

Volume 3

# A Word in Season:

Daily Messages on the Faith for All of Life

R. J. Rushdoony

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## “Another King, One Jesus”

A recurring charge against the early church is set forth plainly by Jason of Thessalonica in Acts 17:7, “[T]hese all do contrary to the decrees of Caesar, saying there is another king, one Jesus.” This charge was true. Wherever the church began, there Christians opposed the way of the world. In those days as now, abortion, homosexuality, prostitution, and more were commonplace and accepted. Thessalonica, like Corinth, was a port city and full of the evils then commonplace. We have explicit data on Corinth, where the city established a temple to Venus as an official house of prostitution, with 1,000 young slaves who were required to charge no more than a single obolus, or one cent. For the wealthy businessmen, the best hetaerae charged \$1,000 a night.

All the records indicate that very early the Christians confronted the permissive laws of the Roman Empire with the higher law of King Jesus. By calling Him Christ, or Messiah, they were declaring Him to be God’s anointed King over the nations. All men and nations had a duty, the church declared, to believe in and obey the King of kings and Lord of lords.

They dared to speak boldly because they believe God’s Word very literally. Isaiah 60:12 had declared, “For the nation and kingdom that will not serve thee [the Lord] shall perish; yea, those nations shall be utterly wasted.” Salvian the Presbyter saw the fall of Rome as the vindication of the Word of God.

The Christians triumphed, despite the bloody persecution, because they believed in and obeyed their King, Jesus Christ, and they challenged and fought against the evils of their day. They never doubted that “whatsoever is born of God overcometh the world: and this is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith” (1 John 5:4). Do you share their faith and their holy boldness?

# The King of Kings

Paul, in 1 Timothy 6:15, speaks of Jesus Christ as “the blessed and only Potentate, the King of kings, and Lord of lords.” Ernest Gordon translated the latter part of this verse as “the King of those kinging it, the Lord of those lording it.” Behind all the powers of history, in other words, stands the Great King, Jesus Christ.

This Great King allows men and nations to pursue their evil dreams and to work out their sins. Thus, what men in their evil imaginations see as the solution to man’s problems becomes in time their curse. The storms of history then in due time sweep away all things that are not founded on the Rock. As Paul says in Hebrews 12:22–29, the things which are all around us, and we ourselves, are being shaken so that only those things which cannot be shaken may remain.

We must therefore expect crises which will shake us. They will come from the Great King to test us and to prove us. We have no right to expect God to treat us as fragile cut glass.

Isaac Watts, in his great hymn “Am I a Soldier of the Cross?” (1724), asked,

Must I be carried to the skies  
On flow’ry beds of ease,  
While others fought to  
win the prize,  
And sailed through  
bloody seas?

Watts then said, “Sure I must fight if I would reign,” and he prayed for courage to endure as a good soldier of Christ.

We are in a time of shaking. The Great King is allowing men and nations to pursue their course to its deadly end. We shall be shaken. The question we need to ask ourselves is this: are we earthquake-proof? Are we so grounded in Christ that we cannot be shaken?

# Change

Things change in this world. Since my birth, twelve presidents have occupied the White House, and the country has undergone drastic changes. To return to once familiar places is sometimes a shock, because the differences are so dramatic. The river where I fished as a boy looks radically different. I lost my way in my university city, because the familiar landmarks were gone. Looking in the mirror, I realize that I have changed too. I saw some pictures of our present home site more than fifty years ago, when it was a gold mine; it was so very different then, because so many trees have grown back and filled the area, and some hills have been bulldozed and smoothed out. Things change, and so do we.

God's salvation and grace remain unchanged amidst all the changes of life. God tells us, "[T]he mountains shall depart, and the hills be removed; but my kindness shall not depart from thee, neither shall the covenant of my peace be removed" (Isa. 54:10). In Isaiah 51:6, He makes His promise even stronger: "Lift up your eyes to the heavens, and look upon the earth beneath: for the heavens shall vanish away like smoke, and the earth shall wax old like a garment ... but my salvation shall be for ever, and my righteousness shall not be abolished."

All the changes of the world are God's earthquakes, designed to shatter the things that need to be destroyed. We are plainly told that all the things that are must be shaken so that only those things that cannot be shaken may remain (Heb. 12:26–29).

