaster in Human history." I would add that this is only part of it. It is the God Concept in any form, including Government, that is the worst disaster. The several persons who wrote the letters of Paul, and their disciples, injected the cancer of oriental altruistic mysticism and its' "deadly superstition" (Tacitus) into the largely pagan and Aristotelian west, thereby killing its' brain and thrusting it into almost twelve centuries of darkness. The destruction, misery and death wrought by this make those writers the most destructive men in the history of Western Civilization."

"Your philosophy and history lecture is all well and fine". , returned the attentive Scrooge, "But what has all this to do with me? I was miserable for most of my life, an outcast as a businessman as well as a saint. Perhaps none of it really matters. Perhaps we are merely just the inhabitants of a cruel Shakespearean tragedy, heroically striving but ultimately doomed because of a tragic flaw or comical circumstances beyond our control, our foolish desires and human vanities swept aside by a pointless and cruel universe."

"Very perceptive Mr. Scrooge. You have learned, apparently, that almost every outlook on life is negative and hostile toward men; even the 'good news' had you grovelling your whole life for the reward it gives you - *after you are dead*. None of them validates mans' right to his own interests. Almost none validate, except in the negative, the efficacy of his actions, independent of the forces around him. Almost none make him out for what he really is here on earth- a singular, volitional, self-reliant, sacrosanct being capable of unlimited achievement and happiness. With most the 'value' is life after death, but never the value of life *before* death."

"Look at what man is supposed to be to their various 'philosophies'- To the Judeo-Christian-Muslim: a poverty stricken martyr giving up the freedoms of life for the freedom of the grave. To Buddha: one who sacrifices everything to the ultimate goal of Nirvana- Which means nothingness. To Marx: a mindless robot. To Shakespeare: a vain fool, whose grandiose plans end in tragedy. To Freud: a *thing* ruled by the primitive subconscious part of the brain with its' addictive voice overwhelming the conscious Neo-Cortex. To Democracy: a slave of the "lawful" sanction of any gang of thugs that can out-vote him and take away *his* "lawful" sanction. A pretty bleak existence by those standards, wouldn't you say Ebenezer? Might as well just kill yourself and be done with it."

"I was about to do just that", returned Scrooge.

"Indeed you were. Any being of reason that is bombarded by these wretched condemnations would certainly feel lost and miserable. One starts out in life with a basic self-esteem and solid identity that is then reduced to shame when he is told it is wrong to be you. Conform! Or be cast out. A world where the last are first. A world where he who thinks he knows, doesn't, but he who thinks he doesn't know, knows. That life is an endless circle leading nowhere instead of a straight line. Where your independent judgment is flawed. Where definitions and reality are neither definite nor real."

"But the ghosts that visited me, what of them?" asked Scrooge.

"Think back. When you were young you were a good church goer. You listened to your parents. You accepted what they told you. What they told you was reinforced by everyone around you. When one is young it is natural to want to fit in, to have people like you, so without even thinking about it one goes along. Besides, to succeed in a society like that it pays to tow the line - if everyone believes in something then it must be right. Right? Slowly, though, as you grew older you began to notice the contradictions and constrictions of the things that you had been taught. Being strong-willed and intelligent you began to pull away and found that by doing so caused more and more friction between yourself and others who were more content to be herded down the path of least resistance. Your fiancée' even fell out of love with you because of...What was it?" "Another idol has displaced me; and if it can cheer and comfort you in time to come as I would have tried to do, I have no just cause to grieve."

"What idol has replaced you?" you asked.

"A golden one", she replied.

And you returned, "This is the even handed dealing of the world! There is nothing on which it is so hard as poverty; and there is nothing it professes to condemn with such averity as the pursuit of wealth!"

"You fear the world too much", replied the wretch. "All your other hopes have merged into the hope of being beyond the chance of its' sordid reproach. I have seen your nobler aspirations fall off one by one until the master passion, gain, engrosses you. Have I not?"

"By what then did she weigh value with, loss? That is exactly what people of her feeble minded easily indoctrinated mediocrity measure their value with. Never mind that the passion for gain is exactly that which separates us from animals and weeds."

"Nonetheless, you were aware that what she was telling you was indeed the truth. You felt deep inside that the two of you were in fact taking far different roads- and you were right; but it did not occur to you that her path was downhill, even as she tried to paint it with the illusion, real in fact to her, that it was uphill. Instead you fretted over your torn sense that it was indeed you who was in fact correct, while at the same time the venom of false guilt ate away at your inner fibres. This poison would haunt you for the rest of your life. A poison that would chain you to isolation and forever keep you from being happy. There is a ghost for you Ebenezer. The same ghost that inhabited her, but unlike you, controlled her completely. You were too strong a mind, for a while, to let it control you and you succeeded in spite of the gnawing haunt within you. Ah, but came the guilt and poison of Christian altruism born of their Christmas bells and carols and outstretched hands and finally came the ghosts in full force."

Ghosts. Like dreams. Visual projections of the imagination. False images, like mirages. The products of false ideas inputted into the brain by the hypnosis of constant repetition of time worn myths, repeated over and over and over again until they are accepted as fact by the mental processes then projected outward either visually or philosophically. These mirages then cover up actual reality.

"BOO! I just scared your 'ghosts' away, my fine Ebenezer."

"In spite of all these impediments you achieved anyway. Everyone you knew did everything they could to bring you down to their level to keep you from achieving your goals- by never letting you understand them. Since they were unable to prevent your material successes, they robbed you of the ultimate aim of that success- happiness. They entombed you in isolation and misery by surrounding you with their false gaiety, while at the same time shoveling on top of you the guilt of being alive on the grave they had dug for you. Without the philosophical weapons with which to fight back and free yourself from them, you became exactly what they kept telling you that you were - Miserable, lonely, outcast, unhappy and cruel."

"The irony of it is that it was precisely you who were keeping them happy. It was you who gave *them* life and freedom. You and others of your creed, who fed them, clothed them, cured their diseases and held civilization itself together, keeping them out of the jungle of poverty and fear. All this you did in spite of having to strive against a driving storm of spit and vitriolic hatred. It is they who are the real life vampires that live by sucking the blood out of the rational, the productive, the real lovers of life, leaving them just enough blood and vitality to live on so that they could continue their irresponsibly worthless lives, while raising to the nebulous heavens the hosannas of altruism, brotherly love, socialism, self-sacrifice, and the outright contradiction of 'life after death'. It was this very

vampirism that made you the shriveled cheeked, stiff gaited, red-eyed, grated voiced, evil dark master. This is the whole of Christian economics- Vampirism. They drain the blood of those who are productive so they can wait for their never-never land beyond the grave, while at the same time condemning you for keeping them alive in the interim."

"Foolishly, though, they caught themselves in the same web they spun for you, and in doing so cut off their supply of free blood. In effect, although you were unaware of it, you called their bluff. They too convinced you that your humanly pursuits were evil and therefore so were you. They did not realize how much pain you had held inside for so long without release. They didn't know there was a point to far. The last straw was the deceitful joy of Christmas celebration. You finally cracked."

"Those ghosts were the manifestations of your guilt played out in a dream. They were the ghosts of conformity, of blind adherence to the pointless rituals of their traditions, of self-doubt and the lack of objective identity. They rose from the non-stop attacks on you for what they could never grasp or be - Men. They never thought you would do what they never had the guts to do: Explore an idea or concept to its' logical conclusion in order to ascertain the truth."

"Well... 'You found it' friend. It did not take you long to realize the complete dichotomy of two thoroughly contradictory philosophies. Since you had always followed the one (Although not fully aware of its' basis) and now believed that because of it you were facing a horrible end, you rushed in panic into the arms of the other, but not before you took your accusers along with you. Only then did you see their real nature and the nature of what they preached. Yet even then you continued to take the blame for their crimes against you." Even then you showed more guts than their idol - you actually took the responsibility to kill yourself rather than have others do it for you."

"I am grateful for all the enlightenment, my brainy friend, but what is the answer?" asked Scrooge. What really am I? Everyone goes on yelling about what is wrong with the world, that everything should be changed; yet never provide any concrete plan for what to replace it with. I've been to Parliament", a cynical Scrooge rebutted.

"Perhaps we should then begin at the beginning", replied the brain.

"That is what I've always thought", returned Scrooge, then pondering for a moment, asked, "Just where is that beginning?"

"Actually there are two beginnings - One true, one false. I will begin with the false one first, since it is that false beginning that has influenced and poisoned all Human action and conduct. It is a story. A horror story. The most diabolical horror story ever told. It is set in a garden called Eden. Inhabiting this garden are two 'people' without consciousness, without identity, without volition. This is described by the bible as Human Paradise. The state of being a zombie therefore is human perfection. Before I go further I would like to point out that nowhere in the entire bible is the word brain used. The results are obvious. These two people in the garden of brainless bliss having no consciousness are therefore incapable of ascertaining the difference between right and wrong, good or evil. The 'creator' of these completely helpless things upon whom their very survival depends, then gives them a command which *absolutely* requires the ability to discern right and wrong, good and evil. After giving them this command which they have no possible way of comprehending, he turns them loose in the garden with another creature of his own making. This creature is fully conscious. The all knowing, all seeing, all present 'creator' must therefore be completely aware of this circumstance *and of the ultimate consequence*. When the helpless unsuspecting *things* through no fault of their own are led to disobeying the command, the 'creator' condemns them to a life of hard labor and then death. A thing that is not conscious cannot possibly understand a conscious command, and therefore cannot be held accountable for *any* action or inaction. Imagine a doctor giving a comatose patient a command and when the command is not obeyed he pulls the plug. The 'Creator', obviously, is a pathetic, hopelessly sadistic and irredeemable madman. If power over others corrupts and absolute power over others corrupts absolutely.... God is the guilty party of this scenario, not the non-Humans. God is not a concept. God is anti-concept. An invalid floating abstraction that obliterates concepts. *That is the original sin*.

"This story is the obliteration of sanity, values, justice, self identity and determination. Praxeologically speaking it is the concentrated essence and source of all evil - *And they teach this to children*. It is from this complete metaphysical meltdown that the putrid sewer of unspeakable obscenities called the bible proceeds - Incest to

populate and repopulate the world (After mass murder); the joy of smashing babies against rocks; the burning alive of a virgin daughter to please god; the outright degradation of women, including the rape of an adolescent girl on her first ovulation; the endorsement of slavery and how to beat them by the 'savior', and my personal favorite, the demons who come from *heaven* to murder babies for crimes their elders commit. These demons, alas, must be aided by mortals in this task because they are apparently too stupid to tell the difference between Hebrew babies and Egyptian ones. And oh yes, be sure not to boil any baby goats in their own mother's milk, which is the actual Tenth Commandment."

"I think I understand the scenario", said Scrooge, "Could we move on to the true beginning?"

"Indeed. Let us go and look at the real garden that man came from. A place they fought to get out of and not return. Let us go back and observe what people were like at the dawn of consciousness. A little trip back in time and then move forward from there. You are an intelligent man, Ebenezer; therefore I believe you will draw some intelligent conclusions."

"Another trip! How exciting! This should be a snap for me. After all, I am sort of an old hand at this sort of thing. I suppose that this is the mental serum for all the poison I've been injected with."

"You do catch on quickly my good man and I do mean *good* man. Shall we?" the flashing object asked eagerly.

"I do not believe that delay in any task is for the good. Lets." Scrooge asserted.

A brilliant flash of light enveloped the room and the walls and furniture disappeared in the glare.

When the sudden energy of the light fell to more discernable level and Scrooges' retinas re-acclimated, he found himself standing on a rocky crest in the bitter cold overlooking a snow covered forest that rose and fell over a hilly terrain.

"To where have we come?" Scrooge inquired to the mind.

"We are in France, circa 10,000 B.C.", answered the brain.

"! 0,000 B.C.? I thought the world was created in 4004 B.C.", said Scrooge bewildered.

"Well...they have a little trouble with their math, it being the product and tool of reason and all."

"Scrooge surveyed the landscape around him and commented, "This is the true paradise? Nice view and all, but not my idea of a holiday resort, especially not for all of eternity." Then pausing for a moment asked, "And where are your Adam and Eve?"

"They are right around the corner, there, take a look for yourself."

Scrooge turned and walked a few steps until he came to an opening in the side of a rock wall. "A cave entrance", he thought to himself. He paused with uncertainty at the entrance and asked, "In here"? as if to say, "You want *me* to go in *here*?"

"Go ahead, go on in and take a look around, don't be afraid anyone or anything inside won't be able to see you anyway."

Scrooge bent over to keep from hitting his head on the low entrance. Inside yielded enough headroom to stand, but what the exact dimensions of the space were he could not determine because of the darkness. On ahead though, he could see a glow of light emanating from what appeared to be a small fire in the distance and surmising that this was his goal, cautiously proceeded toward it. When he wasn't stumbling over the uneven rocky floor, he was slipping on the slimy dampness that was everywhere he stepped or laid a hand for balance. The cave had the cool dank smell of permanent moisture and little ventilation that chilled him to his bones. He slowly moved closer to the fire and as he did so the sooty particles of it began to make his eyes burn. Then suddenly out of nowhere some small creature darted across the floor in front of him and startled him. He darted to one side and tripped over a stalagmite jutting up from the cave floor. When he gathered his senses about him he found that he had ungraciously fallen into a pile of excrement. Human.

He also noted that the closer he got to the fire the more fetid the atmosphere became. In fact, by the time he reached the fire it had become a stiflingly rancid mixture of excrement, decayed flesh and unwashed humanity. There, creatures stooped and huddled together around the fire. He recognized them as human, but he had never seen human beings in such a pitiful abject state as this. They were clothed, partially, in insect ridden animal skins. Their exposed flesh revealed a variety of bruises, sores and cuts. Their hair was filthy and matted. Physically they were of small but stocky in stature and looked somewhat undernourished. One held his jaw and moaned, sounding to Scrooge as though he had an abscessed tooth. Scrooge felt for the man, because it did not look like there was a whole lot of morphine lying around or a dentist within ten thousand years of the place. The man would have to endure his condition until the tooth simply rotted out or he could somehow yank it out himself. Scrooge observed the dental condition of the rest of them. All were missing teeth to one degree or another and most had reddened or inflamed gums. He then perused the general physical condition of the rest. One man had an arm that bent in an unnatural fashion, probably the result of a broken bone that had healed unset. Another was missing an eye; another an ear. Scrooge noted how weather-beaten their faces were, how wrinkled their skin. Most of all was the look in their eyes he kept coming back to. They were not animal-like, they were too aware for that. Yet they had the fearful alertness of one who does not live day by day, but second by second.

