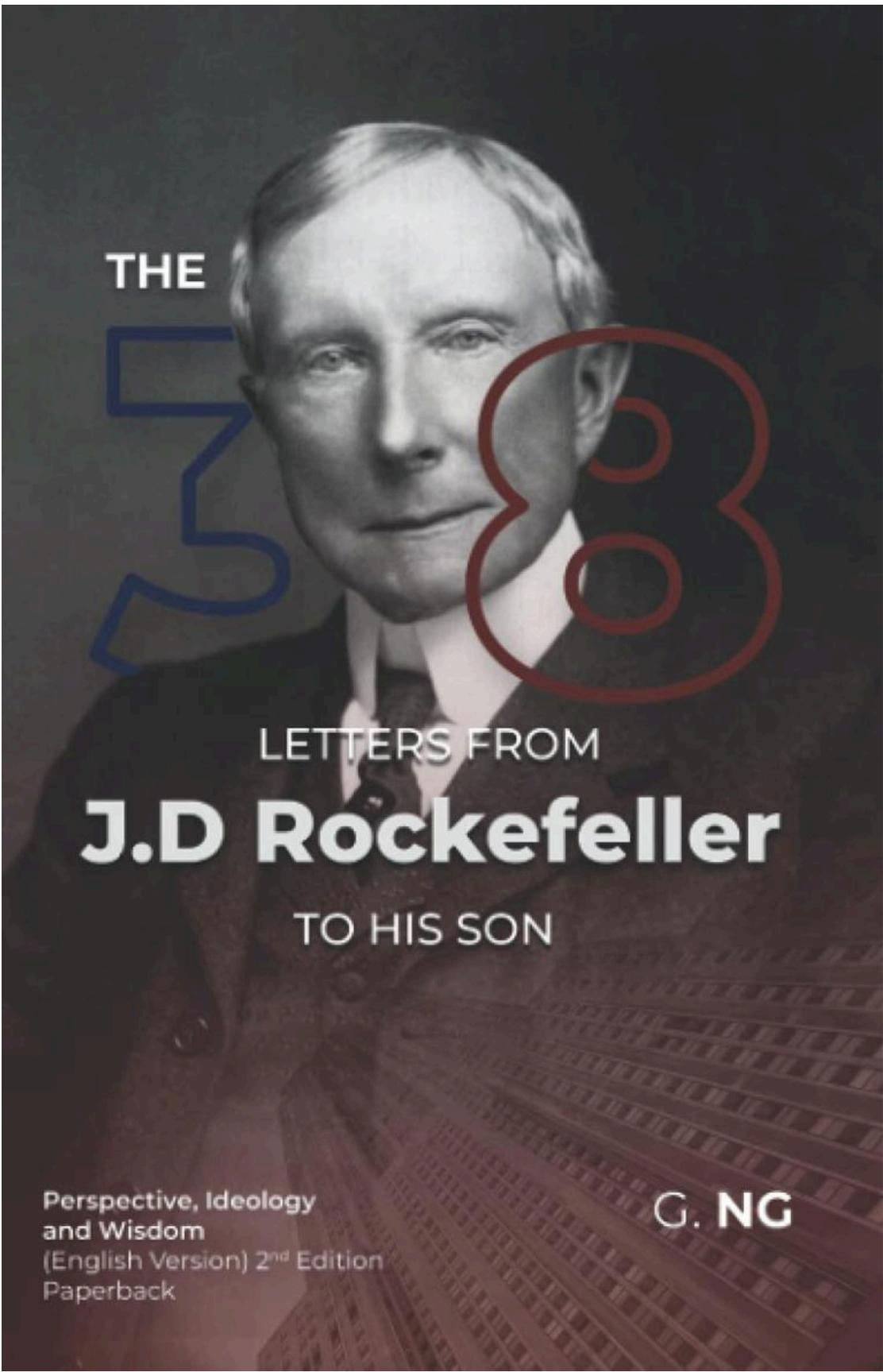
A black and white portrait of J.D. Rockefeller, an elderly man with white hair, wearing a suit and tie. The portrait is the central focus. Overlaid on the image are two large, stylized numbers: a blue '3' on the left and a red '8' on the right. The background of the entire cover is a dark, high-angle photograph of a skyscraper's facade, showing a grid of windows and architectural lines.