We must therefore hold fast to Christ, who cannot change. We must have a faith that cannot be shaken. All the shakings, earthquakes, and changes of our life can be the means of our strengthening, so that we may become steadfast and unshakable.

As I look out of my study window at the beauty and majesty of the mountains, it is a joy to know that, while they may depart, God's kindness,

covenant, and salvation never shall. He is the same, yesterday, today, and forever.

# The Resurrection

At one point in a hearing before King Agrippa, St. Paul asks a question: “Why should it be thought a thing incredible with you, that God should raise the dead?” (Acts 26:8). The king never answered that question.

Men at that time did not dare question the resurrection of Jesus Christ. There were too many eyewitnesses: on one occasion the witnesses numbered “above five hundred” (1 Cor. 15:6). Later in the apostolic age, when the witnesses had mostly died, skeptical remarks were made because the witnesses were safely dead.

Why, asked Paul, is the idea so incredible to you? Men believe in all kinds of marvels in the natural realm; why should the God who made all things not be capable of greater wonders?

But the Roman world had a problem with the resurrection. Rome believed that the pinnacle of all power was the Roman Empire; the senate declared what men could become gods, so that even the gods were creatures of Rome. For Rome to believe in a power not of this world controlling all things was anathema. For someone whom they had executed by crucifixion to have risen from the dead meant that He had more power than imperial Rome. This they refused to believe, and they soon called the notion a superstition.

Rome is now gone, but the question remains. The risen Christ, as King of all creation, stands over all men and nations as their Lord. All their powers are as nothing before His dominion and government. Then, as Paul sums it up, indeed He “is the blessed and only Potentate, the King of kings, and Lord of lords” (1 Tim. 6:15).

This means too that in time every knee shall bow before Him, “and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father” (Phil. 2:10–11).

From before Rome's day until now, the reins of human government have often been in evil hands, with sorry results. Behind all this stands the risen Lord, making all things work together for good for His people and Kingdom (Rom. 8:28). Therefore, rejoice!

## God and the Future

A few years ago, a prominent professor stated, "The future had not yet happened and therefore cannot produce any effect in the present." Many people agree. The future, they hold, is open to all kinds of possibilities, and to all kinds of lifestyles, and there is nothing to bind man in any fashion.

As Christians, we cannot agree with this at all. The future, like the past and present, is totally governed by God. According to Acts 15:18, "Known unto God are all his works from the beginning of the world." God, God's law, and God's judgment govern and determine the future, and nothing happens apart from the providence of God.

In fact, the ground of Christian confidence is that God, made known to us as our Lord and Savior in Jesus Christ, absolutely governs and determines all things, and that the future comes from His hands. It is not the communists, ungodly men anywhere, or man in any form who determine the future but only God Almighty.

This was the confidence of the Psalmist in Psalm 46. The world of his day was an extremely violent one, violent in earthquakes and disasters as well as in the warrings of men and nations. The confidence of the Psalmist in the face of all these frightening developments was in the grace of God and the certainty of His government: "God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble. Therefore will not we fear, though the earth be removed, and though the mountains be carried into the midst of the sea."

To believe in God means to believe that He, not man, is the ultimate Lord and ruler over all things. It means to trust Him for our salvation, and for our todays and tomorrows. It means that we love God as our Lord and Savior, and that we look to Him for our deliverance. It means too that we fear God rather than man and the state, and that we conform ourselves to God, not man, because God alone is Lord and Savior.

Thus, if we profess to believe in God, we will show it as we look to the future in terms of God, not man. All too many who claim to be Christians see the future as supposedly dominated by antichrist, and their faith is thereby manifested. God never for a moment surrenders the government of the universe to anything or anyone, and we had better believe it: He requires us to. He alone is God, and beside Him "there is none else" (Isa. 45:22).

## A World of Rebellion

One of the most common remarks that I have heard over the years has to do with people's objections to something in the Bible or newspapers. "A good God couldn't allow that to happen," these people will say, very earnestly.

What they mean is that God must be bound by their idea of goodness, and if He fails to meet their standard, something is wrong with God! The truth is, something is wrong with these people and their standard of goodness.

I am reminded of a spoiled child, who when denied his demands, screamed at his mother, "You don't love me." This child's standard required he be gratified as proof of love. If the mother had met his requirements, she would have shown not love, but unconcern and even hatred.

We have a world today in rebellion against God. Such a world is an evil and unsafe place: there are penalties for living in such a realm. We have a duty under God to bring this world into captivity to Christ. If we fail to do so, the problems and penalties only increase.