Looking at one who appeared to be the oldest and around whom the others seemed to be arrayed, perhaps the leader of this band, Scrooge tried to measure his age. "Seventy? Eighty?" he thought to himself. Scrooge then turned around toward the brain and asked, "How old do you suppose that one is?"

"He is not yet thirty years of age", was the matter of fact reply.

"Scrooge looked back at the source of his misjudgment, staring at him for some time in disbelief, then asked, "Doesn't the bible teach that Adams' descendants lived to be nine hundred years of age?"

"Yes it does. No they did not. It just seemed like nine hundred years."

"What can be done for their lot?" a pitying Scrooge inquired.

"Nothing that in time they will not do for themselves. They are up against a brutal world and their journey therein will be difficult. In time though, they will conquer their environment and rule the world because they possess the greatest breakthrough nature has yet attained. They possess a weapon more powerful than all the claws, talon, fangs and diseases arrayed against them. They have a brain which allows them volitional, independent action. They have risen above the preset instinctual codes that force all other living things to react in a preset manner that allows for little if any deviation. They have broken the chains of absolute inert uniformity. *They are able to think and act as individuals.* They are aware of their own identity. They are awake. They can *see*. They are the greatest breakthrough in the history of life in it's struggle for survival- A life form that can act independently. A life form that does not react to changing forces, but one that can act to change those forces for its' own purposes and ends. A life form that does not depend on mass reproduction, instinct or requires a specialized food source or environment. A life form that can literally grasp any physical object or abstract concept and shape it into anything it so desires. *Desires.* *Desires.* A life form that for the first time that lives by the rejection of the pragmatic and has the ability to plan ahead. Programmed uniformity is the process by which animals and vegetables live. *Individuality is the state of a Human Being.* Man, as some claim, is not a mutant that acts against nature and life. Man is the greatest and most glorious crowning achievement of life", said the brain proudly blazing with light.

"Then these people will rise above this squalor?" asked Scrooge.

"You are proof of that. You are their successful descendant", answered the brain.

"Not much of a paradise at this point though", observed Scrooge.

"Not to any truly caring eyes it isn't. It is however a perfect Christian state of being. A perfectly anti-materialistic, poverty stricken existence filled with pain. Unfortunately for these people though, they are sinners in Christian judgment because they do not believe in willing self-denial."

"It seems so bleak at this juncture though. How will they find their way out?" asked Scrooge.

"Their thirst for knowledge combined with the ability to use it when they discover it will lift them out of their near animal existence. They will find that the earth will provide them with all the essentials to create all those rotten and fleeting worldly goods that you were told to renounce. Right now that very process is going on outside this very cave. Come. Observe."

Scrooge made his way out more easily than when he had entered, now that he had the knowledge of the path he had previously traced. Outside the entrance he scanned the area around him, not exactly sure what it was he was supposed to observe. Then he detected movement to one side and turned towards it. Not very far down the hill he could see a young girl moving about collecting tree bark, branches and the like. Scrooge decided that she must be rounding up fuel for the meagre fire inside the cave.

"Their fire was made by accident", said the light. Lightning had struck a tree and had set fire to it last fall and they had had the good fortune to chance upon it. They have been nursing it precariously ever since."

Scrooge looked on while the girl roamed to and fro on her vital mission, collecting what she could. She had worked her way unseen too close to a deer in the brush. When the girl had gotten to within mere feet of the animal it suddenly caught notice of her and bolted. As startled as the stag, the girl looked up stunned. As the animal sped away its' hooves struck some rocks, clicking them together and making a spark. The animal took no notice of it. The girl did. She walked over curiously to the pile of stones and kicked them. Nothing happened. She picked one up and threw it down onto the pile. Nothing happened. She stepped back and studied the specimens in front of him for a moment. She then picked one up that was different from the rest and examined it. Then she picked up another one like it and clapped them together. Nothing happened. She clapped them together again, much harder this time. They produced a spark. She tried it again with the same result. Then again. She stopped. Ignoring the cold she stood staring at them in her hands for some time, not moving. Suddenly she turned and ran frantically toward the cave and disappeared inside.

"Her abstract causal connection will make this Christmas much warmer for those inside. This ability is the *true* source of all presents, Christmas or any day of the year", instructed the Light. "You see, she is of the first conscious beings - A Women. Biologically, she is not of Adams' rib. He is of Eves'. All vertebrates are inherently *Female*. All eggs are female. Not Male. Males are the variation of Females. Not the other way around. Behind the vicious story to suppress Mans' conscious ability is another obscene brutality - Which we have for millennia been deprived the free creative thinking of half the minds on Earth."

Scrooge nodded in the affirmative and said, "Let us leave this paradise, I want to learn more."

The scene disappeared in brilliant flash of light.

When the light abated, Scrooge stood shivering, not from cold, but from the transition from cold to warmth. He found himself in an expansive green garden of blossoming shrubs, flowers and giant oriental plane-trees whose broad leafy branches shaded the ground on which he stood. Above him was a brilliant blue sky where puffy white decorator clouds floated by on the breeze. To the west was the bustle of a vibrant city above which rose a commanding hill on which stood monuments of Pentelic marble gleaming with the reflection of the mid-day sun. A few yards away, under a statue of Apollo, was a small framed Man in his early fifties wearing an almost overly ornate embroidered robe. He spoke in a high and shrill yet commanding voice as he paced ceaselessly to and fro, gesturing with his hands as he went. It seemed to Scrooge that the energetic movements of his body were driven as one with the energy of his mind. Sprawled out before him on the lawn was a group of young men, rapt with attention. Scrooge observed that at their age most would be daydreaming about being someplace else, but these young men looked as though they were at the place they had been dreaming about. He then realized that this was a class and the Man their teacher.

Scrooge focused his mind on the lecture of the teacher.

"The educated are to the ignorant as the living are to the dead, therefore, do not wait for those who are behind you, but rather press upon those who are in advance of you. Sight receives light from the air surrounding it, and in like manner, the soul receives light from science."

A raised hand asked, "Master, what is hope?" "The dream of a waking man", replied the teacher. "Remember, the root of learning is bitter, but its' fruit is sweet", he continued. Another inquisitive hand questioned, "Master, what then is the axiom to guide us in the quest for knowledge?" "The guide for the inquisitive rational mind and the rule of all knowledge is this mathematical equation: *Alpha isos Alpha*. A thing equals itself. A thing cannot be another thing at the same time. If it did, it would contradict its very existence and existence itself, and *contradictions do not exist*: $\sim (P \wedge \sim P)$. As well, as a part cannot contradict itself, neither can it contradict the whole."

"Amen!!" exclaimed Scrooge applauding before he realized it. "Where are we?! Who is this Man?!" He asked out loud to no one and everyone. The light shone brightly, "We are at the crossroads of History, and this is the Lyceum, near Athens, 330 B.C... The Man you see before you is the first man to collect a library. He was the first man to make a study of animals and to attempt a classification of living creatures. He is the inventor of the art of logic. He is the originator of categories. He is the beginning of physical science. He taught the first approach to a rational theory of the world, or, at least suggested that by observation alone can man learn of his body or of his mind. His thinking, like so many pioneers had flaws. He stated incorrectly "That Man is a political animal". It would take centuries before it was truly found that Man is an *economic* animal. His syllogistic 'logic' merely gives rise to useless mental gymnastics. Science is not argumentative. But he established the tenets of causality and identification. That reality is real. He taught the world how to think. His name is Aristotle (384 - 322 BC).

Aristotle's greatest contribution was that he established the primacy of existence over consciousness. He taught that existence is immutable and objective, but is graspable and knowable by the subjective conscious. This is the law of identity. This was in direct refutation of his predecessor Plato (427 - 347 BC), who established the philosophical basis for all mystic thought - The primacy of consciousness over existence. To Plato the objects of existence were merely a chimera behind which were "Forms" which were beyond actual definition. He... "Assumed that reality must conform to the content of consciousness, not the other way around, based on the assumption that the presence of any concept in consciousness proves the existence of a corresponding referent in reality." That opened the door to any subjective illusion/delusion that takes the place of, and covers up, actual reality. Reality then became a subjective rather than an objective. In other words: anything goes. These are two utterly divergent philosophical views. Which one will the world and especially the West choose? Unfortunately the latter. Let us now go forward to see the result."

"Let us then", accepted Scrooge. They were gone in an instant.

The radiance flared once more and when Scrooges' eyes refocused he found himself still shivering, but this time in the middle of a slovenly group of thatched roofed huts that could only be charitably described as dwellings for human inhabitants. A steady rain fell from the leaden sky above that joined the rain that had already fallen in rivers of muck that passed for streets and alleys. Here and there ran a scrawny chicken or a squealing pig, as well as a fat rat that scurried to safety underneath one of the huts. What light there was that came from the dwellings flickered feebly through the cracks in the doors, there being no windows. Scrooge stood wet and cold in this strange place and thought that if he had to stay here it would have been better if the beam had held.

He then heard faint noises coming from the distance and looked up toward them. On a hill above the cluster of shacks stood what appeared to be an old manor house, by far and away more sturdily designed and built than those it overlooked. Nearby it were a church and a graveyard. Sloshing their way down the road from the church toward the village was a modest group of people, their heads bent down against the weather, walking mostly in single file. Their demeanor and dress led him to easily conclude that these were indeed the inhabitants of the village.

Scrooge turned to his electric guide and asked, "Don't tell me, its Christmas services they have been attending."

"Actually, two masses were given this day- Christmas and funeral", said the light sadly.

"Where and when are we?" asked Scrooge.

"Merry Olde England. 1000 A.D.", was the reply. "The priest has just 'celebrated' a lovely pair of masses. Not that these people could really discern that given the fact that it was not in their native language and the fact that there are

no books of Latin or any other kind around; not that they would have time to read them anyway due to the fact that they have all they can do to keep themselves alive for the thirty odd years of their miserable life expectancy."

"Are you saying that in eleven thousand years since our cave friends, and thirteen hundred years since Aristotle that there has been no improvement in the quality and length of life?" Scrooge asked in disbelief.

"No. They have chosen Plato in the form of Paul", replied the light.

"What are they then, these peasants, and how did they come to this state?" asked Scrooge.

"They are the feudal serfs of the landowner who resides in yon manor house. More importantly, they are the serfs to the terrible philosophies of mysticism and self-sacrifice, and their derivative political ideology", said the light.

Scrooge was about to ask another question when he was preempted by the people now entering the village. He observed them as they broke off from one another to enter their respective hovels; thinking to himself that being inside would be little different from being outside, as the questionable structures appeared to give little real protection from the elements. He walked over to one of them and peered through a generous crack in the wall and looked about. The rain was leaking in from the roof down onto the mud and straw mixture that passed for a floor. There were no real beds, as such, just piles of straw batched together. Scrooge shuddered as he thought of what other creatures also used them for beds. The family, such as it was, sat about the crudest shape of a wooden table and ate what passed for nourishment with their hands. They wore tattered homespun rags, and displayed a tattered demeanor that hardly displayed the ideal of a joyous celebration. Scrooge thought about the other ideals that were taught of this time- Fair ladies and shining knights and of chivalry that were supposed to be the mark of this age. All he saw was an open sewer of misery.

"The fourth this month", said the man in the group.

"Yes, but that little child was luckier than most, dying on Christmas day and all. The lord will receive her all the more", returned the women.

The husband belched some grog he had just downed and muttered, "Won't be the last. With the wretched harvest and early winter and the lord and the priest taking more and more grain to fatten themselves. They get their share no matter how bad the harvest is!"

"We should fear not", replied the woman, "Christ is coming soon to take us all from this earthly prison, and without the lord and the priest we might not guide ourselves properly. We might not be able to enter the other world. You must simply have more faith."

"The husband downed some more ale and belched again. Then he looked up and struck the woman across the face with the back of his hand and yelled, "Silence wench! Get me some grog! Keep your place and keep your mouth shut! We need food not faith or we'll all be dead soon!" During all this the two children in the hut had scurried from the table and huddled together to protect themselves from the cold, the oft to belligerent demeanor of their father, and to help ignore the all too familiar pangs of a less than full stomach.

"What lesson is to be derived from this, my shining friend?" asked Scrooge.

"Do you remember the book of revelation in the bible Ebenezer?"

"Yes I do", replied Scrooge. "At the end of the world, at the appointed hour, mankind would face terrible tribulations for it's sins and Christ would return to judge them and rule for a thousand years."

"Well Ebenezer, look about you, for that is exactly what has happened. Christ has returned and this is his kingdom. The great civilizations of Greece and Rome, with their man-made laws, science and Aristotelian reason are gone. The City of Man is no more - it lies in ruin and with it prosperity and peace. Rome was powerful, but as always seems to be the case the parasites and the rats have overwhelmed the thinkers and the builders, but as in your case Ebenezer, they went too far and now no one has prosperity because they have simply never understood where prosperity springs from. Great as she was, Rome could not withstand the threefold assault arrayed against her- The

savages at her borders, the politicians in her treasury and the overthrow of reason by oriental altruistic mysticism, aided by the precursor of Platonic illogic."

"So the evil that men supposedly did has been washed away and along with it the roots - Mind and money and trade and the free exchange of ideas that naturally flows from it. The 'City of God' has finally been established on Earth. The church and its' spiritual altruism has replaced men and their objective physical law, and has become the ruling force for almost seven centuries up to this time, and along with it disease, pestilence, superstition, oppression, abject poverty and crushing ignorance. The Millennium in all its' exalted glory has arrived."

"The middle ages comprise a period of almost twelve hundred years, from the conversion of Constantine in 313 A.D. to the close of the fifteenth century. Of this long period six centuries, from the end of the fifth (The fall of Rome in 476 A.D.) to the end of the eleventh century, are usually called the 'dark ages', from the general lack of knowledge and culture by which they are marked in the history of mankind in Europe since the rise of civilization. Long before the territory of the Roman Empire became almost wholly occupied by the barbarian tribes, a general indifference to education and literature had spread amongst the inhabitants of the Roman world. A lethargy existed as to the acquirement of learning, the existence of which was both proved and uselessly combated in the laws enacted by Constantine, Julian, Theodosius and other emperors for the encouragement of learned men and the promotion of liberal education. They were seemingly unaware that it was their other policies that fomented the need for these very enactments. When such enactments as these are required in a society which has once been highly cultivated, the degradation of man's intellect has already reached a low point and is sure to go lower still. There was even a danger that the light of learning should be quite extinguished by the destruction or decay of the books existing then only in manuscript and reproduced at greater cost and trouble than in times when the general love of literature had caused the employment of bodies of rapid and skillful transcribers. One cause of the decay of learning was the general neglect of the so-called pagan literature, containing the highest models of literary art, by the Christian church. Some of the early fathers of the church were, indeed, men of considerable acquirements in these matters, but there was a general aversion felt among Christians for 'heathen' letters and a general contempt for physical science, which was held to be opposed to 'revealed' truth. In its' earliest stage, moreover, the system of monasticism, founded upon the ascetic enthusiasm of austere recluses, was hostile to literary culture. The temporary ruin of civilization on this literary side was completed in the occupation of Gaul, Italy and Spain by the untutored barbarians of the Teutonic world. They knew nothing of learning themselves and they soon reduced nearly all around them to the same level. These intelligent tribes of the central and northern parts of the continent could not fail to observe that the arts of civilization had not preserved the Roman Empire from corruption of morals or conquest in arms, and they despised all attainments which appeared to be incompatible with success in war."

