

Slavery, Work and Service; The Three Ages of Man?

By Edward Minton

The words “Slavery, Work and Service” describe a tripolar though singular world; something considered an impossibility in physics, though a commonality in metaphysics. Though worlds apart, they share the same substance, as it were.

Each of these three is readily interchanged with the others when its connotations are judged to serve an effect. A mother willingly serving her family in the kitchen, when it suits, will be described as “Slaving over a hot stove” or “Working her fingers to the bone”. A bureaucrat whose only motive is his salary, and only delight in his work is in casting every available stumbling block in front of any public he contacts, is described as a “Public Servant”. A retiree who serves charity without recompense, is proclaimed to be “Working for charity.”

Whether poetry or prose, literary license has its value, though when precise semantics are needed one would wish it away. For the purposes of this essay we need clear differentiation to make the case. So firstly, what is the common property or essential attribute of these words which runs them together in our minds? Surely the answer is *service*.

In the first, “*slavery*”, service is compelled, with the choice of withholding it being made in the face of punishment or death. In the second, “*work*”, service is given in exchange for some recompense, while “*service*” itself is purely an act of giving to another. Its object is seen in its benefit to the receiver, though it is always accompanied in the benefactor by the joys associated with giving.

Our differentiation of meaning compares with the distinctions between rape, prostitution and love making. Is the sexual act compelled, traded, or freely given? Seen in this way, the often made claim for “the dignity of labour”, depends upon whether one is comparing the prostitutional status of work to rape, or to love making. That the connotations of “work” and “prostitution” should be equated, is outrageous at the beginning of the 21st century. At the 31st century, after a thousand years of applying the silicon chip and advancing processes, will serving for anything other than love be considered with distaste and abhorrence?

Oh dear, I have kicked over a bucket of worms! What is a “bludger”, as he sits quietly watching automated processes deliver humanities every material need, and whose intervention into production with work would only endanger its delivery of abundance? If his life is lived wholly in self-centered taking, he remains a bludger, I suppose. However, if he is busy teaching his grandchildren to play a musical instrument, visiting the sick, helping a charity, coaching a boy’s sporting team, or some such, he is then a member of the *Aristocracy of Service*, though he may never have done a day’s work in his life.

Downloaded from www.socialcredit.com.au

This is not so futuristic, as historically speaking, the 4th millennium will gallop up with all the speed with which next Christmas arrives for old men. We are already living (arguably) in something like the 11th millennium since farming first established civilization.

During all the years which we now describe as being “B.C.”, though there are at least half a million documents in the cuneiform of Mesopotamia, plus Egyptian hieroglyphics, classical Greek and Latin, Hebrew, and Phoenician etc. there is not a single statement of conscience in opposition to the institution of chattel slavery. Aristotle thought that some had been enslaved unjustly, though he always accepted the legitimacy of the institution itself. In ancient Rome 80% of the population were slaves by some accounts, and the Greek tribes in conquering what we now know as Greece, are thought to have subdued and enslaved a populace ten times their own number.

The Golden Age of Greece is a monument to the efficacy of slavery. They didn't have even a word for work, but spoke only in terms of what we would translate as negotiation. Their word “*ergon*” meant “action” or “deed” as much as it might mean “work”. Their word “*diploma*” we have adopted to mean forming relationships by way of negotiation.

In the true age of slavery there was no work; only slavery properly so called, and then all the rest of man's economic arrangements were but negotiation, arrangement, organization and the like. There were, in the sense in which we use the words here, pretty much no workers; just slaves and negotiators.

The first beginning of the passing of the age of slavery came gently, quietly, and almost innocuously. It started with a brief letter written by St. Paul to his friend Philemon, who had sent him a slave, one O-nes-i-mus, “...who might have ministered unto me...”. This Christian slave was returned by Paul “Not now as a servant, but above a servant, a brother beloved...”. The Church came to the view, beginning here, that those perceived to have been redeemed by Christ in the shedding of His blood, ought not to be re-enslaved by their fellowmen. The torpedo into the Age of Slavery was off and running, and fully arrived only about 1,800 years later at approximately the time of Wilberforce. From here on, and for the foreseeable future, men would live out their lives in the Age of Work.

In the centuries in which scarcity was ever present in the human economy, St. Paul decreed that “He who will not work, neither shall he eat”. If the ship is badly holed, it's “all hands to the pumps”. If survival is a hard fought struggle, it is but fair that all should contribute.

Work, after all, is not an end, but a means. A better means of pumping water than using human or animal muscles, was contributed by James Watt in his steam engine, which led on to the railways. The discovery of petroleum and the internal combustion engine gave us the tractor and personal transport. The silicon chip is eliminating men from repetitive processes.