Our goal is defined throughout Scripture. Revelation 11:15 reveals the end result must be the glorious proclamation of victory: "The kingdoms of this world are become the kingdoms of our Lord, and of his Christ; and he shall reign for ever and ever."

Until then, the Lord will not allow this world to be a safe haven or an easy heaven for fallen man. We have locks on our doors because this is a fallen world, not heaven. There are thus risks in living here. More important, there are responsibilities to our Lord. Are you meeting them?

# Judgment

In a remarkable Psalm, David praises God for executing judgment. Life could not be endured if God's judgments did not fall upon wayward men and nations. As David surveys the world, past and present, he rejoices that God again and again destroys the evil ones and is a refuge for the oppressed. Thus evil powers come and go, "[b]ut the LORD shall endure for ever: he hath prepared his throne for judgment. And he shall judge the world in righteousness, he shall minister judgment to the people in uprightness" (Ps. 9:7-8).

God has a twofold ministry to men and nations, David tells us many times. There is a ministry of grace and a ministry of justice. Institutionally, God has ordained the church to be primarily a ministry of grace, and the state to be mainly a ministry of justice. When either or both fail to discharge their ministry faithfully, God judges them.

We too have our calling to exercise grace and justice towards all men, in our families and in our vocations. If we fail in our discharge of our functions under God, we too will be judged.

David rejoices in God's judgments. They clear the ground of history for newer and more faithful peoples. He says, "Arise, O LORD; let not man prevail" (Ps. 9:19). If God does not judge us, the alternative is that man and man's sin will prevail. The world will then become a hell, and men will be overwhelmed with evil.

Thus, the fact that God over and over again judges the world is itself an act of grace and mercy on God's part. Just as a child needs to be spanked at times to be recalled to the right way, and just as true parental discipline is an act of love, so too God's judgments are linked to His grace and His saving mercy.

## The Work of Faith

Too often men wrongly divide God's Word to give a false emphasis. James 2:26 speaks bluntly against this when it declares "faith without works is dead." Paul in 1 Thessalonians 1:3 speaks of the unity of the godly life when he thanks God for the Thessalonian believers' "work of faith, and labour of love, and patience of hope in our Lord Jesus Christ, in the sight of God and our Father." Paul speaks more than once about faith, hope, and love; here, the order is reversed, and hope is given the final place.

By the "work of faith" Paul means hard work, unselfish, self-giving work for the Lord and for His people. Churchmen nowadays separate faith and works far too much; Paul makes clear that true faith works to obey God's mandates and Word. True faith manifests itself in godly works. Faith not only changes our hearts but our works also.

The "labour of love" means the sweaty dedication to work which a man makes to provide for his family under the most difficult circumstances. We are summoned to give the same dedicated labor to the Lord and His work. Like Christ's love for us, which He showed by His crucifixion, our love must manifest "labour," work above and beyond the call of duty.

Paul's third point is the "patience of hope." The word translated as "patience" has also the meaning of steadfastness, that is, persistent action because of our hope, no matter what difficulties there may be. The focus of our faith, love, and hope, and our labors in these things, is Jesus Christ.

We now face a more troubled and failing world than the early church faced before the fall of Rome. The whole world is in deep economic distress and facing its greatest economic disaster. The political scene everywhere is an ugly one, with humanistic statism in power and hostile to the Lord.

This, however, is not a time for despair. Instead it is time for us to work in faith, love, and hope, in the confidence of our Lord's assured victory.

# Confounding the Mighty

St. Paul in 1 Corinthians 1:27 declares, "But God hath chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the wise; and God hath chosen the weak things of the world to confound the things which are mighty." The meaning of the word "confound" is very important to this verse. It is *kataischuno* in the Greek, and it means to confound and put to shame, to bring down to defeat and dishonor.

Paul tells the early church (and us) that the ungodly regard us as foolish and weak. They see themselves as the elite, and as both mighty and wise. It is their self-appointed duty to rule the world and us for our own good.

Their plans are doomed to fail. We who believe and act in the power of God are chosen by God to overturn and confound these elitist and ungodly leaders. We are ordained by God "to bring to nought" the powers that be (1 Cor. 1:28). We are destined to be overcomers and overturners.