"The mental state of these dark ages is well exhibited in the superstitious beliefs which prevailed. In the tenth century it was believed that the world was to come to an end with the year 1000 A.D. The judgment of heaven was appealed to in ordeals and judicial combats. Imposters and fanatics raved about Europe, declaring themselves to be divine prophets, and drew many after them into riotous folly. So-called miracles abounded, and had multitudes of believers. The dark ages were times when reason was degraded, morals were loose, and lawlessness was rife. Judicial perjury was one of the commonest of crimes. A passion for field-sports caused much oppression of the peasantry by the nobles and a generally backward state of agriculture, since the leveling of forests, the draining of morasses and the elimination of dangerous animals were forbidden by the landed aristocracy, who wanted game preserves for their pleasure instead of corn fields for their true and lasting profit. For five or six centuries the finest regions of Europe were unfruitful and desolate. There is no trace of manufacture beyond what was needed to supply the wants of the immediate neighborhood. In the ninth century even kings had their clothes made by the women upon their farms. Extended traffic there could be none, amidst the general ignorance of mutual wants, the peril of robbery in conveying merchandise and the certainty of extortion. In the domains of every feudal lord a toll was to be paid in passing his bridge, or along his highway, or at his market. Thus enterprise was stifled in the birth and trade perished in the making. The worst of the feudal masters of the European world were not satisfied with the robberies of fiscal extortion, but came down openly from their castles to plunder wealthy travelers, or shared the gains of the highway robbers whom they protected in their infamous misdeeds. Travelers were seized and sold as slaves, or held as ransom and the Venetians purchased the luxuries of Asia by supplying the markets of the Saracens with slaves. The subversion of the Roman Empire of the west thus led from ignorance to superstition, from superstition to lawlessness and vice and thence to general rudeness and poverty.

"Between the eleventh and fifteenth centuries we have a time of revival and of recovery from the state of degradation and poverty in Europe. The darkness grows fainter, the twilight comes, the sky reddens, and at last the sun bursts forth amidst the lingering mists of prejudice and ignorance and superstition. The rise and growth of important towns are at once signs of reviving civilization. With the advent of Teutonic nations the Roman towns had decayed, because the new inhabitants of the old Roman world were not fond of the restraints of existence within walled enclosures. As civilization was developed in new forms the old towns recovered their former importance and new towns everywhere arose. Many were founded in Germany by the emperors of the Saxon dynasty and the growth of commerce was a powerful agent in creation and development of new centers of population and wealth. Some of these new or revised cities became powerful and independent commonwealths playing a great part in the history of the middle ages.

"Towns were in many cases were the result of reaction and protest against feudal violence. As vassals gathered for protection around the castles of feudal lords and around monasteries and churches; towns had their beginnings in hamlets. The inhabitants then became burghers, dependent on the lords of the castles or on monastic bodies. Unions and confederations also arose among those who were connected in the cultivation of the soil in particular districts. They agreed to render to each other such aid and service as they had been obliged to render to their feudal lord. The first thing was to erect a tower with a bell, to be rung as a signal to meet for defense and so kind of a crude militia was formed. Then a municipal government was instituted, with magistrates, a common treasury and (Unfortunately) the imposition of taxes and tolls. Thus grew the reviving sense of freedom. Then trenches were dug and walls were built for defense and along with the security handicrafts found a home. Artisans rose to a higher position than that of tillers of the ground, who were forcibly driven to work; the artisan, moreover, had a skill and an activity of his own. At first artisans required leave from the liege lord to sell their work and earn something for themselves; for the privilege of selling their wares they paid a certain sum, besides giving part of their gains to the baronial exchequer. In the early days of the new towns the nobility imposed rents for houses and tolls on imports and exports and exacted money for safe conduct from travelers. As the rising communities grew in wealth and strength all these feudal rights were bought from the nobles or cession of them was exerted by force; by degrees the towns acquired independent jurisdiction and freed themselves from taxes, tolls, and rents and each place was fairly started on a new and prosperous career. The trading class then divided itself into guilds with particular rights and obligations. Thus did the cities grow, in many cases, to be independent republics- In Italy, in the Netherlands, in Germany and France.

"Slowly then did man bring himself back to the light of reason, rejecting the horrors of supernatural revelation and faith as means for acquiring knowledge and replaced them instead with the information gathered by his senses and integrated them using his own mind. Money which had almost entirely gone out of use returned and with it trade and commerce and as a natural consequence individualism and liberty. The light of the renaissance is merely a reflection of the light given off by the Human mind, like the moon that reflects the brilliance of the sun, there cannot be one without the other. The great light which pulled mankind out of the quagmire of altruistic cruelty and tyranny, bringing back with it the study of physical science, the free exchange of ideas, Aristotelian philosophy and the benefits that arise there from, came back to life by the grace of the power of the Human mind to ask- **WHY!**

"Any observations my good Ebenezer? Asked the light.

"Yes", said Scrooge, "It seems to me that the apologists should just simply apologize."

"A poignant observation, my good man. You do catch on so very quickly". Beamed the light.

"As you can see, when men were free of the impossible chains of mysticism and the blight that accompanies it, they were able to open their eyes and their minds, and when they had done so to discover a world of wonders around them, and be able to say- How good it is to live! Once free they began to examine themselves and the world with the inestimable measure of reality. They subsequently explored the earth, established the first workable scientific method, and debated the nature of man and his proper role in the universe, and the role, if any, of government. Their culture exploded, art thrived anew, and their population raised, their life expectancy climbed. In other words, with the mind and its' great tool of exchange, money, reemerging, both the quality and quantity of their life increased. All this by a change in their philosophy, away from the mind and life strangling practice of self-denial toward the life giving philosophy of self-worth and self-realization."

"Unfortunately, the many poisonous philosophies that I earlier talked about did not go away, in fact, because they were now better fed by a more industrious earth, some began to thrive, while others ran like the vampires they were, into the shadows to await a time when they could feed again on Humans and live even better on the newfound prosperity. For now though, Man would go forward on the momentum of the reborn brain, and its' engine of exchange and progress- Money. The whys kept coming, and with them a multitude of answers that led to even more whys and more answers, but Man was still threatened by the slime in the shadows, and the prejudices of thousands of years, threatened because they had not yet discovered the name nor the nature of the philosophy that was saving them and letting them thrive, and when they began to, and it was attacked, they failed to properly stand up and protect it, and therefore themselves."

"What is the name of this great and vital code?" asked Scrooge.

"Let us go where it reached its' greatest brilliance and suffered its' greatest attacks. Then I will tell you, and more importantly- show you." returned the light.

"Please! Not a moment's hesitation!" cried Scrooge, with a child's enthusiasm.

"The brilliance filled Scrooge's eyes, and the scene disappeared in the glare..."

CHAPTER THREE: THE MAN OF CHRISTMAS PRESENT

When the light had abated, and Scrooge had adjusted, he looked about himself with a mild yet friendly shock. He was in the familiar confines of the London Stock Exchange. Judging by the modest decorations placed about, then confirmed by a desk calendar, he observed that it was Christmas Eve. Ever the more, it was afternoon yet, and there was business still to be done. Scrooge watched the many faces, a good deal of them known to him, as they hurried to and fro on their appointed missions. He listened to the technical jargon he knew so well being barked out back and forth and closed his eyes and let the voices merge into one harmonious melody that was as music to his ears. Feeling comfortably and gratefully once again at home and at ease, he spoke to himself with eyes yet closed amidst the din of activity- "Zounds! The sound is magnificent!"

Scrooge stood quietly absorbed for a moment, then slowly gathered and concentrated his thoughts, opened his eyes and looked on again at his surroundings. "Has the whole event been just a dream?" he wondered. Then he remembered and turned around. Still there was his constant companion, blazing radiance as never before.

"Welcome home Ebenezer", greeted the now vitally brilliant light. "Look about you my good man and see the greatest philosophy of life ever in its' full flower, a philosophy while even as you practiced it, never understood and were therefore unable to defend it or yourself. Gaze you my good fellow upon the true light of the world".

"The true light of the world?" returned a puzzled Scrooge.

"Yes, the true light. Jesus is supposed to have said that he was the light of the world, but that was simply myth incarnate. This house borrows not from myth, but from fact, and has given rise to a passion play far greater. As you were probably unaware, six centuries before Jesus was born, there was a Persian god who was born of a virgin birth on the 25 of December who said he was the redeemer of the world, had twelve disciples, purified with baptism, died, and after three days rose from the grave on Easter; and proclaimed that he was "The Light of the World". His name was Mithras. Something of a Persian Adonis. Adonis also was born of a virgin birth, died, and was resurrected, and proclaimed he was "The Bread of Life." For him Bethlehem, "The House of Bread" was named. As you can now see, Jesus wasn't very original."

"Here before you now, you see the real Light of the World, the real House of Bread... A house wherein men do not sacrifice, or ramble about foolishly in faith (Which means belief where no evidence exists, an open declaration of

insanity). Here they take *action*. They act as is necessary and proper according to their nature to not just survive, but to thrive. Here is the true Light of prosperity, liberty, justice and true compassion. It does not demand their austerity; it demands instead that they think. This Bethlehem is the very citadel that stands against tyranny and poverty and slavery, any of those ingredients will cause its' malfunction and downfall. This is the Bethlehem of the true deliverance and resurrection of mankind. The blind fools who attacked you, Ebenezer, as an exploiter of the working class and as an abuser of child labor are not only horrendously wrong, but seemingly oblivious to fact. Without the Industrial Revolution, which is synonymous with the revolution of the mind, there would be neither workers to exploit nor children to abuse to begin with. You see, at the outset of the Industrial Revolution around 1750 the population of England was only about six and a half million. A mere eighty years later it was over fourteen million. Industry had created life- *Abundant life*."

"The exchange you see before you is not only the greatest bastion of morality on earth- *It is morality*. As well, it is more than the destroyer of poverty, it is the pathway and the conduit through which prosperity is created, and passed on. This is because this sacred place of life is based upon a philosophy that is unlike any other. A philosophy so utterly unique that it stands alone and above all others, borrowing nothing from its' rivals, simply because it has no rivals. It is the only philosophy that not only does not contradict itself and does not contradict those who practice it. It is the philosophy that allows men to live and prosper because it is the only one that sees man as man, as he really is, and that the man it sees is profoundly unique and good. It is the only philosophy that believes that the universe is real and identifiable, not an ungraspable mystical chimera. Therefore it is the only philosophy that proclaims Mans' mind as the master of that identifiable reality, that his mind is the greatest tool ever developed by nature for changing the world and the universe around him to suit his needs, his goals and passions. It is the only philosophy that allows men to thrive in the real world because it realizes that there is no other world. It is the philosophy which stands alone in the clear light with *reason* as its' premise, dispersing all the lies and misconceptions of all the others back into the vacuum of mystical non-existence from which they come, where they cannot, nor Man cannot survive. The name of this greatest of all philosophies is - CAPITALISM."

"Capitalism is the very nature and being of man. Capitalism embraces economics because it rejects the idea that economics is the 'dull and cold science', identifying, proclaiming, and proving that Man is in fact an economic being, not a political one; and identifying that, realizes that money is the greatest tool ever developed by him for the forwarding and *protection* of his life; and that the accumulation of wealth is the proper and natural goal of Man; and is vital to his life, liberty and happiness; and is not as some would have it, an evil destroyer, or some kind of sick urge to be spit upon, shunned and suppressed. Capitalism recognizes that as goes money so goes man. Capitalism does not tell men that they are evil and flawed, and therefore that their proper state is a mindless Garden of Eden where all must line up in anonymous and unanimous adoration of a supreme dictator, be it god or state. Capitalism does not tell men just that god and state are evil, it does not pander to the idea that nature and reality will eventually blunt his every effort no matter how hard he tries, because somehow he is a misfit of nature, a fluke or a mutant that is unnatural and therefore at odds with nature. Capitalism is based on the idea, the correct idea, that Man not only has a valid place in nature and reality, but that he is the single greatest triumphant victory of both. Unlike any other concept, Capitalism is cognizant of the fact that Man is not a mindless herd of animals, that he must move as a herd; because what sets man off from other creatures is that he possesses the grace of independent and volitional action; that each person is a singular unit, and does not need nor depend upon a group; that if the herd so chooses to follow itself over the edge of a cliff, the individual can save him or herself, and the species, with the grace of being able to stand aside and not be drawn into the deadly vortex of communal suicide."

"The great genius of the free market place is that it allows each independent person to be able to test and trade their ideas and products with other independent people in an arena free of any type of coercion whatsoever. Coercion of any kind is indeed the bane of Capitalism, and therefore of Man. Coercion is replaced by an objective standard, and reward called money. Money is the most vitally important common denominator and fuel for this vibrant life giving system. It is the symbol of the value of each person. It is not merely the measure of the value of tangible goods, but the measure of the value of Mankind itself."

"The Capitalist philosophy is based upon the understanding that Mankind cannot operate or survive amidst the nebulous, the mysterious, or the shapeless. The Human mind is not suited to; nor is the universe in which it exists; an enigmatic blob with no edges; that the goals one strives for, the values one holds, and the rewards one seeks by effort, must be objectively defined, so that each person's subjective value can flourish. Thus must his tool and the

measure of his dealings with others- Money. That money is separate from or evil to man within the concept of Capitalism is ludicrous. That is because Capitalism believes that money is what defines Man and Man is what defines money- there is not one without the other. One need look no further for irrefutable proof of this than to look at any time or place where money is not used or has been subjectively degraded, thereby degrading the lives and the condition of Mankind. *Any contempt for money is contempt for Man.* Any attempt to manipulate money by fractionalizing, monetizing debt, inflating or confiscation (All of which are involuntary taxation at the point of a gun) only leads to disaster. The first goal of any enslaver, be it dictator from heaven or Earth, is to take away a person's individuality; the possession of self and property by taking control of money."

