

effectively we may hope to check them. A profounder insight into the nature of the economic forces and their action may enable us to control and enlighten them. But this was not possible either to the optimism of a blind idolatry or the pessimism of a despairing acquiescence. If laws and institutions are not omnipotent neither are they wholly impotent. The play of individual desires produces many results that outrage the general conscience, and, as we can control the lightning so soon as we understand it, we may hope, as we come better to understand the economic forces, indefinitely to increase our control of them, till we can make the ever-present vigilance of the individual's desire to accomplish his own purposes subject to the control of public aims, and so harness individualism to the car of collectivism, avail ourselves of its prodigious economies and yet say to it, when it would rage destructively, "hitherto shalt thou go and no further."

The purpose of the investigations we have now completed has been to make some contribution towards that understanding upon which all fruitful action must be based.