We have thus a remarkable future in Christ, and we must prepare for it. God's plan is to use us to break the hold of the ungodly on history and to convert all things to Christ.

To found something is to establish it; to confound something is to disestablish and destroy it. In the New Testament, the words "foundation" and "founded" are the same. One of the two Greek words can mean both to conceive seed (as in Heb. 11:11) and to lay a foundation. Because Jesus Christ is our foundation, we are empowered to confound and disestablish all false faiths. We build on Christ; repentance, faith, and good works are the blocks wherewith we build (Heb. 6:1; 1 Tim. 6:19). As we build, we confound or break down the powers of evil.

The meaning is clear: to build our lives on Christ is the means of confounding the false rulers of this world.

## In God We Trust

The men of our times have no right to complain of the developing problems and crises of our world. When men trust in civil government rather than in God, they will always get more statist power in their lives and less of God's power. When men trust in controls rather than freedom, they will get more controls unto slavery and less freedom.

What men trust in becomes the power over their lives, and the god a man worships is known by what a man trusts. Our coins still read, "In God we trust," but men address their hopes and prayers to the national and state capitols and then wonder why God abandons them.

St. Paul declared, "Be not deceived; God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap" (Gal. 6:7). Harvest time is approaching for our age.

Men have sown unbelief, debt-living, a trust in what civil government can do for them rather than faith in God. They have looked to politicians for salvation rather than to Jesus Christ, and they have paid their taxes to the state and neglected their tithes to the Lord. They have given their children everything except godly nurture, and they have been rich to themselves and poor to God. Now, as they begin to see the harvest developing, they ask blindly, "Where did I go wrong?"

They want a harvest of blessings they never sowed for, and they want a Sabbath peace and rest they have always defiled, and they wonder at the results because they are blinded by their sins.

The house without foundations is destined to collapse in the storms of history, whereas the life built upon the rock of ages, Jesus Christ, will emerge secure and strong.

Look to your foundations. What is your life founded on? Where is your trust? Your life depends on it.

# The Meaning of Words

Charles Curtis once noted in discussing the language of law courts, "Legal interpretation is concerned, not with the meaning of words, but only with their boundaries." In other words, courts of law deal nowadays, not with the plain meaning of the law, but with how much can be read into the words, and how far the limits can be pushed.

The roots of this misuse of the law go back centuries, and they rest on the misuse of the Bible. The scribes and lawyers of the Old Testament era, and in New Testament times, and churchmen through the centuries, have twisted the plain meaning of Scripture to suit themselves. Thus, in plain contradiction to the Bible, many will argue today that the Bible favors abortion and homosexuality and opposes capital punishment! To give you an idea how far men have gone with this perversion, it was once argued that, since the tenth commandment, Exodus 20:17, says, "[T]hou shalt not covet thy neighbour's wife," it is not adultery if she is a stranger's wife, rather than a neighbor's!

When men treat the Word of God so callously, is it any wonder that they treat civil laws with contempt for the plain meaning of words? If God's Word is not respected, why should man's word be?

Do you want to restore meaning to the law, and to society? Then begin by believing and obeying every word that proceeds out of the mouth of God (Matt. 4:4).

God means every word He says. We cannot treat His words lightly without destroying the meaning of all words. A casual treatment of God's Word means a loss of meaning and truth in every area of life. The foundations of all life and communication are destroyed.

We cannot restore meaning to our world and society without first of all honoring the meaning of God's every word. Hear ye the Lord, and believe and obey His every word!

# Seizure and Property

The history of words sometimes tells us much about the history of man. The word "seizure" is a good example. Originally, the word "seizure" was a legal term for ownership. "Seize" meant legal possession, and "seizing" or "seisin" meant in early English law possession with quiet enjoyment. In common law "seizen in deed" means actual possession, and "seizing in law" means the right of present possession.

Now, of course, "seize" means to confiscate, to take possession by force. The word has thus come to mean its exact opposite, changing from the ownership of property to the confiscation by force of something or anything.

The history of the change in the meaning of this English word is a complex one, but basically it tells us this: the law, which should have confirmed a man in his "seizing," began to rob a man of his property. The lords and kings of England worked too often to dispossess by law a man from his property, and the law of "seizing" became a law of seizure in the modern sense. The change in the meaning of the word thus tells us of a change in the life of the kingdom.