"Capitalism asserts the primacy of the individual on the axiom that a conscious individual is an autonomous, irreducible, irreplaceable, subjective, creative, finite entity that is capable of determining his or her own course in a definable world; and therefore, excepting reality, is not subservient to the will of any other entity, real or imagined. And that the only way each of these autonomous individuals can legitimately exchange ideas, art, and product, is with an undiluted, objective, verifiable value: MONEY."

"Only in the greatness that is an open and free market place are products and ideas and men given true protection and a fertile soil on which to grow. Here is where these same men, their ideas and their products are given the objective scrutiny that determines whether or not they are valid and to what degree they can succeed on true merit. Failure here though is not the end of anyone's' endeavors, here failure can be a stepping stone for future success. In this great life giving market all are able to benefit from the genius and the creativity of one and that one is rewarded by the many for his efforts, which in turn reward and enrich the whole. Here are embraced individuality, effort, creativity, ingenuity, self-reliance, selfishness, *risk taking*, value, trust, justice and liberty. Here are scorned the enemies of Mankind and its' prosperity- Enforced self-sacrifice to others, that is, slavery, faith, mysticism and their end, the will to power over others."

"Capitalism, because it is founded upon definition, therefore understands the law of definition, which in turn is the law of the universe: that being: contradictions do not exist: Capitalism allows no contradictions. Mankind has never thrived under any form of political or philosophical contradiction. Nor will they ever. Capitalism is the only concept that does not put Mankind at odds with itself. It does not, for example, preach to Man that life is evil, that people are evil, that to die is good because real life begins after death and therefore that death is life."

"While Capitalism is steadfastly black and white on what is *praxeologically* good and evil, right and wrong; it is not the rigid and stern discompassionate machine that allows for no romance as its' attackers would claim. Far from colourless, here is the place where there is more texture and colour than any rainbow that ever graced a summer sky. Here is the place more filled with the many hues of realized romances, dreams, and desires of Mankind come to life than all the wistful and stillborn fairy tales ever written."

"This is why, my dear Ebenezer, that an attack on you really constitutes an attack on business, the human spirit and therefore upon civilization itself. If the lover of money, the businessman, is lost, so is everything else lost. Before there can be medicine, the arts, exploration, abundant crops and education there first must be the entrepreneur. Money and the pursuit of it is evil they say. **BAH! HUMBUG!** Let them try to live without it and you. *They cannot.* The opposite of wealth is poverty. The opposite of life is death. It is poverty that is the greatest enslaver. By setting free the Human mind Capitalism is the greatest creator of wealth ever known; and therefore the greatest creator of freedom; and thus the greatest friend of man. Those who claim to be compassionate by attacking Capitalism are nothing of the kind; they are in fact the vilest and most discompassionate of all."

"They want you to say, Ebenezer, that you are a 'we' or a 'they' or an 'us'. Never an I. How can it be good to mindlessly slobber a creed for all in a singular mass, like the bleating of sheep? Capitalism *demand*s diversification. By rejecting the political, 'one man, one vote', and instead saying that man is not a political or social being, but an economic one; it declares- One man, one vote for *himself*. Why should we adhere to one or two or three ideas when we can have hundreds of millions? **Politics is the enemy of Mankind and the enemy of life.** Politics is in essence nothing more than a way to gain inordinate power over others. Whenever the 'will of the majority' is invoked it is the individual and his freedom that inevitably loses. Politics is born of corruption and in turn corrupts everything it touches. Politics is a *disease*. While politics usually draws the worst of men to it, it also corrupts the well intentioned that come to it (Or disillusion them and turns them into skeptics of Man). Capitalism holds that Man is an economic

being, that he is valid, that he is good, and so then are his desires, his dreams and passions. Capitalism does not hold that Man is guilty for being alive. Only the most wretched of filth hold to that creed. Whenever you here someone utter, "For the good of the people", or, "I am the servant of the public", grab a gun, and run for cover; because you can be sure that they will have many guns; and come looking for you, your life, your property, and your liberty. They may even drag you into one of their courts of 'Justice', where under their code; there can be none; before an ignorant indoctrinated jury of your 'peers'."

"Since the Seventeenth century when the entrepreneur Legendre sent the minister of Louis the Fourteenth home with the rebuff "Laissez nous faire!" the world has made more progress than ever before. The greatest progress came in the very century in which you Ebenezer Scrooge were so vehemently attacked, the Nineteenth. Witness as well that in the United States, where government was the most limited, and church was at least partially separated from state that the greatest triumphs in the history of Mankind were achieved. Let us now delve into the incredible record of those achievements accomplished with only partial Capitalism."

"In the one hundred years of the Nineteenth century the world saw greater advance in science and the arts than in all the preceding ages combined. The Human mind reels when it tries to grasp the spectacular achievements of this period, in every branch of discovery and invention. Because of their love of pure knowledge, men of gigantic intellect have sought out the mighty secrets of the universe and have raised to the sky a temple of science on ground upon which stood, a century before, only scattered and isolated stones. Close behind the worshippers of knowledge have followed the magicians of the day; chemists, engineers and electricians. At their command the spirits of air, water, earth and fire have been made to do Mans' every bidding. They propel his steamships, railway cars, and mighty engines; they make his garments; they build his houses; they illuminate his cities; they harvest his crops. For him they make ice in the tropics or grow oranges amid snow. For him they fan a heated atmosphere into cooling breezes or banish icy winds. They flash his news around the globe; they carry the sound of his voice for thousands of miles, or preserve it after he is dead. Verily the fairies and genii of old did not so much for Solomon in all his glory. *That is what to teach your children.*"

"During the Nineteenth century Man has made a messenger boy of lightening and harnessed vapor to his chariot wheels and all this he regards as a matter of course. Men and women alive in this day can remember the introduction of the first steamboat and the first locomotive. They can recall their delight at the first daguerreotype. Yet their grandchildren from their cradles have been used to electric streetcars, ocean greyhounds and kodaks."

"They are benefited by thousands of practical applications of the discoveries of wise and patient men, but do not pause to consider the wonder of it all and how new a power science is in the world."

"It is almost impossible to realize the state of science one hundred years before. All was inchoate. Great truths, germs of much that has been developed since, had been discovered and were startling the world by their novelty and their simplicity. But they stood apart, nor did man dream of science as a single rounded and connected whole. When we regard the astonishing structure that has been built since then, the materials for which have been hewn in so many forests and quarried from so many mines, it seems incredible that a single century can have witnessed so many brilliant achievements."

"Astronomy, a hundred years prior, stood foremost of the sciences, most ancient, most advanced, of them all. Job mentions Orion and the Pleiades, and the wise men of the east were reading the heavens when the star of Bethlehem supposedly blazed upon their sight. The Phoenicians steered their ships by the Polestar and followed the planets in their courses. Nevertheless, astrologers learned little that was new, as the centuries passed. Complex lenses were unknown and with the exception of the planet Uranus, discovered by Herschel in 1781, and the moons of Jupiter and Saturn, no addition had been made to the solar system since the days of the Chaldeans. As for other solar systems they were scarcely dreamed of. Aldebaran, "The fixed star, the star that changeth not"; Sirius and the rest, were but lights in the sky which exercised a weird and mysterious influence over the destinies of men and were studied by sages to that end. The beginning of the nineteenth century, 1801, saw the discovery of Ceres, the first of the asteroids, five more were found between that date and 1847 and since then more than four hundred minor planets belonging to the same system have been catalogued. The discovery of the planet Neptune, in 1846, was the result of the triumph of mathematical reasoning which confirmed the Newtonian theory. As recently as 1836 Auguste Comte had maintained that the measurement of distances of the stars was impossible, the Newtonian theory

incapable of proof and the chemical composition of the stars must forever remain a mystery to Mankind. Three years after this dictum, Bessel had measured the distance of the star sixty one Cygni and Newton's theory was abundantly proved. Then with the invention of the spectroscope, combined with the discovery of spectrum analysis, enables us even to study stellar chemistry."

"At the beginning of the nineteenth century we knew so little about the chemistry of our own world that oxygen was a brand new discovery. Since then, what vast advances have been made in chemistry alone! Its range is almost boundless."

"Spectacular, indeed, is the progress which was made in the physical sciences during the nineteenth century. Three achievements alone are sufficient to crown the age with glory. These are the doctrines of the molecular constitution of matter, the determination of the mechanical equivalent of heat, leading to the theory of the conservation of energy; and the doctrine of evolution discovered by Darwin."

"One discovery leads to another and science has been applied to a myriad of practical uses. One hundred years before man possessed the germ of electricity which was developed into a wonder during the century. At the outset it was regarded as little more than a costly toy. Then the telegraph, the Trans Atlantic cable, the electric railway, the telephone, the phonograph, the gramophone, the telautograph, the kinoscope and the Roentgen rays. These are things and words and ideas unheard and undreamed of a hundred years earlier. Now this electricity rings bells, opens and locks doors, lights and heats buildings, drives fans, works sewing machines, does cooking and moves elevators. It is even used to illuminate Christmas trees, the symbol which stands against Human independence and ingenuity, lit by the product of Human independence and ingenuity- There is no excuse for this."

"Steam is another giant which was a puny infant in 1800. Robert Fulton, the first man to make a success of a steamboat, launched the Cleremont on August 4, 1807. It took thirty-two hours to make the trip from New York to Albany. (Napoleon Bonaparte speaking to Robert Fulton said, "What sir? You would make a ship sail against the wind and currents by lighting a bonfire under her deck? I pray you, excuse me. I have no time to listen to such nonsense.") Ocean 'greyhounds' now travel from New York to Liverpool in six days. Stephenson's first locomotive, built in 1814, traveled only six miles an hour. At that time there was not a single mile of railroad in the whole of the United States. By 1899 there were almost a quarter of a million."

"At the dawn of the century there was not only no electric light, but there were few lamps and little gas. As for matches, their place was filled by tinder, flint and steel. It is almost impossible to realize the darkness of the time. The methods of illumination at the end of the Eighteenth Century were almost identical with those which had been used throughout the whole of Human history. The basic lamp of one hundred years prior was constructed on the same principle as those of ancient Greece and Rome, and consisted of a clay cup containing a little melted animal fat and a fibrous wick. Torches and tallow dips were the general mode of illumination even among the well-to-do. Argand burners were introduced at the very end of the Eighteenth Century, but they were not sufficiently improved or cheapened to come into use until 1830. Gas was used for out-door illumination in 1813, when Westminster Bridge in London was first lighted by it. From there its' use spread all over the world. Man, who for ages had revered or feared gas as a demon, made it his servant and tamed it to his uses. Since Franklin caught the lightning with his kite and key, electricity, the Nineteenth Century miracle, rapidly superseded gas, bringing light into darkness. Its' searchlight penetrates the deepest caverns, explores the depths of the ocean, illuminates for the surgeon the opaque and exposes the interior mechanisms of Man without the aid of a knife. During the Nineteenth Century the practice of medicine and surgery underwent magical changes. The combined uses of anesthetics and antiseptics revolutionized surgery, robbing the knife of it's' terrors and rendering possible a multitude of difficult life saving operations. Not until 1847 did the era of anesthetics begin, enabling the surgeon to eliminate the agony of his patient. and allowing him to perform his boldest feats with quiet confidence and leisure."

"All these achievements, however, pale compared to the greatest scientific breakthrough of the Nineteenth and all other centuries previous- The establishment of the doctrine of evolution. Through it the mental horizon was immeasurably expanded. Darwin's' courageous mind, more than any other in the century, advanced the light of Human understanding to spectacular heights. When the century began there were educated men who gravely maintained that fossils were 'sports of nature', 'created' already dead and petrified. As late as 1857, Gosse, the English naturalist, held that all the evidences of convulsive changes and long epochs in strata, rocks, minerals and

fossils were simply "appearances" all created at the same time. Many held that this was so because God put them there to test our faith. Men will go to any length in the defense of a bias."

"Many has been the centuries' discoveries in the field of biology and enormous their influence on the practice of medicine. The discoveries of the cell theory and the science of embryology, the germ theory of disease and the nature and function of the white blood corpuscles or leucocytes have all were turned to account. Men such as Pasteur and Koch devised ways to render powerless the most dreaded zymotic diseases and put to flight the deadly bacilli."

"At the dawn of the century the sciences of Man, language and societies were yet unborn. Questions as to the antiquity of Man had not yet arisen. The figures of speech of Moses were interpreted literally and the universe was believed to have been created exactly as it is now, only six thousand years prior. Now we know that its' origin goes back through aeons of time. Anthropology, philology, sociology and economics are all children of the Nineteenth Century, and attained full stature in that one hundred years through the triumph of the comparative method of study. The history of the growth of articulate speech and of all language was sought and found, as was the history of the development and growth of most of the customs and institutions of Man. Not only have the stories of the ancient civilizations on the banks of the Tigris, the Euphrates and the Nile been traced out for us in bewildering detail, but we have been made conversant with the minutest particulars of the life of pre-historic man. With pick and spade the devotees of anthropology and archeology laid bare the secrets of old mother earth."

"Perhaps the most profound of events of the nineteenth century, which would have overwhelming consequences in the Twentieth century, was Charles Babbage's (1792-1871) invention of the computer. In the 1820s he developed the Difference Engine, and in the 1830s the Analytical Engine. In 1832 he published the 'Economy of Machines and Manufacturers'."

"While one army of workers examined the past ages, others were solving the problems of the present. Slavery was finally abolished amongst civilized nations (In spite of biblical teachings), and slave traffic was driven from the high seas. Education, both elementary and higher, is now an established fact in enlightened countries. Although the theocracies, following biblical teachings, still ban women from reading. Colleges and universities place a thorough education within the reach of every young man or women willing to take the trouble to attain it. Comfortable hospitals under the management of expert physicians and capable nurses open their doors to the sick. Insanity is dealt with as a disease and not as a crime. Finally, with the bible swept aside and government placed in check, the deaf hear; the dumb speak; and the blind are well-nigh as efficient as those who see. Libraries in every town of any importance yield the treasures of the great minds of all ages to all. The price of books in the Nineteenth Century is so low that every working man may possess his own library. Lithography and the engraved illustrate ten cent magazines with pictures that fifty years before were beyond the reach of all save the enlightened rich. He who now wishes to present his likeness to a friend has the sun for a painter and is no longer obliged to pay hundreds of dollars for a portrait. The news of the world may now be had for a penny within a few hours of its' happening, and for a few cents private letters are carried by steam to the antipodes."