THE

LETTERS FROM
J.D. Rockefeller
TO HIS SON

**Perspective, Ideology
and Wisdom**
(English Version) 2nd Edition

G. Ng



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The 38 Letters from

J.D. Rockefeller to his son

The letters written by Rockefeller to his son imparting his perspectives, ideology, and wisdom to his son.

Compiled and Translated

by

G. Ng

Edited by M. Tan

2nd Edition

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Foreword

There were times of the very low, there were times of the very high. But what goes up, must come down.

In compiling this book, a lot of the stories and letter written greatly resonated with me. As you read through the letters, empty your cup and read them with a set of clear perspective.

For it allows me to be guided, I hope it is for you as well.

To all my failures and rejections, you may have thrown me down, but you will never strip me off the passion I have for entrepreneurship.

For it is with my loved one that stands by me, I ought to bring about what I truly seek.

3

LETTER

1

Starting points do not determine your end point

Our destiny is determined by our actions, not by our origins.

People who are privileged but have no power are a waste, while those who are educated but uninfluenced are a pile of worthless rubbish.

(Men of privilege without power are waste-material. Men of enlightenment without influence are the poorest kind of rubbish.)

July 20, 1897

Dear John:

You hope that I can sail with you forever, this sounds great, but I am not your eternal captain. God created feet for us to let us walk on our own.

Maybe you are not ready to go alone, but you need to know that the challenging and magical business world that I am in is the starting point of your new life. You will start from there in order to participate in the feast of life that you have never enjoyed before and that relates to your future. As for how you use the knives and forks that are placed in front of you, and how you taste every dish served by the angel of destiny is entirely up to you.

Of course, I expect you to stand out from the crowd in future and outdo me. However, I have decided to keep you by my side, because I want to bring you to a higher starting point in life, so that you can indulge in the rapid opportunities without having to face obstacles.

Of course, there is nothing worth showing off or for you to feel gratified about, and you do not need to be grateful. The founding belief of the United States of America is that all human beings are created equal, but this equality is only present in the context of rights and laws. It has nothing to do with economic and cultural advantages. Think of our world as a high mountain.

When your parents live on the peak of the mountain, you are destined to not live at the foot of the mountain; likewise when your parents live at the foot of the mountain, you are destined to not live on the peak of the mountain. In most cases, the status of parents will determine the starting point of their child's life.

But this does not mean that everyone has a different starting point and life outcomes. In this world, there is never a saying of inheriting wealth or poverty, same goes to inheriting success or failure. The only truth is that as long as you work hard enough, you will succeed. I firmly believe that our destiny is determined by our actions, not by our origins.

As you know, when I was young, my family was very poor. I remember that the books I

read when I was in high school were bought by my kind neighbours. In the beginning of my career as a bookkeeper, I was only earning a weekly salary of 5 dollars. But it was only through unremitting efforts that have enabled me to establish an enviable oil kingdom. In the eyes of others, this may seem

to be a legend, but I think it is the reward for my perseverance and hard work from the god of destiny.

John, opportunities will always be unequal, but the results prove otherwise. In history, whether in politics or businesses, (especially in businesses), there has been many examples of successful people who started from scratch. They have had only a few opportunities because of poverty, but they eventually achieved fame because of their past struggles. However, history has also been filled with examples of rich children who were privileged but have failed in life. According to a study that was conducted in Massachusetts on 17 wealthy people, it was revealed that none of their children left the world wealthy.

A long time ago, there was a story in society that satirized the incompetence of rich children. It mentioned that in a small bar in Philadelphia, a guest was talking about a millionaire when he said, "He is a self-made millionaire." "Yeah," a smarter man next to him replied, "He inherited 20 million dollars, but now he is only left with a million."

This is a distressing story but in our society today, the rich children are caught between advancing and retreating. Many of them are destined to be sympathetic and pitiful, and even, go to hell.

The glory and success of the family cannot guarantee the future of its children and grandchildren. I admit that the early advantage is really helpful, but it does not guarantee them a victory in the end. I have thought about this distressing problem for rich children more than once.

I feel that once rich children begin taking advantage of their family success, they will have little opportunity to learn and develop the skills needed for survival. People of poorer backgrounds will actively develop their creativity, abilities, while also cherishing and seizing various opportunities because

they urgently need to rescue themselves. I have also observed that the kind of ambition of the rich children have, often lacks the motivation and attributes the poor, hence they resort to praying for their own success.

