

(B) The free democratic institutions of the West were invented and established by people who believed that rational thinking about the common experience of mankind would always lead to the same ultimate conclusions. Though there were differences of opinion on how such institutions might be arranged and maintained, there was a general agreement that all problems could be solved through free debate and by scientific investigation, but only if all those people involved in debate and investigation kept to the same ideas of the common good. In other words, they were expected to use the same standards of reason for reaching the truth and for distinguishing good from evil.

It is quite clear that no sharp line can be drawn in any community between people who do and people who do not support the common good. It is not a simple matter, something that could be scientifically proven, to say that one particular person or group holds to one extreme or the other. However, although there are many shades and degrees in between, the two different positions can be defined rather clearly. Where there is a solid adherence of everybody to the same idea of what is good, a true community does exist; where there is division and dissent over the main principles, the result is a condition of violent conflict just below the surface. Such cases of divided societies may be seen in many historical periods, and the threat may always be perceived that any society could fall into such a divided, potentially violent state. What is required in the maintenance and formation of a true community is something like a thread which holds the pieces of a fabric together.

17. According to the text, Western institutions of democracy depend basically upon

- (a) ambition for power.
- (b) human inventiveness.
- (c) reason and goodwill.
- (d) social perfectibility.

18. According to the author, a true community is one in which people

- (a) can freely express their opinions.
- (b) clearly distinguish good and evil.
- (c) have the same basic beliefs on social issues.
- (d) need not worry about war.

19. In the last sentence, "something like a thread which holds the pieces of a fabric together" symbolizes a

- (a) division of society on a class basis.
- (b) sharp definition of human society.
- (c) social philosophy that unifies people.
- (d) tool for rational, scientific observation.