"Not the least among the achievements of the Nineteenth Century is what was done for the farmer and through him for the hungry world which he feeds. A hundred years ago wooden plows were in use that were not dissimilar from the one driven by Elisha. At that time there were no reaping machines. In the heat of midsummer, with no protection from the broiling sun, the working men of the world gathered the harvest, sickles in hand, while the women crept after them, kneeling while they bound the sheaves. So trying was the work that double wages were paid for harvesting and farmers engaged their men months ahead of time. A little more than fifty years of American invention changed all this. Seedtime and harvest are no longer the dreaded task as machinery invented by the free mind has come to the rescue. Since 1800 farmers had gone from sweating out a few acres of land to feed their own family or a small community to feeding the world and toiling behind horse-drawn hand plows to riding comfortably on harvesters that do the work of twenty men. In 1800 there was no farm manufacturing industry in existence; by 1899 factories were turning out 150,000 self-binding harvesters a year."

"And on and on and on; bridges built over chasms nobody thought possible to cross, tunnels cut through mountain ranges that faith never dented, mile after mile of canals dug where ships and barges transport people and goods to places thought unreachable; the Suez Canal is built linking whole oceans; oil and gold fields discovered. Science,

commerce, exploration, discovery and civilization all had their boundaries exploded. What one hundred centuries of magic, religion, empire, war, monarchy, and all other attempts to control and subjugate the mind of Man failed to do; *free* minds competing in *free* markets did in *one. Credo Quia Certum!*"

"Ebenezer Scrooge, this is your true legacy. This is what you, and your cohorts in Capitalism are spit on for: Using your mind with inductive reasoning as your guide; and money and yourself as your standard of value; and in doing so raising the well being of every Man, Woman, and Child on Earth to levels heretofore undreamed of. For curing disease; for spreading culture, and art; for establishing *true* justice; for educating the ignorant; for championing the rights, and the efficacy of the individual. How can anyone still say that there is more romance and glory in prayer than in rational action? How can anyone still say that the realization of dreams is the "will of the Majority", and not the freedom of the individual mind? How can anyone still say that Man is a tragic actor on an inescapable stage, when it is he who builds the stage, and writes the play? How can anyone still say that need shall be the measure, when it is greed that satisfies all the needs? How can anyone still say that knowledge is a sin; and the mind of Man is evil; when it is that mind and it's ability to acquire knowledge that keeps them alive? How can anyone still say that faith is the gateway to salvation; and that logic is a stumbling block to man when it is logic that keeps coming to rescue Mankind from the wreckage created by faith? Yet in spite of the overwhelmingly irrefutable evidence that slaps them in the face- they do. And so next to a factory a church is built- the church that could not possibly be built without the profits from the factory. And soon after the university is founded that teaches mysticism in it's philosophy and economics departments, a concentration camp is filled. And across the street from the stock exchange is the office of the politician who was elected on the promise of equality for all, who now demands stricter regulation of the Capitalists who built it."

"While the greatest period in all of Human history was producing miracle after miracle, those indoctrinated in the voodoo of the past reeled from the assault on their cherished misbeliefs. They lashed out in desperation at Capitalism from all sides. Decrying the selfish greed of the Capitalists; because they simply could not stand prosperity; or hated selfishness because they hated themselves; or wanted the power over it for themselves; or just out of plain ignorance came the long line of vehement detractors- Sinclair, Dickens, Marx, Shaw, the Fabians, James, Kant, et al. All of whom wrote in or near the benevolent glory of the Nineteenth Century. The damage they caused to Mankind, and its' freedom was extensive - and *unforgivable*."

"The Authors of the Constitution of the United States made a phenomenal leap forward in the cause of Liberty. Machiavelli had licensed brutal survivability by saying - "I deem it necessary to stick to the practical truth of things rather than to fancies. Many men have imagined republics and principalities that never really existed at all. Yet the way men live is so far removed from the way they ought to live; that anyone who pursues what should be rather than what is; pursues his downfall rather than his preservation." The Authors of the Constitution said Hogwash. Their ideology was that survival was not enough. They said that Man was a rational being; and given the proper environment would *thrive*. They then pledged their "*Lives, fortunes and sacred Honor*" to establish what would be if men could determine their own course."

"Their form of limited government ("An Extended, Commercial, Federal, Democratic, Republic."- Madison.), was an attempt to balance many different forces while at the same time to grant specific unalterable rights under the Age of Reason and Deist credo "*Life, Liberty, and the pursuit of Happiness*". This was a history shattering defiance of all religion and religious sanctioned monarchies; and their tyrannical control over the Mind of Man, and *its' sanctity*. This attempt at 'rational' government, though flawed, gave men the stage necessary to vault themselves into heretofore unthinkable heights."

"However, I must repeat - Flawed. In the Twentieth Century many patriots and Pro- Constitutionalists will point to the evil forces that "betrayed", or made "end runs", around the Constitution. They point to the series of truly heinous crimes against Liberty: The 1890 Sherman Anti-Trust Act supposedly passed to end monopoly; and the so-called 'Robber Barons' control of the marketplace. Never mind that monopolies cannot exist for long in a truly free market. All the 'monopolies' and 'Robber' Barons were in fact government supported by over the table legislation brought about by under the table graft. The Sherman Anti-Trust Act was nothing more than a vehicle to make government the ultimate and lone monopoly. This set the stage for the trifecta of horrors in 1913- The Sixteenth and Seventeenth Amendments and the Federal Reserve Act - All of which require each other for existence. For the banking powers to successfully foist-off their Fractional-Reserve Perpetual Credit Expansion Fraud they first needed four things (The

same four things all governments need to survive and thrive): One- Ignorance. Ignorance and deception are the cornerstones of any fraud; be it religion, government, monetized debt, or any other form of mysticism. **Ignorance is the bane of Liberty.** Two- A controlled press. One must make people believe that it is free, anarchistic markets that cause "instability" and make people then clamor for control. Three- The elimination of property rights. "The Congress shall have the power to lay and collect taxes on incomes, from whatever source derived." That should do it. If one wants to go perpetually into debt then one must pay the interest perpetually. Four- Implement pure democracy. Democracy is mob rule. Period. *No greater form of tyranny has ever been known.* One must absolutely replace the economic ballot of the free market with the political ballot to gain total control. The original two houses of Congress were meant to balance each other, id est, the House of Representatives were directly elected by the people, or more accurately, the common man; who were more apt to be less educated, and whimsical. The Senate, however, was elected by the state legislatures and represented the landed and business interests for six years rather than the two years of the House; thus giving the Senate more stability. The Seventeenth Amendment simply made the Senator a six year Congressman - nothing more."

"Is all this the fault of nefarious forces subverting the original Constitution as it's' defenders submit? No it is not. It is the fault of the Constitution itself; because what it constitutes is Government. Make no mistake - Working with the lessons of History learned up to that time, and riding the powerful wave of Enlightenment, Age of Reason, and Deist intellectual thought, the Authors' experiment in Liberty was not just revolutionary, it was the very salvation of Mankind. But what the Authors could only guess at, "A Republic, if you can keep it"(Franklin), both Logic and History have indisputably verified- **Limited Government is an outright contradiction of concepts. GOVERNMENT CAN NOT BE LIMITED.** As well, the idea that religion can be separated from state is an oxymoron. All government is derived from the Ultimate Tyranny- Religion. Both Government and religion are *deeply* rooted in mysticism and faith. Both compete for the same end - Power over the individual's right to his or her own life. Note that most of the Pro- Constitutionals or those in favor of modifying it are religionists. They decry the secular One World Government movement, but passionately strive to replace it with a One Universe Government, under a Tyrant that is impossibly beyond reproach. For Mankind and to survive as a species both Religion and Government must be abolished as a means of Men dealing with Men."

"The Founders made the same mistake as Aristotle: They believed that Politics was a branch of philosophy. That "Man is a political animal." This is false. A pack of dogs has a hierarchy. Men are not dogs. Politics, like mysticism, is a *disease*. When men are infected by this disease they turn into dogs. Or worse - lawyers. Some believe that government is a necessity in limited form to protect property, and individual rights. They study politics as a branch of philosophy under the heading 'Study of Force'; to determine what actions under what conditions it is permissible to use force, and how much. Government, however, is neither an entity nor a vehicle which can be used to initiate force, properly or improperly - By its' very definition government *is the initiation of force*. No matter how well intended, it is inherently, like god, an anti- concept. It is not a vehicle of oppression, it *is* oppression; and can only survive by the continual expansion of force. *Alpha isos Alpha*. Until politics is replaced by praxeological economics as a branch of philosophy there will be continuous conflict and chaos."

"There are those who assert the "proper role of government". That is, law courts, and police to protect property, and individual rights. If they were kidding I would laugh. What more does a tyrant need other than the ability to make laws, render judgments, and have the guns to enforce such judgments? Property rights? Individual rights? Where is the need for a right? *Right implies that someone or something has the sanction to grant such - and therefore has the sanction to withdraw it.* A right is something that has historically had to be wrested from a tyrant. The concept of Right is derived from, and is a modification of force. By definition Property needs no such suffix; nor does the definition of Individual. One either owns one's self, and property, or they do not: No right is necessary: It is Either- Or. Self ownership needs no "Right". Self-ownership is by the grace and fact of existence. Grant a right, and the mystic priesthood of vampires known as lawyers will suck dry the blood of you and your property. Every law they create, creates a crime - millions upon millions of laws all overlapping one another until it is impossible not to commit a crime. So much for Federalist 51. The only way to separate powers is to eliminate government, and recognize each individual as sovereign. The savage tribalism of government, state, nation, nation of laws not of men, (Men make laws. The concept of "Law and Order" is an oxymoron - the more law, the less order. The Law of the lawyers is a perversion of nature.) , and rights must be eliminated before someone exercises their "Right" to use nuclear weapons. If the best form of government is the government that governs least; then the best form of

government is no government at all. If one is stranded on a deserted island the only cop handing out tickets is reality. Unless men are educated away from tribalist notions such as government and collectivism there may well be no Human Race. Politics is mysticism. There is no difference between Political Science, and Theology. None. They are both self-negating contradictions. The best defense of individuals and their property is education: education free from government and religion; and that by which they live - *coercion and force*. **The antithesis of coercion and force is Capitalism** "Religion and its' incestuously deformed child, government, are the leading cause of death for Human Beings in all of History. There is no disease, short of aging, that even comes close. In the Twentieth Century alone government will be the direct cause of more than 200,000,000 deaths; and the indirect cause of hundreds of millions more through starvation, poverty and disease caused by endless monetized debt-driven wars; and the government induced cancer holocaust. "

"Then I'm glad I wasn't born in the Twentieth Century!" exclaimed Scrooge, "It sounds dreadful."

"Yes indeed", agreed the light, "but it will be necessary for you to see life there; where reason is once again being overcome by mysticism, and hatred for the individual; and witness what happens when government takes control of the technologies invented by the independent mind, and turns them on it."

"It sounds like I'm going to miss the Nineteenth Century", lamented Scrooge.

"So will they", returned the light, "So will they."

Once again the light flared and enveloped Scrooge. They were off.

CHAPTER FOUR: THE MAN OF CHRISTMAS FUTURE

Stark cold grey sky above him; his shoes up to their laces in mud below; in front and behind him muddy walls; around him uniformed men in helmets holding rifles: men with strained apprehension in their eyes. He climbed up the muddy wall in front of him and looked out over it. Miles of open plain was all he saw. He looked left and right. Hundreds of yards of poorly dug trench filled with thousands of men. He strained his neck around while he clung to the top of the trench: cement forts with cannon and men on the parapets looking out onto the open plain ahead with binoculars.

"What? When? Where?"

"France. Verdun to be precise. February 21st 1916", came the reply from his friend. "Sit tight. You will be here for a while. It will be quite a show."

The ground underneath him trembled in a long wave vibration. A moment later came the roll of distant thunder. Then a continuous staccato of it. A few seconds later came a symphony of shrieking whistles. The men around him dove into the mud with their hands over their heads. It did them no good. Air compressing, concussive explosions burst everywhere. "Men were squashed. Cut in two or divided from top to bottom. Blown into showers; bellies turned inside out; skulls forced into the chest as if by a blow from a club." Men were "...dismembered, torn to pieces, and reduced to pulp..." Behind were massive explosions blasting apart the forts in flashes of fire. Nine hours of explosive and incendiary artillery shells fell out of the sky like rain. Literally. One million rounds in nine hours.

Then, except for the moans and cries of the wounded and dying - silence. Those still alive ignored the pleas of those who soon would not be. They grabbed their rifles and looked out over the trenches, Scrooge one of them. He saw thousands of soldiers running across the open plain toward him.

When the onrushing hoard came within range, Scrooge's newfound trench mates opened fire with rifles and machine guns. Those in the front of the charge dropped in rows. This did not, however, deter those behind them who

continued the onslaught, some even tripping and falling over the bodies of their comrades, only to be trampled themselves by those behind.

The swarming mass finally reached the trench. The two sides fought savagely at close range. They thrust bayonets into each other, clubbed each other with rifle butts, and fired point-blank into each others faces. Men slipped and fell in each others blood and entrails. Just as it seemed Scrooge's friends would gain the upper hand, men with metal canisters on their backs appeared. They lit the nozzles at the end of rubber tubes that extended from them and streams of flame shot out for yards. The trench was immediately filled with men consumed in fire; screaming mindlessly in pain.

Scrooge finally looked around to find his shining guide. Upon locating him declared, "Whatever Hell is supposed to be, it cannot be as terrible as this."

"Hell. Indeed. Provided by those who preach Heaven. And those who preach the necessity of government."

"This battle will rage for ten months. There will be seven hundred thousand casualties. A quarter of a million will die. This battle will spawn another on the Somme, where five hundred thousand more will die. Not one of these men has a personal grudge against the other. If they met each other by chance on the street they would exchange pleasantries, jokes, and hearty well wishes. But indoctrinated by the politicians and clergy to defend 'their' countries and so-called ideals, they will slaughter each other worse than animals. They will be paid one sixtieth of those who work in the factories of their respective countries, who make the uniforms, helmets, boots, guns and ammunition that make those manufacturers rich from their government contracts. They will call this endeavor by an outright oxymoron: The War to End All Wars. As if by waging war one can end it.