Therefore, when you and your sisters were very young, I deliberately concealed the fact that I was well off. I instilled many values such as frugality and personal struggle in you because I know that the quickest way to harm someone is to give them money. It can make people corrupt, depraved, arrogant, and cause them to lose their source of happiness. I cannot bury my beloved children with wealth, and foolishly make you all into one that is incompetent and only depends on the success of their parents.

A truly happy person is one who is able to enjoy his creation. Those of whom that are like sponges that only takes without giving will only lose happiness.

I believe that there is not one person in the world that does not long for a happy and luxurious life, yet not many people truly understand where it comes from. In my opinion, it does not come from wealthy blood, nor from a luxurious lifestyle, but from a luxurious character – the spirit of self-reliance. Only by looking at noble people who have won the respect of the world 5

and exhibit charisma wherever they go, will we then know the worth of independence.

John, every move of yours will be of concern to me. However, as compared to being concerned, I am more confident in you, and I believe in your excellent character – a character that is more valuable than any wealth in the world, that will help you pave a good future, and lead a successful and fulfilling life

But you need to strengthen the belief that even though the starting point will affect the outcome, it does not determine it. Factors such as ability, attitude, character, ambition, method, experience, and luck play an extremely important role in life and the business world. Your life has just begun, but a battle of life is in front of you. I can deeply feel that you want to be the winner of this war, but you must know that everyone has the will to pursue victory, and only those who are determined and ready will win.

My son, the privileged but powerless people are a waste, while the educated but unaffected people are a pile of worthless garbage. Find your own way and God will help you!

Love,

Your Father

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LETTER

2

Luck depends on planning

Everyone is a designer and architect of his own destiny.

I do not live by God-given luck, but I do-so by planning luck.

When waiting for luck, you must know how to guide luck; to design luck is to design life.

(He who marches in rank and file has already earned my contempt. He has been given a large brain by mistake, since for him the spinal cord would suffice.) January 20, 1900

Dear John:

Some people are destined to be dazzling Kings or great men, because of their extraordinary talents, for example, Mr. McCormick, who has a head of luck and knows how to turn a harvester into a sickle for harvesting banknotes.

In my eyes, Old McCormick has always been an ambitious and commercially capable industrial giant. He used harvesting machines to liberate American farmers, and he also rose to the ranks to become one of the richest person in the United States. The French seem to like him more and praised him to be “the world’s greatest contributor”. Oh, this really is an unexpected reward.

This business genius who was once just an ordinary farm tool merchant once had an esoteric saying which went: “Luck is the remnant of design.”

This phrase does sound quite brainy. Does it mean that luck is the result of planning and strategy? Or does it mean that luck is what remains after planning? My experience tells me that these two meanings exist. In other words, we create our own luck, and no action can eliminate it.

Luck is the gospel that is difficult to get rid of in the planning process.

McCormick saw the true meaning of luck and opened his door to it. So, I am not surprised that McCormick harvesters' product can be sold all over the world.

However, in this world of ours, it is difficult to find people who are good at planning luck like Mr. McCormick, and it is difficult to find people who do not believe in yet understands luck.

In the eyes of ordinary people, luck is always innate. As long as they find out someone has 7

attained success or have been promoted, they will say casually, with contempt: "This man's luck is so good, it is luck that helped him!" Such a person can never have a peek into the truth that makes one successful: everyone is a designer and architect of his own destiny.

I admit, just like a person cannot have no money, a person cannot have no luck. However, if you want to make a difference, you cannot wait for luck to patronize. My credo is: I do not live by God-given luck, but I do-so by planning luck. I believe that a good plan will affect luck, and in any case, it can successfully affect luck. My plan to turn competition into cooperation in the oil industry justified this.

Before the plan began, the oil refiners fought for their own interests, which led to a devastating competition between them. This kind of competition is

certainly a boon for consumers, but falling oil prices are a disaster for oil refiners. At that time, the vast majority of refiners were a loss, and were successively sliding into bankruptcy.

I am well aware that if we were to be profitable again and make money forever, we must tame this industry and have everyone act rationally. I regard it as a responsibility, but it is very difficult to do, it requires a plan – a plan that places all the oil refining businesses under my control.

John, to be a good hunter in a profitable hunting ground, you need to think hard, be careful, be able to see all possible dangers and opportunities in things, as well as study all kinds of strategies that could endanger your dominance like a chess player. I thoroughly researched the situation and evaluated my strength. I decided to use the base camp of Cleveland as my first battlefield to launch a war in order to rule the oil industry. After conquering more than 20

competitors there, I moved quickly to open up a second battlefield until I conquered all of their opponents and established an oil industry and a new order.