Behind that change was a spiritual change. The Renaissance and its humanism destroyed the old sense of Christian responsibility and law, so that, in terms of Judges 21:25, because Christ was not King in the hearts of men, "every man did that which was right in his own eyes." The result was a rapid decline of honesty and godliness in every area of life and, lacking moral restraints, men began to exploit one another. Those who had the power to use the courts to do so began to confiscate the property of other men, so that the very legal term for ownership came to mean confiscation.

We are drifting closer to such a condition daily. To be a property owner is to be the target of confiscatory taxes, crime, and hostility. Men who are professed "peace lovers" are increasingly also bombers and rioters. Men

who claim to believe in a religion of love are most likely to spout hatred. Good words are used as a cover for evil ends, and peace may come to mean war someday, if this trend continues.

No reform movement can change these things more than superficially. Only Christ can change the hearts of men, and Christ will not rule a man who will not be His absolute possession. Christ is not merely a resource or a power for men to rely on but an absolute Lord and King who claims and seizes us as His property. If we are His, we must obey His law and serve His Kingdom. We are then not our own, for we “are bought with a price” by Jesus Christ (1 Cor. 6:20). He made us so that we and all creation are His property. By His redemption, we are doubly His.

If we are guilty of seizure in the modern sense, that is, if we have taken our lives as our own, to be lived apart from Christ, can we expect our world to show respect for our property when we ourselves rob God of His due? When we restore ourselves, our homes, churches, schools, civil government, and all things else to God the King, then God will restore to us what is our due property.

## The Law As a Song

Our attitude towards God's law is very defective in our day. We sinfully see the law as some kind of restraint on man, whereas God's covenant law was given to man as a sign of His love and grace. God's law is a restraint on the sinner, whose desire is to do evil, but it is the way of righteousness to the redeemed.

In Psalm 119, God Himself teaches us how to view His law. Through the Psalmist, He gives us a moving account of God's law as our comfort, as God's favor, His truth, and more. However, an especially telling verse is Psalm 119:54, "Thy statutes [or laws] have been my songs in the house of my pilgrimage."

Amazing! The law is seen as songs, joyful songs! I am reminded of a staunch old Christian who died recently, active and vigorous until close to ninety. On one occasion, a year ago, he was describing life in his youth. No one locked their doors; crime was something remote and strange, and virtually everyone in his community went to church. "America was something to sing about in those days," he said. It was something to sing about, because it was godly and law-abiding.

The Psalmist speaks of God's laws as songs, because it is faith and obedience which gives man peace, joy, and a song. The Hebrew word used in Psalm 119:54 is *zemir*, meaning a song of praise. The Psalmist was praising God for His laws, because God's law is for our peace, joy, and communion in and with Him. Just as sin destroys communion with both God and man, the godly man grows in his communion with the Lord as well as man by faithful obedience to God's law. God's statutes or laws are therefore something to sing about.

In fact, songs about the law were once more common in the church, and I can remember some of them:

The precepts of the law are right,

And fill the heart with great delight.

If we could sing it again, from the heart, perhaps we would once more see a land whose joy is in godliness rather than in sin.

# Loving God

The average Christian today gives about 3 percent of his income to the Lord's work, and this fact does not trouble him. God's Word requires a tithe.

The federal, state, and county governments require far more than a tithe of us, in fact several tithes a year. If we fail to pay, we are in trouble. The IRS, for example, is not indulgent towards tax evaders.

Then what makes us think the Lord God is indulgent? Very plainly, He tells us otherwise, and He declares that very serious consequences follow when we do not give God His due (Mal. 3:8–12).

One of the consequences of failing to render God His due is described thus by Haggai 1:6, "Ye have sown much, and bring in little; ye eat, but ye have not enough; ye drink, but ye are not filled with drink; ye clothe you, but there is none warm; and he that earneth wages earneth wages to put it into a bag with holes."

Economically, we are in troubled times, and many of us are suffering, some with grace and growth, and others with blindness. One man complained to me a few weeks ago about God's neglect of him, but he refused to face up to the fact that for years he has neglected the Lord. All that this man had ever given to the Lord was the leftovers of his time and money, but now he expected God to dash to his rescue!

Our Lord summons us, saying, "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind" (Matt. 22:37). To love God in faithfulness to this commandment means to love Him with our time and money also. Do you?