"War and conflict are what government thrives on. Its supposed sanction is resolving conflict or there would be no need for it. Yet government creates the very conflict which it purports to resolve; as Randolph Bourne (1886 - 1918) so poignantly expressed in his essay, *War is the Health of the State*. God and government cannot be justified unless there is some conflict to resolve, thus sanctioning subordination and sacrifice of the individual to the 'higher cause' of the 'greater good. This progresses to quickly turn natural competition into continual open conflict."

"Certainly after this horror people will cease to endorse this kind of thinking." said Scrooge with wry understatement.

"Yes, they will cry out against it. But they will try to correct it by simply recycling the same false formulas that they have been indoctrinated with from the beginning. Certainly the formula was simply misapplied. That this simply is not in the "spirit" of what was meant. Or, we simply need more enlightened leaders. No one ever asks *Why?* What is the source? What is the underlying cause? They talk of higher cause without recognizing the law of cause *and effect*. That is, that their 'higher cause' philosophy led to this effect. Thus they simply keep applying the same false premise which causes the same effect with ever increasing disaster."

"But how can anything get worse than this?" queried an incredulous Scrooge.

"Unfortunately..."

The next sensation Ebenezer Scrooge experienced was his skin being burned by the snowflakes that were being blown horizontally by a fierce wind blasting unabated by any impediment for a thousand miles. Reflexively turning his back to it he witnessed a sprawling settlement of barracks and shacks partially surrounded by barbed-wire on a landscape barren, flat and frozen.

Between him and the settlement were a railroad track and a railhead. A train was already steaming toward a stop. Scrooge had not heard its approach before because of the wind carrying the sound in the opposite direction. Behind the engine were about twenty cattle cars. As it came to a stop a squad of armed soldiers marching out of the settlement lined up parallel to the train. At a sharp command from an officer, several of the soldiers stepped forward and opened the sliding side doors of the train-cars. Stumbling out of the cars was the most rag-tag rabble of men Scrooge had ever seen. These men were lined up in a row, which took some prodding, because these men were hopelessly unmotivated. A burly officer then stepped forward and motioned the soldiers to march the rabble by him one by one. As they staggered past him he checked them off using a list he had in his hand.

"Chernenko. 10 years. Hard labor. Andropov. 12 years. Hard labor. Brezhnev. 10 years. Hard labor. Molotov. 15 years. Hard labor. Gorbachov. 15 years. Hard labor. Gromyko. 25 years. Hard labor. 25 years!? What did you do to earn such a long privilege Comrade!?"

The man looked up with at the officer with baggy blood-shot eyes and somehow summoned a protest. "Nothing. Nothing! I did nothing at all! The officer looked at him with an expressionless face for a moment, and then replied, "That I do not believe comrade. As you well know, the privilege for nothing is only 8 years."

Scrooge turned his head toward his guide and simply stared.

"No joke. Stark reality. We are just above the Arctic Circle in northeastern Siberia, 1933. The current landlord has established a socialist worker's paradise known as the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics. The ideological founder of this system, Vladimir I. Lenin, on witnessing the horrors of the Christian Czar, asked: "What is to be done?" His answer was the "Red Terror" to force people to subjugate themselves to the new secular socialist state. Scores of camps such as these were built and filled with anyone and everyone who dissented - or even those who did not. Twenty million people were sent to these 'Gulags' as slave labor to dig coal, gold, salt, and to manufacture all kinds of goods, including those lovely fur caps. More than five million of these prisoners will never return. All told, from 1929 to 1953, thirty million Russians, and those under Russian domination, will be slaughtered during 'purges', agricultural 'reform', and just simply because many were starving; as it was easier to kill them than feed them. This is known as Communism. Commune - ism. Which is simply god brought down to Earth and the name changed to State. The entire collectivist self-sacrifice principle stays the same. Both are based on the same mystical underpinnings. Both require the immolation of self to service. The mortal enemy of religion and government is the same - The Autonomous Individual. The individual Human Being is a positive force. Government is a *negative* force. By their very definition and nature god and state *must* suppress freedom to survive; and to constantly expand suppression of Liberty through negative means to thrive."

"But... *Millions*. Certainly people will recognize this as insanity and cease this behavior", returned a stupefied Scrooge.

"War is the health of the State. It thrives on constant conflict; and when there are many States..."

It was freezing cold, but that was not the sensation he felt. It was the smell. It clogged his nostrils and sinuses. It made his eyes water so much he could barely see. It almost knocked him over. Cold, yes. But there was no wind. The entire atmosphere was rancid, putrid, and dank with rotting and decaying flesh. He half gagged and wiped the water from his eyes. He looked out on a large clearing in a forest where a huge open crater had been dug in the muddy soil. There were uniformed armed guards with handkerchiefs worn over their faces, apparently to lessen their exposure to the smell. They watched silently as men clad only in striped pajamas with the Star of David on them threw naked corpses, thousands of them, into wheel-barrow from the back of open bed trucks; then carted them to edge of the pit, where they were thrown in, one on top of another. As this occurred, other pajamaed zombie's shoveled lime on top of them from piles surrounding the pit. It was ghastly.

"W-ww-w-aa..." Scrooge could barely speak through his closing throat.

"Germany. December 19, 1943. Exactly one hundred years after the publication of Charles Dickens's '*A Christmas Carol*'. Philosophy leads to action, then to outcome. Some two hundred years prior to Dickens, Thomas Hobbes (1588-1679) would write a book entitled '*Leviathan, or the matter, forme, and power of a Commonwealth, ecclesiastical, and civill*', 1651. In the book he defended central government as necessary to control men and keep them from their savage "natural state". He wrote, "Whatsoever therefore is consequent to time of Warre, where every man is Enemy to every man; the same is consequent to the time, wherein men live without other security, than what their own strength, and their own invention shall furnish them withall. In such condition, there is no place for industry; because the fruit thereof is uncertain; and consequently no Culture of the Earth; no Navigation, nor use of the commodities that may be imported by Sea; no commodious Building; no instruments of moving, and removing such things as require much force; no Knowledge of the face of the Earth; no account of Time; no Arts; no Letters; no Society; and which is worst of all, continuall feare, and danger of violent death; And the life of man, solitary, poore, nasty, brutish, and short." No statement has ever been more devastatingly false. What is occurring before you Ebenezer is nasty and brutal proof of that."

"Central government preaches collectivism, and then brings about collective slavery and slaughter. The socialist, communist, monarchical, fascist, 'new deal' central governments of the world have compelled their "Citizens" to march out and massacre each other in droves. They are killing each other in the Pacific, in China, in Southeast Asia, in Africa, in the Atlantic, in Europe; and in the 'Land of the Free'; they are building a bomb that can incinerate an entire city in a flash. 60,000,000 million people will die in six years. Hundreds million more will be injured and impoverished. This is the order, peace, and stability brought about by government. This they call necessary for civilization. This is the logical outcome of the illogic of government."

"The author of this particular governmental initiative you see before you, Adolf Hitler, came to power by the "Will of the People", in a free and democratic election. He won 43% of the vote - of those who voted. In his impossibly stupid book, 'My Battle', he sung the politician's creed: "The Aryan is not the greatest in his mental qualities as such, but in the extent of his willingness to put all his abilities in the service of the community. In him the instinct of self-preservation has reached the noblest form, since he willingly subordinates his own ego to the life of the community and, if the hour demands, even sacrifices it." One may interchange the word Aryan with anything one pleases, for example- Human Being; but this is as pure an endorsement of altruism as has ever been put forth. Every religion and form of government on planet Earth in 1943 and beyond agrees whole-heartedly with Adolf Hitler; yet they will call his government the "Hated Nazis". That is deception and lie. They must hide the fact that they all agree. Hitler and Company never called them-selves Nazis. That was a derisive term invented by their political opponents. In fact, they were the "Nationalsozialistische Deutsche Arbeiter Parte": National Socialist German Workers' Party. Every clergyman and politician agrees with Hitler; modified to their own particular bias."

All of this had become a drone to Ebenezer Scrooge. He was overcome by the sight and stench of what he witnessed. His legs turned to jelly and he fell to his knees at the edge of the mass grave and began to vomit. While trying to spit the taste out of his mouth he cried, "This is hell! Hell... Get me out of here!"

When the darkness gave way to light, Scrooge found himself standing some distance from a large, gleaming white, Greek Revival mansion. Surrounding it a stately city of classical architecture that reminded him of Athens. Outside the mansion was a man surrounded by a huge cheering throng. The man was smiling and waving back at them. They seemed to act as if this man was the new messiah and salvation must certainly be upon them.

Thinking logically forward from what he had been witnessing, Scrooge surmised that perhaps this man had enlightened the masses; and had taught them the error of the former altruistic nightmare.

"Not even close", was the reply from his shining guide. "We are in Washington D.C., 2004. This man has just been elected President of the United National Socialist States of America. He was legally elected in a 'free' and democratic election. The people have spoken. The mysticism of their collective will has triumphed. This organ grinder's monkey in an expensive suit is now President and Commander-In-Chief of a permanently bankrupt nuclear superpower that is desperately in need of hard assets. 197 million people were of voting age for this election. 62 million voted for this man. 65 million voted for his opponents. 70 million did not vote for any candidate on the ballot. With this "mandate" he will proceed to deprive all the citizens of their 'right' to an attorney. He will deprive all the citizens of their 'right' to privacy, and their 'right' to free speech. He will march armies into foreign lands under false pretext, murdering hundreds of thousands of them because somehow *they* are terrorists. This is why the idea of government is considered necessary and valid.

Democracy is a Greek word. It means 'Rule by the People'. This, like the idea god, is pure mysticism. Both are defined by their complete lack of definition. Democracy, like god, is anti-concept. Democracy, at its base, is the savage law of the jungle: mob rule. That is, the most people with the most clubs rule. This has been recognized for a very long time; but under the noble aegis of political 'scientists', and the obvious brutalities divine right monarchs, emperors, and other tyrants have reigned down upon the 'common' people, it was deemed appropriate to let the masses have their say in some fashion. So the two insane nightmares were married into one, along with some enigmatic equalizers to supposedly balance the power. This is called Constitutional Government: a room made entirely of mirrors, where the same lie is reflected back in every direction and truth can never be visible. This is what all legal parlance is designed to accomplish. The supposed Rule of Law is a self-reinforcing contradiction. This leads directly to a new mystical aristocracy of priests: lawyers. Supposedly, under 'Rule of Law', everyone becomes equal. But inevitably, some quickly become more equal than others: lawyers. This, then, quickly reverts back to

tyrannical oligarchy. *Any 'rights' granted by any form of government will invariably be revoked.* Ballots will always be manipulated by lawyers into bullets (In fairness, the authors of the American constitution were repulsed by the idea of democracy; calling it the worst possible form of government). The Chinese mass murderer, Mao Tse Tung, had it entirely correct when he stated that, "All politics comes out of the barrel of a gun." Democracy is a means for a minority to gain control of the gun to enslave the majority. The minority then makes the laws by which to rule: even the "democratic process" in which they are continually re-elected. The United States of America has a one party system that is divided into two different factions which have an overwhelming financial, legal and propaganda machine to control the election fraud they perpetrate. There are minority parties, but even they support the same process that forever will keep them minorities. A typical ballot is thus:

A) REPUBLICAN PARTY

B) DEMOCRATIC PARTY

C) LIBERTARIAN PARTY

A Capitalist ballot would read:

A) REPUBLICAN PARTY

B) DEMOCRATIC PARTY

C) LIBERTARIAN PARTY

D) NONE OF THE ABOVE - *Laissez Moi Faire*

This would be the last vote ever taken. And the first. Collectivist government, democracy, and tyranny would be quickly rendered impotent. Virtually all war and conflict would cease. Prosperity, reason, and order would reign. The politicians, lawyers, and priests would proceed to starve to death in a free market dispelled of the mystical, free floating abstraction - 'We the People'; and be confronted with rule by a potent definable entity- An *actual* person. This protects the individual from *all* collective coercion. This is known as CAPITALISM. That is why all governments and religions vehemently oppose it.

"When do the polls open?" inquired Scrooge.

"Whenever *you* decide."

"But hold not thy breath. The oligarchic elite have long understood this. To ensure their stranglehold on Humanity they have devised an even more sinister fraud."

"Than this?" asked an incredulous Scrooge.

"Let us have a look. Shall we?"

"I'm not sure. My eyes are so wide open I don't think they can get any bigger."

"Perhaps, but don't blink now. What you fail to see will definitely hurt you. Let us take a stroll across town and witness how the ruling elite profits from all this..."

What Scrooge saw next was a large wood paneled room with an oblong mahogany table in the center around which a dozen men sat. They wore the same modern style suit and necktie as the organ grinder's monkey. Scrooge listened intently to their discussion. It seemed to him that they were talking about money, but they were using words and phrases that were utterly nonsensical to him. They spoke of "stimulating the economy", "creating jobs", "elasticity of money", "monetizing treasury bonds", "draining reserves from the system", "meeting interest rate targets", and "aggregate consumption."

"They sound like lawyers." surmised Scrooge.

"They are from the same fraudulent school of mysticism. They have the unmitigated gall to call themselves economists. In fact they are plutocrats who have been knighted by their feudal masters in Old Zurich. This is a

meeting of the board of governors of the American Federal Reserve System; a legalized counterfeiting operation. They are protected by a gang of government thugs known as the Secret Service which hunts down and arrests people who counterfeit their counterfeit money without sanction of the government. At the inception of the American Constitution the dollar was silver. The treasury act at the time declared that anyone debasing the silver based dollar would be executed. The gentlemen you see before you are fortunate that the constitution is a thing of the past: otherwise they and the entire government would be doing a rope dance. Again- So much for the idea of a constitutional limited government. Actually, any form of government imposed money "Standard" is tyrannical. Only the free market can determine price of and what is money."

"The legalized crime you see before you is a truly ingenious form of tyranny. It is called "Monetized Debt". It is based on perpetual credit expansion. The bogus money created is based on debt, and must be expanded to infinity. *It can never be paid off by the people who borrow it.* Therefore the criminals who create it can collect interest on the money they print *forever*. All capital formation, goods and services 'created' by this lending cannot possibly be paid off by the borrowers. All profits and capital formation will ultimately belong to the lenders. Anyone participating in this eventually owes their lives to the lenders. Theoretically, all property and life on earth will eventually be mortgaged into foreclosure by lenders who have nothing lend but lies. Compared to this, Feudalism is joy. This is known as debt - capitalism: another outright contradiction of concepts."