Just like a commander on the battlefield, you must first know what kind of firearm to choose in order to be the most effective, before choosing your target. In order for me to successfully realize my plan to place the oil industry under my command, a thorough solution is needed. That's money. I needed a lot of money to buy those refineries that overproduce. But the amount of money on my hands was not enough to realize my plan, so I decided to form a joint stock company to attract investors from outside the industry. Soon we registered a standard oil company in Ohio with millions of assets, and the capital expanded significantly within three and a half years but deciding when to do it is a matter of knowledge.

Visionary businessmen are always good at finding opportunities in every disaster, and that's how I did it. Before we started our journey of conquest, the oil industry was in chaos and there was no hope at all. Ninety percent of the refiners in Cleveland had been crushed by the increasingly fierce competition. If they did not sell the factory, they can only watch themselves go extinct. This was the best time to acquire an opponent.

It seems unethical to take an acquisition at times like these, but it really has nothing to do with conscience. An enterprise is like a battlefield, and the purpose of strategic goals is to create the most beneficial state for oneself. For strategic considerations, the first target I chose to conquer was not a small company that was vulnerable, but the strongest opponent, Clark 8

Payne. This company was well-known in Cleveland and were ambitious, as they wanted to acquire my star oil refinery.

But before the opponent decides, I will have to strike first to gain the upper hand. I took the initiative to meet the largest shareholder of Clark Payne, my old friend in middle school, Mr.

Oliver Payne, and I told him that the chaotic and sluggish era of the oil industry should end in order to protect the industry that countless families depend on for survival. I wanted to build a huge, high-performance oil company, and welcomed him to join. My plan impressed Payne, and finally they agreed to sell the company for 400,000 dollars.

I know that Clark Payne is not worth that amount at all, but I did not reject them. Acquiring Clark Payne meant that I would gain the title of the world's largest oil refinery and will also serve as a strong pioneer in the industry to efficiently bring together the refiners in Cleveland.

This trick really worked. In less than two months, there were 22 competitors under the leadership of Standard Oil, which eventually made me the big winner of that acquisition battle. This gave me unstoppable momentum. In the following three years, I conquered oil refiners in Philadelphia, Pittsburgh, and Baltimore successively, and became the only master of the oil refining industry in the United States.

Come to think about it, am lucky if I were to only lament on my bad luck at that time and follow the crowd, I might have been conquered. But I planned my luck.

Anything can happen in this world, but nothing can happen without doing anything (reap without sowing). Those who blindly follow the crowd and rules, I view them with disdain. Their brains are entangled with wrong thoughts, as they think that it is worth being complacent just by being able to withdraw themselves.

John, for our good luck to continue, we must carefully plan our luck, and planning luck requires a good plan. A good plan must be a good design, and a good design must be able to play a role. You need to know that when designing a good design, you must first consider two basic prerequisites. The first condition is to know your goals, such as what you want to do, or even what kind of person you want to become; the second condition is knowing what resources you have, such as status, money, interpersonal relationships, and even abilities.

The order of these two basic prerequisites is interchangeable. You may have an idea and/or a goal before you start looking for goals that can be achieved from these resources, or you can also mix them together to form the third and fourth methods, such as having a certain goal and a certain resource. To achieve your goal, you need to selectively choose and create some resources,

and also own some resources and a goal, to which afterwards you can adjust your goals accordingly

After adjusting the goal according to the resource or the goal, you have a foundation – you can conceive the design structure, and the rest is up to you to fill it with your means and time, while waiting for luck to come.

You need to remember that my son, designing luck is designing life. So, while you wait for luck, you need to know how to guide your luck. Give it a try.

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Love,

Your Father

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LETTER

3

Comparing Heaven and Hell

The greatest reward for our hard work is not what we get, but what we will become.

If you view work as a pleasure, life is heaven; if you view work as a duty, life is hell.

(With this faith we will be able to hew out of the mountain of despair a stone of hope.) November 9, 1897

Dear John:

There is an allegory that is very meaningful and provided me with a lot of insights.

The fable said:

In ancient Europe, a man found himself in a wonderful place where he could enjoy everything in his afterlife.

As soon as he stepped into the piece of music, someone who looked like a waiter came over and asked him: "Sir, do you have any needs? Here you can have everything you want: delicious food, all possible forms of entertainment and all kinds of pastimes, amongst them are many beautiful young women where you can enjoy as you please."