



## There's Theory and There's Reality

The great American statesmen J. Reuben Clark Jr. noted: "Tradition has it that Solon, the great law-giver declared in reply to the taunt 'Are these the best laws you can devise?' 'No! but they are the best the Greeks can bear!'"



Clark responds, "There is always a wide margin between the theoretically perfect and the practically enforceable law."

He is right. And if a few more of us would weigh this bit of wisdom, and come to understand it, and finally strike rock solid belief on its count accompanied by action, the cause of liberty and any hope for our country remaining sovereign would benefit by it.

I mean to say if some of my conservative friends who still stand behind this nonsensical neo-con/Wilsonian/ultimately socialist penchant for imposing democracy on the world — and note: it is not our republican form of government they keep imposing but the unitary parliamentary model — America would benefit by it.

And I mean to say if some of my libertarian friends who are religiously attached to "free trade or bust!" — a free trade, by the way, that was not the policy of our forefathers (they believed in and practiced fair trade); and is only a figment of the imagination in a world full of managed and heavily regulated economies (especially our own), regional and international trade arrangements (with their thousands of pages of regulations and unelected bureaucrats), and nations that hate us, hate our religious freedom, our families, our private property, and what free enterprise remains among us — America would benefit by it.

It must be asked again and again, why all the theorizing on this matter when so-called free trade isn't free, never has been believed or practiced, is certainly not complied with by our competitors, and is being used, as a matter of design, by our enemies as a weapon against us to transfer our wealth and technology to them. And why oh why insist that America, America alone be COMPELLED to comply?

Again it must be asked, why not focus the same money, the same intellectual energy on freeing up America's free enterprise zone first? Why not first target the EPA, and OSHA, and the Department of Energy, and the FCC, and right on through and through the regulatory alphabet soup of socialist and fascist agencies that crush free enterprise right here at home, so that they may be shut up and shut down? before even dreaming, before even DREAMING of saving the world under an economic 'free trade' Utopia? I was taught in Sunday School that the natural order of things is to 'set one's own house in order first,' and I believe it. America would benefit by it.

But returning to theory one last time; theory is a wonderful thing. It wets the imagination, and it rarely hurts to engage imagination, so long as the imagination's dreams can be applied to reality in practical ways, so long as they are abandoned when they cannot, or if not abandoned at least put up on the shelf for reexamination at a later date when conditions may have changed. Jefferson as a young man theorized about and believed in absolute free trade. As President of the United States he engaged in trade wars (for good or ill) and imposed embargoes against the British who still refused to honor all their obligations as promised by treaty after the Revolutionary War. There's theory and there's reality.



Written by [Steve Farrell](#) on August 17, 2010

---

Jefferson as a young man believed our Republican form of government could be transported successfully to Europe and that free trade with Europe would expedite the case and even usher in an age of peace. And so he, unlike Washington, Adams, and Hamilton, joined the Jacobins in standing behind the French Revolution. That bloodbath maneuver for tyranny masquerading as a war for “liberty, equality, and fraternity” taught him that only an educated and moral people are ready for republicanism. He abandoned all hope that Europe would see such liberty in his day, and predicted so far as South and Central America goes (which he said was populated by an uneducated and superstitious people) that it would take centuries before our form would take firmly in their lands. Indeed, if it were attempted before education and solid religious morals were widely found among them he predicted constant revolutions. Said he reflecting this maturer view: “If a nation expects to be uneducated and free; it expects what never was and never will be.” The more mature thinking Jefferson was right. There’s theory and there’s reality.

Jefferson too was such an extreme state rights man (nothing against state rights) that while a citizen of Virginia he opposed national days of VOLUNTARY prayer (he upheld state days calling for voluntary prayer, however, for that business he believed belonged to the states), and frequently referred to the federal government as the “foreign government” to emphasize their limited sphere of constitutional influence. Good point. But as President, having a national view in mind, and a national crisis at hand, called for a national day of voluntary prayer. America needed Heaven’s help. Good point too. There’s theory and there’s reality.

Jefferson also is among the first to introduce legislation against slavery in colonial America; but the British refused to hear it and mandated slavery continue. Jefferson also inserted an anti-slavery provision into the original draft of the Declaration of Independence; but a couple of states (Georgia was one) would not join in the fight if the clause remained. Jefferson removed it. Union and victory over the British tyrants must come first, he reasoned, or ALL is lost. “All things must be done in wisdom and order,” says the scripture. Further, Jefferson complying with state law continued to own slaves. That he treated the slaves he owned like family, educated them, freed them at his death (contrary to what some revisionists claim), and continued to advance anti-slavery legislation, ideas, and influence to his death reflects his true beliefs. But there’s theory and there’s reality.

James Madison observed in Federalist 51: “But what is government itself, but the greatest of all reflections on human nature? If men were angels, no government would be necessary. If angels were to govern men, neither external nor internal controls on government would be necessary. In framing a government which is to be administered by men over men, the great difficulty lies in this: you must first enable the government to control the governed; and in the next place oblige it to control itself. A dependence on the people is, no doubt, the primary control on the government; but experience has taught mankind the necessity of auxiliary precautions.”

Indeed. There’s theory and there’s reality.

**Steve Farrell** is one of the original pundits at Silver Eddy Award Winner, [NewsMax.com \(1999-2008\)](#), associate professor of political economy at [George Wythe University](#), the author of the highly praised inspirational novel “[Dark Rose](#),” and editor in chief of [The Moral Liberal](#).



## Subscribe to the New American

Get exclusive digital access to the most informative, non-partisan truthful news source for patriotic Americans!

Discover a refreshing blend of time-honored values, principles and insightful perspectives within the pages of "The New American" magazine. Delve into a world where tradition is the foundation, and exploration knows no bounds.

From politics and finance to foreign affairs, environment, culture, and technology, we bring you an unparalleled array of topics that matter most.



### What's Included?

- 24 Issues Per Year
- Optional Print Edition
- Digital Edition Access
- Exclusive Subscriber Content
- Audio provided for all articles
- Unlimited access to past issues
- Coming Soon! Ad FREE
- 60-Day money back guarantee!
- Cancel anytime.

**Subscribe**