"It works as follows - Corruption loves company. The politicians need money to buy votes. If they tax actual capital too much the people revolt. The jackals of counterfeiting explain to the jackals of government that they can work together to enjoy perpetual power. The 'representatives of the people' begin drooling in buckets and legalize the fraud without understanding that they themselves will soon be slaves, just like their constituents. Soon the lenders own the entire government, and the whole nation becomes perpetually bankrupt; since not even the interest itself can ever be paid, the entire nation is insidiously confiscated by the lenders."

"The mechanics of this monetary mysticism are as follows: The politicians must borrow to expand their conflict based system. Since politicians have no money they must either tax by force or borrow by force. Remember. *Government is force.* To expand their altruistic programs and war machine they borrow the money by floating bonds. If there are too many bonds for the public to buy the counterfeiting lenders step in and buy them with their so-called reserves. The reserves are a printing press. The Federal 'Reserve' buys the bond from the government by writing a check. There is no capital to back the check. So they call the treasury of the government which has no money and orders it to print money to back the check..."

"You're lying! You MUST be! No one would ever fall for a scam like that!!" an incensed Scrooge interrupted. "This sounds like a lost chapter of *Alive in wonderland!!*"

"Almost. In this real life fairy tale the Emperor is wearing clothes. Yours. Grit your teeth and have patience my friend. I'm not one tenth done."

"With their bogus Reserve check in hand the government goes to the Federal Reserve 'Bank' to cash it. They then use the 'cash' to pay themselves, their government employees, and all their vote-buying altruistic programs, and the guns they use to enforce the fraud. The recipients of the cash then deposit the money in their favorite Federal Reserve System bank. All the banks in the nation are of course part of the 'System'. Now comes the part that simple counterfeiters and Alice can only dream of. It is called Fractional Reserve Banking. When the recipients of the cash deposit their hard earned cash in their favorite Reserve bank, that bank can loan out ninety percent of it. They are required to keep only ten percent as reserve. They then collect interest on the ninety percent loaned out. When the borrowers of the ninety percent then redeposit that money back into the bank, the bank can loan out ninety percent of that, keeping ten percent as reserve, while collecting interest on the rest. When the borrowers of that ninety percent redeposit the money back into the bank, the bank can loan out ninety percent of that, collecting interest on it, then when the money is redeposited, the bank..."

"WHAAAT!!! WHY DOES ANYONE LET THEM GET AWAY WITH THAT!!!"

"Why not? They have been reduced to an altruistic collective 'aggregate' through centuries of intellectual conditioning. These central planners have fine honed their propaganda into a seamless machine. Even if they actually allowed free speech no one knows what to speak. Or how to. Since they have already conditioned people to

become patriots and die in droves for them, how hard is it to get them to accept anything? Virtually all governments and wars have been financed by this fraud for over three centuries. This is why the words Gold and Silver are utter obscenities to them."

"There is an endless taxation here in two ways: 1) the endless interest that is collected on the same phony dollar over and over. 2) The endless inflation that occurs where every new phony dollar becomes worth less than the one preceding it. The banksters will declare right out in the open that they are "fighting inflation", but this is just another contradiction: one cannot fight the very inflation that one is causing. They are criminals telling people that they are fighting crime. For example, all states now have a "sales tax" that is stolen from people. Inflation does not affect this government revenue. If the tax is say six percent, people buy goods and services which continually rise in price with dollars that are continually worth less, but the state is protected and benefits because they keep collecting six percent on more dollars spent. The people get poorer, crime increases. The state passes new laws to fight the crime they create. The crime fighting, however, costs money. So taxes must go up. Creating more crime. Quite a fairy tale, is it not, Alice, er Ebenezer. But the whole world has been an intellectual fairy story for thousands of years. That fairy tale is that the individual must be subordinated to the collective. Or to the non-existent.

"But it is a pyramid scheme. It has to collapse." observed Scrooge.

"Indeed. And when the ensuing chaos breaks out who do you think will have the guns and the authority to declare the martial law the ignorant victims will cry out for?"

"Despicable."

"Indeed. It is. Monetized Debt, like all forms of mysticism, is a lie. A disease. *Death*. Being unable to recognize the difference between fairy tale and reality, a gullible populace can be told any story, now matter how fantastic, and readily buy into it - hook, line, sinker, and boat. Government cannot survive nor thrive without a malleable monetary unit under its command. Inversely, freedom cannot survive nor thrive without a tangible, objective immutable monetary unit. Objective monetary exchange is the key to the door of freedom; the lock will not turn with mush. This brings us to the next fairy tale- Chicken Little. "

Scrooge once more was engulfed in light.

When the radiance had equalized with the natural light Scrooge beheld a spectacular panoramic summer view that spread out before him for miles. He stood two hundred feet in the air at the apex of massive bridge that extended more than two miles in either direction of where he stood. A constant flow of motorized vehicles sped in both directions. He looked out over a huge body of sun-sparkled water below that reflected the vibrant colour of the blue sky above. Flying on the water was a fleet of sailing yachts powered by spinnakers displaying imperiously brilliant colours. The scene was a living dream. It held him mesmerized; as his sense of time simply vanished.

Eventually he looked to locate his shining guide and said, "Fine. I'm ready. What horror shall descend upon us now?"

"None. All is well with what you see. Remember though, that where no problem actually exists one must be invented. Mankind is successful and happy. Everyone here is enjoying themselves. Some people, however, simply cannot stand that. Man's pursuit of happiness has been decried as evil for millennia. To stop Man from being happy the mausoleums of government and religion have been built. Now a new group of grave-diggers has appeared with a new dogmatic mystical insanity. This group of Chicken Little's is called Environmentalists. Mankind and his industriousness, they say, are going to make the sky fall. Amongst their long list of Mankind's crimes against nature (While denying that Man is nature.) is that his factories and motorized vehicles are producing so much CO2 that the Earth will heat up and somehow be destroyed. This they call 'Global Warming'. They say that there are simply too many people being industrious and happy. Certainly environmentalists are neither.

One of the canonized saints of this new mysticism, Jacques Cousteau, wants to solve the problem by: "What should we do to eliminate suffering and disease? It is a wonderful idea but perhaps not altogether a beneficial one in the long run. If we try to implement it we may jeopardize the future of our species. It's terrible to have to say this. World population must be stabilized, and to do that we must eliminate 350,000 people per day. This is so horrible to contemplate that we shouldn't even say it, but it is just as bad not to say it." "Hmmm... let's see.... uh huh....carry

that... why yes, that is 127,750,000 people per year that the good sociopathic saint wants to "eliminate". Why does everyone hate Hitler? *Die Calypso*. And by what method do these friends of planet Earth want to implement this systematic slaughter? That method which is best equipped to do so: Government. One world centralized government."

"The fact, however, is this: There are at this point five and a half billion people. *All* of them could live on a land mass the slightly larger than the state of Texas with a population density equivalent to London. The rest of the planet would be empty. The population density of this super-city would be even less if all the friends of planet Earth would practice what they preach and kill *themselves*. Thank them very much. This would also help the non-existent problem of too much Man produced CO2 by eliminating a lot of hot air."

You are standing on a magnificent engineering achievement, the Mackinac Bridge. It is the longest suspension bridge in the world, spanning a great natural engineering feat, the Straits of Mackinac in Lake Michigan. The bridge is five miles in length, at its' apex 199 feet above the water, and its' suspension towers are 552 feet high. But if you were standing here 11,000 years ago, you and the bridge would be buried under a mile and a half of ice. 10,000 years ago that ice melted, filling the upper Midwest basins and creating the largest body of fresh water in the world: The Great Lakes. Now *that* is Global Warming. When that happened there was not one CO2 creating factory or internal combustion engine on the planet. Not one. Really. You can look it up."

"The Earth is in size to the Sun what a b-b is to a basketball. That basketball makes up 99.8% of the mass in the Solar System. Jupiter makes up most of the rest. Said-same basketball is a thermo-nuclear fusion blast-furnace towing the b-b along at the rate of 44,640 miles per hour through the universe, blasting through all kinds of interstellar debris, while creating a radioactive, magnetic, ion storm that howls about a million miles per hour, blowing the atmosphere of the b-b into a tail that stretches millions of miles out into space on the opposite side. Yet not one environmentalist has ever demanded legislation to regulate this. If that massive fusion furnace were to so much as hiccup, the Earth would be incinerated into oblivion faster than anyone could call the government for regulation on Al Gore's inter-net."

"Environmentalism is based on the same premise as Government and Religion: the evil of the conscious Human Mind. Ultimately, therefore, they demand and promote non-thinking. In the Environmental version, Nature, which is not conscious, is good. Man, who is conscious, is evil. Any action Mankind takes to forward his happiness damages Nature. So Mankind must be "eliminated". Nature becomes god in this religion. It is the same Garden of Eden story: Conscious beings ruin it. It is the same original sin crap all over again. This anti-concept pseudo-philosophical, pseudo-science fails to note that Man is the *result* of nature. Therefore if they were consistent they would have to conclude that Nature itself must then be evil. Since this is the logically correct conclusion, they should encourage Man to destroy Nature- The source of the evil. "

"Man is the result of nature. Nature Awakened. Nature *liberated*. So there is no confusion as to my meaning, Buddha means Awakened One. Awakened by ceasing to be awake. Reverting back to a plant. To achieve this goal (Siddhartha) is rather simple medically - It is called a Pre-Frontal Lobotomy. The conscious mind is the greatest resource on Earth. And by far the most precious. To kill the conscious mind is to kill Nature itself. It is to kill the very meaning, purpose and goal of Life - *Liberty*. To state that Man is the enemy of "The Planet" or "The Environment" is to contradict oneself and Planet Earth out of existence. The only way to "Save the Planet" is to promote the freedom of the autonomous individual Human Mind. Only then will there truly be a joyful garden. One that the inhabitants can actually identify."

Scrooge had stopped listening to all this. He was too immersed in identifying the garden. Looking out from his lofty view he watched the foam dancing on the waves. The bows of the yachts crashing through the foam. The cool summer breeze filling their sails and blowing against his face.

"Whatever Heaven is supposed to be, it cannot be as fair as this", he mused.

Scrooges' bliss was interrupted by the roar of an engine a thousand feet over his head. He raised his eyes skyward to see a flying machine defy the law of gravity with graceful consummate ease. It was not possible he thought. Then he integrated the concepts and concluded- Yes it is.

He looked to find his guide. What he saw instead was a shiny red land- missile with it's door open.

"Come my friend", said the light. Scrooge sat down in the passenger seat and closed the door. The vehicle thrust forward compressing him in the seat, while the road in front was devoured at an ever increasing velocity. Eventually it slowed to match the speed of the rest of the traffic.

"What sort of...exuberant mind...designed this rocket?"

"A fine Russian engineer and Libertarian: Zachary 'Zora' Arkus-Duntov. He once said, "No one should be able to legislate speed. No one can tell me how fast I need to get to my destination. Speed is what cars are all about. If that were not the case we would all walk."

"Amen", said Scrooge.

As they flowed down the road with the rest of the motorized traffic there came a pulsing shriek that had Scrooge half out of his seat with psychological and physical fear. He whirled to the source of the terror, and was greeted with a kaleidoscope of blinding lights emanating from two vehicles approaching at reckless velocity through the traffic. Paralyzed with fear he gripped the door handle, expecting the worst. The two vehicles roared past as the rest of the traffic scrambled to avoid them, almost causing multiple wrecks in the midst of the chaos.

"...THE BLOODY HELL WAS THAT!!"

"Rather unnerving wouldn't you say?"

"I would say. Yes."

"Those are known as Public Servants. Let us go see how they serve the Public. Shall we?"

"You're running this show. I'm just on for the ride."

The Corvette accelerated forward, easily catching the Public Service vehicles, then slowing to match their speed. They watched as the two vehicles ran down and cut-off an old pick-up truck. Electronically amplified voices shouted at the person in the truck to get out with hands raised. The uniformed Public Servants leapt from their vehicles pointing hand-guns at the subject. They then ordered him face down on the ground, one of them then put his knee in the subjects back and hand-cuffed him, while the other Public Servant held his gun not six inches from the mans' head. The one holding the gun informed the subject that he was under arrest for robbery, then began to inform the man of his 'Rights'. They stood him up just as a large box with wheels and bars on the windows drove up. They put the man in the back, shut the door, and told the driver to "Take him to County Lock-up."

From the communication devices in the Public Servants' vehicles Scrooge ascertained that the man had held-up a local business establishment and had made off with the money. He then watched as the Servants got back into their vehicles and drove off at much more leisurely pace. The Corvette then followed them to their next destination, which turned out to be the establishment that just been robbed. The servants parked their vehicles outside and walked in.

"Did you catch him?", The owner queried. "Yes we did.", was the reply. "However, we have another matter for you." The Public Servant then extended his hand with a paper in it toward the proprietor. "What is this?", he asked. "A writ for possession of the premises. You will have to leave at once." "What are you talking about, leave at once?" "Sorry. Back property taxes. You're delinquent. The judge ordered the place to be closed and sold. You'll have to leave at once." "This is an outrage! I've been here thirty years! I own the place free and clear! Business has been down and the legislature keeps raising the taxes!" "Sorry. You will have to leave at once." "I'm not going anywhere! You leave at once!" "Sir, either leave quietly now or leave our way. You have ten seconds." The owner stepped forward and shoved the Servant in the chest. "How dare you!" The Servant grabbed a can of mace from his belt and sprayed the store owner in the face. He fell to his knees in blinding pain. The other Servant grabbed him and pulled his hands behind his back and cuffed him. The first Servant pulled out his gun dropped one knee on the 'owners' back to hold him down, while the other called for the wagon. Five minutes later they half dragged and half shoved the man into the back as he yelled obscenities at them through the burning pain in his eyes and throat.

"This man is the victim of two thefts. The first being much lesser in magnitude than the second. The second was the result of "To each according to his need from each according to his ability." As Dickens put it "Because he needs it the most." This is literally democracy in action. People condemn the first man, then go to the poles to vote to steal from the second. *Voting is an act of violence.*

Scrooge looked at the inscription on the Public Servants vehicles. It read: "To Protect and Serve." He thought out loud to himself "To protect and serve... The Government."

"Exactly", returned his friend. Understand that every law, from murder down to jay walking, is punishable by death. Every single law is backed by a gun. That is what Government *is*: A Gun.

Scrooge began to notice the various proclamations and sayings displayed on the rear of some of the other vehicles. Some made him cringe. Some made him laugh. Then he saw one that was perplexing. It read: "It is a poverty to decide that a child must die so that you may live as you wish."

"Please elucidate", asked Scrooge.

