

On this, the dedication of the new law buildings of the great University of Chicago, I am asked to identify the characteristics of our age which future historians should weigh when attempting to understand our period. Ours is said to be an era of social change comparable in significance to any in history. Domestically, this is thought to be reflected in the problem of assimilating the Negro, and, on the world stage, in the struggle to establish an International body of law to govern the conduct of Nations.

Basically, however, I think a great struggle is going on, obscured perhaps by the excitement of convulsive change. It is not at all a new struggle, but merely our chapter in a struggle that never ends.

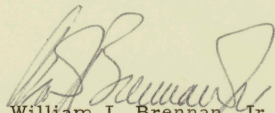
Reluctant though we as a people have been to see it, ours is not an age of science, as so many think, or of technology or atomic energy, but an age dominated by politics, and all too often selfish power politics. In the face of political pressures, both at home and abroad, the retention and development of our freedom will continue to be, as it is today, the supreme concern of our times. The struggle of centuries in England for freedom culminated in the acceptance of the doctrine of the supremacy of law, and that doctrine has been expanded here not only in our written Con-

stitution but in the very spirit of our people. Despite our more than occasional lapses from vigilance in the protection of our rights, our freedom has grown from year to year. The protection of our growing concept of freedom in the rapidly shifting environment of our times and in the face of many adverse forces is the grand task of American law today. Justice between individuals necessarily follows in the wake of freedom of the citizen against his Government. Indeed, complete justice is possible only in the realm of freedom, where justice is a matter of right and not merely of governmental grace.

The primary mission of us all has been and at the present moment is to preserve individual freedom - freedom of thought and action - to the fullest extent possible consistent with the public welfare. Over the centuries our freedom is largely to be traced to lawyers at the bar, lawyers on the bench, and lawyers in the legislature. The modernization of the law, its adaptation to the needs of our times must be thought through in terms of freedom if we are to get the greatest good out of the potentialities of every individual. It is only within recent years that we have had occasion to think of freedom except in terms of peace. Now we have to consider freedom in terms of cold war, preparation for actual war, war itself, recovery from war and the emergencies attendant on war, and in a world which daily witnesses miracles

of science undreamed of a quarter of a century ago. Even the Constitution must be restudied in terms of these basic realities, with which we apparently have to live for years to come.

Thus there is really nothing peculiar to our age. The problems may differ in shape, but in kind they are the problems of every age. Many men are proud, selfish, desirous of power and wealth. There are many men too who are honest, charitable and deeply desirous of the well-being of their fellow man. The struggle is essentially the challenge of freedom. You of 2008 will better be able to look back and say how well we met the challenge.



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