While farm production steadily rose, the percentage of the workforce employed in farming fell in the U.S.A. and Australia from 40% in 1900, to 1 or 2% in 2013, by which time obesity had displaced want and under nourishment as the chief concern with food.*⁽¹⁾ The word-processor reduced document production by more than 90%. The attrition of employment in manufacture is advancing everywhere. In countries with low wages, the fort is being held, but the robots are at the gates. Robots manufactured by robot-manufacturing robots which work at a much faster rate, and three times longer each day, without offsite accommodation, food (other than electricity), or thought of industrial relations, medical attention, aged care or entertainment, are infiltrating and sabotaging the standing armies of workers everywhere.

It has all long ago reached the point of tragi-comedy. Every business is striving might and main to reduce labour input, and another group of people are sustaining a counter-effort to “achieve full employment”. Both camps generally regard the efforts of the counter movement as worthy endeavors with desirable objects, whilst redoubling their own efforts to negate them.

So what is it which is driving this onslaught against work? In summation it is best described as our “industrial inheritance”. It is no one process, technology, energy source or applied idea, but all of them and all else which has come down to us from the previous 10,000 years of achievement, learning and experience.

Why did the Greeks of classical times not work? Because they had inherited on average 10 slaves each. Why did the English nobility of Victorian times not work? Because they had inherited sufficient assets, usually in land, to make work superfluous. And why is the labour necessary for production being everywhere supplanted, notwithstanding our best efforts to retain full employment? Our whole industrial inheritance is conspiring to make life easier, and the Luddites’ contrivances at compelling full employment are not prevailing, though through sheer tenaciousness, the inefficiency imposed upon industry by regulation and the application of fashionable verbiage in its justification, is an amazingly effective (and silly) rearguard.

The regulation of residential house building now greatly increases its cost, this leading to every compromise with quality which is possible within the regulations, the purpose of these regulations being of course, to ensure quality. Of course the “plus”, is that making life difficult increases the employment necessary to make it easier. The charlatans who alone bring justification for these excessive regulations, usually evade due process of the law through limited liability incorporation devices. Their continuing presence in business, of course, though in small numbers, continues the propensity towards full employment all the while; for wherever it is present, over regulation acts in this manner. Still, such sand bags temporarily thrown down against the incoming tide must not be allowed to distract us.

While the motivating force behind slavery is in the whip and the sword, when, if and as they are required, the motivation behind work is now wages paid in money, and behind inheritance is the dividend, again expressed in terms of money.

Downloaded from www.socialcredit.com.au

The industrial inheritance has been bequeathed to us from those who have gone before. Most of these contributors are now lost to living memory; even copyright where taken, soon lapses into the public domain. 90% of all production is now attributable to our advancing knowledge and our current tools for its application. Take the hammer, the saw, all tools and electricity, training and knowledge off a carpenter, and then see how long it takes him to build a house.

The transition from slavery to work came with the Act which abolished slavery in 1807. For the British this ended black slavery out of Africa. Action to end white slavery in North Africa (which had taken about a million Europeans in the previous 3 centuries) came much later. In 1816 Sir Edward Pellow led 18 British men-of-war and 6 Dutch into the Port of Algiers. The ruling Dey (or Bey) Omar Bashaw, was given 1 hour to release his slaves and renounce slavery forever. The shore batteries of Algiers were formidable, (being built by generations of white slaves who alone in Barbary had this skill) but after several hours of the most fierce cannon fire seen to that time, they were destroyed. Next, every Algerian vessel in the port was destroyed, and the city battered and burned into the early hours of the morning until the need to rest the exhausted crews brought a calm. At dawn the Bey capitulated. * (2)

The transition from a work to a service based society is an uncharted path. We know something about the forces which are driving us, and of our ultimate destination once these forces are utterly ascendant, but little about what is in the middle.

I need to say something now, with which many will find it difficult to cope. Please sit down and take a few deep breaths, and determine to suppress your wildest emotions, at least for a little while, in the hope that reflective processes will kick in.

The transition from a society of work [where one's life is surrendered for recompense], to a society of service where one's contributions to others are personally chosen and voluntarily given, is dependent upon dividends being progressively and universally distributed to all.

While we are operating outside the bounds of "common sense", let's add insult to injury by doing an hypothetical.

Let us suppose that at many places in the world industrial plants are established which use some futuristic nano-technology which can take any form of matter, separate it into its component atoms and molecules, and reassemble it into any and every conceivable product. These self-maintaining plants are designed to (and do) function without any attention or further (other than solar) energy inputs for 1,000 years. Their capacity exceeds all needs and desires. Material security causes a loss of interest in the clutter of storing endless products against tomorrow.