"That is the quote of a Catholic Nun decrying the modern penchant for terminating unwanted pregnancies. Considering, however, that it comes from someone who is celibate so that she may live as she wishes; and who *preaches* self-denial and poverty, that is hypocrisy in its' purest form. "Mother" Teresa is the perfect example of a text-book candidate for sainthood; that is, propound a doctrine that causes mass poverty and starvation, (Leading to unwanted pregnancies.) then throw a few of your victims some crumbs and you will surely be canonized. If she truly wanted to help people, born and unborn, she would promote the praxeological prosperity that the freedom of subjective self-valuation of Capitalism brings.

Scrooge then pointed out a philosophically similar proclamation which read: "Question Reality."

"Indeed. Notice, Ebenezer, how the driver lacks the courage of his convictions. He drives in a straight line on the correct side of the road. He stops at all intersections. When he becomes low on fuel he stops well beforehand to acquire more. He wears a seat-belt. He does not pull to the side of the road, exit the vehicle, and stand in the oncoming traffic. His desire, though, is to live in delusion and denial. Let us follow.

They followed the vehicle as it turned into a suburban neighborhood, then into the parking lot of "Faith Evangelical Apostolic Church". The man exited the vehicle and entered the building through a side door. Walking down a corridor inside, he entered an office and sat down at a desk in front of a computer. A computer. He turned on the product of Reason and clicked on a Platonic labeled icon - Sunday Sermon. The sermon was entitled - The Defeat of Darwinism.

The discourse was a rambling dialogue about "Gods' Plan, the futility of secular science, and the fulfillment of Gods' Creation and His Ultimate Purpose. That evolution is a fraud that falls apart because the universe was "Intelligently Designed." That this has been proven because we now know that life at its' essence is "Irreducibly Complex." Therefore, this once and for all disproves Darwins' theory of evolution.

"This attempt at thinking is not just "futile", it is desperate. Intelligent Design is a seductive deceit. The first clue is the trickery of the name itself - All designs are the result of intelligence, thus intelligent design is needlessly redundant. The 'proof' for Intelligent Design is based on the ultimate contradiction - Irreducible Complexity. The assertion, based supposedly on science, is that at the biochemical level organisms have no more parts than necessary to function; that is, to remove a single part would cause the organism to cease functioning. Therefore the evolution of living organisms is not possible, they must have been "designed". Guess by whom. This sinks below pathetic and pitiful to shameful. This flies right back to Aquinas' attempt to marry reason to revelation. Observable quantifiable reality with mysticism. No divorce is necessary when the marriage is impossible. The mystics attack science in its' alleged gaps. These gaps, they say, prove invalidity of science. The fact is, however, that the gaps continually get narrower. The mystics also conveniently fail to mention that it is they who are the cause of these gaps. They are the ones who have for millennia attacked reason and the mind. It is they who have burned the scientists at the stake for

blasphemy, depriving Humanity of untold progress. Now they have the audacity to proclaim that science proves that science is invalid..... Once again, it is so simple: Existence Exists. That which is not part of existence does not exist. That which is part of existence cannot change the physical laws of existence, and is therefore subject to them - There is no magic wand. Mystics *must* deceive. As the philosopher Ayn Rand noted - "The honest man says, "It is; therefore I want it. The dishonest man says, "I want it; therefore it is." That is the mystics' "Design".

"There are a host of actual scientific refutations of this desperate last ditch attempt at some actual evidence for the existence of the supernatural. One excellent example is Pete Dunkelberg's' **Irreducible Complexity Demystified**; www.talkdesign.org/articles

Scrooge pondered all this for a moment then mused, "Intelligent Design is truly irreducible in one aspect - Its' irreducible lack of intelligence."

"In Fact", returned the Light. "To demonstrate the consequences of religions' toll upon Mankind I will now take you back in time. This will be the last stop of our journey. Ready?"

"Hesitate not my friend", said Scrooge. Scrooge waved an arm with drama at the rising of the Light.

He stood on a rise in the ground on an open plain. To the East at a distance was a small village. To the South a medium sized lake. At the top of the rise above him was a scraggly group of people dressed in course clothing listening to the exhortations of a man struggling to keep his voice above the wind.

Scrooge simply looked at his guide for explanation.

"The village to the East is Capernaum. To the South the Sea of Galilee. It is about 36 A.D."

Scrooge nodded in understanding. Then turned back toward the speaker, cupping an ear to better pick up his words.

"The meek will inherit the Earth", he proclaimed.

As he spoke this a thundering roar came from the sky across the lake. Scrooge and the group of people whirled to look. Streaking across the sky over the lake was a fleet of Vertical Take-Off and Landing Space Shuttles. They stopped and hovered over the rise, then descended straight down. Scrooge looked on in admiration. The scraggly band of people threw themselves face down on the ground in abject terror. Then the craft landed, their doors opened up, and out came the descendants of Aristotle, bearing the gift of the ability to feed the five billion for five thousand years.

The Light blazed. "It has been about three and a half centuries since the death of Aristotle. Had his teachings been fully accepted and acted upon this would have been the result. It only took from 1776 to 1969 for America to put a Man on the Moon, 193 years. Think what would have happened in the century and a half still left in our time frame here. Jesus of Nazareth would never have been a carpenter: he would have been a nautical engineer building ocean-liners. Now think forward to 1843 from this point."

Scrooges' mind reeled at the thought of eighteen centuries of progress wiped out by the futile quest for the supernatural at the expense of Human life.

"Think. Think. The whole of Humanity suffering needlessly. Dying before their time. Not born at all!"

"Thank you my Great Man. Thank you. You have learned. Now it is time for me to let you return home and continue on."

"It has been an astounding journey my friend. It is I who must thank you. Do you have any parting advice?"

"Yes. To paraphrase Ann Wortham: There is no one that is like you, there has never been anyone like you, and there will never be anyone like you again. Ebenezer Scrooge - Cry Joy. You are *Alive*. My friend > Stride forth > you are *free*.....

The whole world around Scrooge turned to a glorious radiance.

CHAPTER FIVE: THE BEGINNING OF IT

Scrooges' eyes once again acclimated to the ebbing radiance. Looking around himself he realized that he was still in the same squalid situation as when his adventure began. He was still sitting on his backside amidst the pile of broken and splintered wood that had led to the outcome other than the one intended. The sounds coming from the street below told him that it was still Christmas Eve.

"Well I'm free. Free to starve to death", he said out-loud to himself.

He looked about for his electric friend. There was no trace of it. Then it was there. The light came on in his head. "Consciousness is nothing. Identity is useless. Knowledge is meaningless. All are as impotent as prayer without the other key ingredients - Rational Purpose and Action. He sat for some moments and analyzed his predicament. He began to formulate. "Forward motion. But forward motion without gain is a waste of energy. First I need fuel - Money. To make more Money. But I have no money. How am I going to...?" Then he saw it. Lying on the floor in a corner of the room, covered with sediment, was his last possession other than Himself - His Bible. An old and rare family Bible that had been handed down to him after being passed on generation after generation. He rose up slowly, keeping his gaze steady upon it as he moved toward it with great deliberation. He reached down and clasped it in his hand, bringing it up to eye level. His first reaction, to hurl it through the broken window out into the street, was stopped by the realization of its' true worth. He smiled a whisper to himself ... "Of course. Of course." He tucked the book securely under his arm, and with neither hesitation nor haste he moved with complete certainty across the room, through the door, down the rickety steps out onto the snow covered street.

The world was abustle with people hurrying to and fro in the festive atmosphere. Ebenezer Scrooge strode confidently through the commotion to his goal with the power of complete understanding and clarity; using the sight and sound of the madness around him as the fuel that propelled him forward. Catching the strains of organ music he looked on ahead to see the line of sheeple going into Saint John's Church. As he shouldered his way through them he was momentarily awash in the strains of Bach's *Sleepers, Awake!*, as it came cascading out through the doors into the street. He grinned at the irony. Bach was right he thought. For the wrong reason. "That music came from you, Johann. Not from beyond"

Scrooge regained his momentum down the snow covered street. After several blocks he turned a corner and collided with a young boy scrambling around the same corner at the opposite ninety degrees sliding on the snow at full song. They both went to the ground. Scrooge got up brushing himself off and said, "Nice try; but I've no money in these pockets to pick young man."

"No. No sir! That is not my aim. I'm trying to get to Saint John's before the people all go inside. If I can beg enough money from the parishioners I can buy Christmas confections to sell to the crowd on the circus. I can treble me money. Then I'll have enough from the profit to feed me and me mum for a month."

Scrooge stood stone paralyzed with astonishment. When he regained the ability to speak he declared, "I have a son. A son who is clearly not in any way related to the Cratchit family."

"What? Who?" Them lad returned.

Never mind, young man. You will not have to beg from anyone to get your money. Follow me."

"No-no! I must go. The people are almost inside by now. I must..."

"None of it", commanded Scrooge. "None of it. Follow me. Now!"

"But..."

"NOW! Everything you need is just a few blocks away."

Scrooge continued on around the corner without looking back. The boy hesitated, not moving in either direction.

He then began to follow Scrooge; as if pulled along in the tow of his driven energy. As he caught up along side a man approached the pair and thrust a pamphlet into Scrooge's face.

"I have no time for this. Get out of my way! He demanded.

"Please take and read it", the man pleaded. "We are trying to get people together for the socialist rally later tonight. Surely you want to do something for the downcast in the world; such as yourself Sir."

"I was doing just that before you impeded me. Now get out of my way!"

"But Sir!" cried the man, "We can accomplish so much more if we come together as one."

"Nuts!" cried Scrooge. With the sweep of his arm, he forced the fool away, sending his pamphlets fluttering about the street.

Scrooge powered forward once more, the thought of the encounter already out of his mind. The lad followed, fascinated more by this man's deliberate, confident, assertion than by where he would eventually end up. That mystery dissolved soon enough. Scrooge walked up to a shop door and without breaking stride opened it and disappeared to the other side of it. The lad stood for a moment in the falling snow and looked up at the sign over the door - ANTIQUE BOOKS - BOUGHT AND SOLD

The shopkeeper heard the bells ring on the door as it opened, and looked up from his work to see Scrooge standing at the counter with the look of ready contention in his demeanor.

"Weell, lucky you are Sir, I was just about ready to close for the evening. What can I do for you my good man?"

"How much will you give me for this", Scrooge asked, displaying his trade.

"Well now, why would you want to sell a bible on this of all days?"

"How much", repeated Scrooge, thrusting the object of trade into the gentleman's hand.

"Indeed. A beauty. 1611 King James First Edition Pulpit. Very fine."

He thumbed through the pages to Ruth 3: 15.

"Aye. It'd be a "She". "

"How much", said Scrooge, becoming a bit more emphatic.

The tradesman looked through the pages, then examined the elaborate binding, all with greatest of care. He looked up at Scrooge, then at the book again. He repeated this several times.

"How much!"

"Well sir, it is rather valuable. I shant have a problem turning it over. Rather I should keep it for myself."

"Good Sirr."

"A hundred pounds. Not a pence more."

"BAH! That binding is Eighteenth Century silver. It is worth a hundred and fifty if it is worth a bob."

The man looked Scrooge straight in the eye. "Fine. One twenty five."

"Deal", agreed Scrooge. "Hand it over. Tempus fugit."

The moment the money was in his hand Scrooge turned to the lad and said, "Okay son, now it is my turn to follow you. Let's be away."

The eager lad did not have to be told twice. He turned and was out the door in the same motion; Scrooge following right behind the lad's forced pace. He already knew the destination - out from the shop district to the warehouse district. The lad led him through the crowds, around corners, taking shortcuts across the greens instead of down

streets. They came to a row of buildings that Scrooge knew by heart. He had helped finance many of them. The lad walked straight into the large entranceway of one of them with Scrooge still behind, but now moving at a more leisurely pace.

"Where is Mr. Jamerson!" the lad cried out.

"So, our aspiring young lad has returned. Rounded up a little capital have you?" asked Mr. Jamerson.

"He has indeed, William", said Scrooge answering in the boy's stead.

"Scrooge! What in the..." Jamerson was unable to complete his thought; he simply stared at Scrooge as though he had seen a ghost.

"I see you have a new line for market", observed Scrooge almost casually.

"Bloody Mary! Miracles abound, the dead walk."

"No William. The living do", Scrooge corrected.

"I need you to give the boy as much product as he can carry. And be quick. The clock is ticking."

"Give? I should say not. Or were you thinking I would be daft and extend you credit?"

"Hard money William. One hundred twenty five pounds worth" replied Scrooge, extending a bag of Gold Sovereigns.

"I don't know what you are up to Scrooge, but..." He turned to one of his clerks and motioned to him to load the lad up.

When Scrooge and the lad had all they could carry they turned and walked toward the door. Jamerson stopped them by asking, "What gives Ebenezer? Please tell me all this is not going to charity."

"Not on your life William. I intend to make a fortune on it. I'll be back day after tomorrow with the profit. Then you can load us up again."

Jamerson walked right up to Scrooge, looked him right in the eyes and said, "Welcome back Ebenezer."

"Thank you", said Scrooge. "Now if you will excuse us, we have business to attend to."

After the door had closed behind the pair Jamerson turned to one of the clerks and said, "That was the best Christmas gift I've ever received. There may be hope for this world after all."

With fleet feet and precipitous purpose Scrooge and Company set up shop amongst the still bustling crowd on the circus. They laid out the stock which Scrooge was to tend while the lad would hawk the crowd. As the boy was about to begin Scrooge said, "Get out there and do your best son." "I am not here to do my best", returned the lad. "I am here to win." "I stand corrected", said Scrooge, filled with a radiance he had never experienced. "Go!"

Thirty minutes later the product was gone, and Scrooge was counting the money. Three hundred and seventy five pounds. He peeled off half the profit, one hundred and twenty five, and handed it to the lad. The boy stood speechless and dumbfounded. He had not accumulated even half that amount in his entire life.

"I am mighty grateful Sir. Thank you."

Nonsense, son. Thank yourself. I could use an industrious partner like you. What do you say?"

"Deal!"

"Good. What venture shall we tackle next?"

"If it's all the same to you Sir, I'd like to tackle a fair size Christmas turkey first. I've worked quite the appetite. Be sure me mum would fix it for us both."

A CAPITALIST CAROL Page 53

"Capital idea son. Let us be on."

Ebenezer Scrooge put his arm around the lad's shoulder, and the two walked down the street through the falling snow; onward to a newfound day.

AMAGI SYMBOL HERE

This symbol first appeared in the Sumerian City-State of Lagash about 2300 B.C. It is Cuneiform, and is pronounced Amagi. It is the first known written expression of the concept of Freedom, or Liberty.