If you say this is impossible, I would like to agree with you on two counts. Firstly, it is almost certainly as physically impossible as my Grandfather believed man going to the moon to be. Secondly, it presents today's financial technicians with an imponderable conundrum with which they could never cope without a revolution in thought.

Downloaded from www.socialcredit.com.au

The investors in these plants having spent all their money in their construction, would be anticipating a millennium of dividends. Since all labour is superfluous for the next 1,000 years, all the other people could anticipate a long pause in incomes receivable. There being no effective market for any product, since there is no income out there, there are no dividends either. The destiny of humanity is now analogous with the maggot, who starved to death because his apple was too big!

It is at this point that rocket science must come to the rescue. Money must be seen for what it is; to continue worshipping it as a supreme and inviolable entity in now clearly terminal. Money is a ticket system whose purpose is to facilitate production *and distribution*. It has no value whatever outside of its contribution towards efficiency *in terms of human satisfaction*.

If society can produce a super abundance for no current input, this is clearly a profit of “one super abundance”. In order to distribute this profit to the shareholders (the citizen inheritors of this industrial know-how), a rocket scientist would no doubt calculate the number of tickets required to distribute it, create them, and distribute them equally to all (if he were a democrat). The owners of the plant, now able to sell their products, would no doubt receive an additional dividend and liquidate some of the debt raised to build the plant. Ensuing cycles of production would be treated likewise.

The Third Age of Man will begin modestly (most probably) when some country issues a small national dividend aimed at funding some small part of a deficiency of purchasing power. That such deficiencies are continually generated is now universally accepted in all nations, as none fail to increase their money existent every year. In normal years they do this by above 10%.

Thus far, the policy towards meeting a situation in which we cannot buy society’s product with the money available to us, is in large measure, to finance the building of an even greater productive capacity. This distributes wages with which to buy today’s product. It also transfers onto tomorrow’s greater capacity the cost of today’s wages. The alternatives here are either to consume like gluttonous lunatics to keep it all going, or to starve in recession because consumption, while adequate for human needs, is inadequate for financial needs (when orthodox).

The opponents of social credit see it in dramatic terms, where at some point, with a tumultuous shout the workers down tools, descend upon the closest warm beaches, and live out their lives in dissipation, indulgence, sloth and gluttonous irresponsibility.

On the contrary, the workers believe that dividends are only for rich people, and that such as they, could never aspire to live in a society in which all progressively, and increasingly, participated in a National Dividend. Labour Leaders tug the forelock at their Bankers for maintaining work (which they represent) as the lot of man. Conservative Leaders tug the forelock before their Bankers, for maintaining the worker state of submission to the Bosses.

Downloaded from www.socialcredit.com.au

Since you have come this far, I will presume that you are either impervious to shock, or an academic psychiatrist studying madness. In either case, you, and probably only you, will be able to cope with the coming profanity. The chilling cry of the Age of Service in birth pangs is

“Workers of the world unite, you have nothing to lose but your jobs!”

The extent to which a worker is in receipt of some National Dividend payments, is the exact extent to which he can desist from prostituting his working life to external impositions, and offer his services to others in love, because he is in this measure beyond the dictation of needs.

Marx always believed that the bosses were, and should be, paramount. His bosses were to be appointed by government, instead of privately, with increased powers because there could only be one employer in the Government.

The loss of jobs will not be with cataclysmic suddenness. It is a remorseless, irresistible glacial process which will free men from work, in spite of the “everybody must work all the time” brigade, forever eulogising full employment. Mondayitis may be a forgotten affliction in coming generations.

The Swiss are now (2013) in the throes of holding a referendum which if passed, will guarantee every citizen a reasonably comfortable minimum income, irrespective of all other considerations. Whether passed or not, and whether financed in the right way or not, this is part of the aforesaid glacial shift which is carrying us all towards less employment. Indeed many may kick and scream, tearing their hair as they lament the demise of the despot demanding that we serve for lucre, but still, the caravan will ever move on.

Whoever said “Blessed are the meek: for they shall inherit the earth?”

Footnotes:

1. The Commonwealth Year Book, 2012, published by the Australian Bureau of Statistics, also credits Australian farmers with producing 15.8 kg of cotton lint and 17.9 kg of wool for every man, woman and child, every year. So much for the scarcity of food and clothing. It also tells us there are 7.6 million occupied private dwellings in Australia with an average of only 2.6 persons residing in each. Scarcity?
2. Giles Milton, *White Gold*, 2004, Hodder & Stoughton