## Men and Many Sparrows

Our Lord, in Matthew 10:29–30, speaks of God’s care even for sparrows and then tells us, “Fear ye not therefore, ye are of more value than many sparrows” (v. 31). More than once in history, rulers have not seen men as of equal value with birds and animals. In English history, there was a long and bitter struggle between the people and the crown over the royal game preserves and forests. The wildlife was of more importance to the rulers than the people; and deer, for example, had the freedom to destroy a farmer’s crop, and he had no right to stop it. Historian E. P. Thompson has written that we have better statistics for the deer in Windsor Forest, over three centuries ago, than we do of the people. There was an annual census of the deer, among other things. Oliver Cromwell was very much loved by the farmers, because in his days of power he ended this higher regard for animals than for people. With Charles II, the old order returned.

We must remember that our Lord’s statement “While God has a regard for even sparrows, we who are made in His image are of far greater value” has not always been believed. The kings, lords, and ladies of Europe hold that farmers were worth less than deer and birds! Puritanism, among other things, was a strong protest against all such thinking.

This same issue is again with us. As people abandon Christ, they often show an elitist contempt for all men below them socially and financially, and an undue and abnormal regard for animals.

God’s law speaks of the need to be mindful of trees, birds, and animals. Proverbs 12:10 tells us, “A righteous man regardeth the life of his beast: but the tender mercies of the wicked are cruel.” Today we have many who are full of “tender mercies” for the environment but who are cruel to their fellow men.

Remember what our Lord says, that we are of more value than the flowers of the field, the wildlife, and many sparrows. This is God’s truth.

## Not by Bread Alone

In A.D. 840, Bertram, presbyter and monk of Corbie, France, wrote, at the request of Emperor Charles the Bald, a book on “The Body and Blood of the Lord” (*De sordore et sanguine Domini*). In explaining the sacrament, Bertram wrote, “the soul,... the heart of man, is not fed by corporal food or drink, but is nourished and grows by the word of God. It is not this bread which goes into the body, but the bread of eternal life which ministers support to the soul.” Recalling Christ’s Word to the tempter, “It is written, Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God” (Matt. 4:4), Bertram declared that man needs the bread of life, the Word of God, and God’s grace and life, to live. Returning to the elements of Communion, Bertram wrote, “For this bread and this drink are the body and blood of Christ, not according to what they appear, but according to what they spiritually minister—the substance of life.”

The substance of life, this is what people are desperately in need of today. The form of life was never in better evidence: people are richly clothed and sheltered; they live in abundance and in ease, but in spite of all this, with ulcers, fear, and discontent. There is nothing wrong in material prosperity, and much to be grateful for with respect to it, but material prosperity without the substance of life is frustration and futility.

The students at Berkeley in the 1930s were far from perfect, and they had problems. More than a few were put into Cowell Hospital by sympathetic doctors, not because they were seriously ill, but because they would eat better there. But it is today’s students who are revolutionists and rioters; many of them come from prosperous homes and have a surprising amount of spending money. They demand “rights” for themselves and our present-day poor with no real knowledge of what problems and material poverty can be. Their answer to all problems is more material possessions for all.

Material progress and wealth must be a part of the goal of any society, but any country that thinks these material advantages will solve its needs is far gone indeed. Without the substance of life, Jesus Christ, man's lot is perpetual discontent. The man who wants to solve man's problems with a purely material answer is not only wrong but dangerous, because he is a liar. When Judas talked about giving to the poor, St. John observed, "This he said, not that he cared for the poor; but because he was a thief" (John 12:6). We have many such thieves with us today.

Jesus warned, "The thief cometh not, but for to steal, and to kill, and to destroy: I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly" (John 10:10).

Some would charge that it is ridiculous to talk about the sacrament and its meaning as some kind of answer to the problems of civil disorder and poverty. What are you doing for the poor people, they demand? The answer is an obvious one: Bertram, monk of Corbie, did more for the needy of his age than do our noisy revolutionists of today who are generous only with other people's money. He had the substance of life, and he shared that life, materially and spiritually. The same is still true of Christ's flock today.

## Trick Questions

Ask the wrong questions, and you always get the wrong answers. The old trick question "Have you stopped beating your wife?" is a good example. A bad question deserves no answer, because it raises false issues and requires incriminating answers.

Another such bad question, still very widely debated, is heredity versus environment: which determines man? There are scientists on both sides of the question, and people feel duty bound to choose sides. But, from a Christian perspective, both sides are false. Both sides effectively deny human responsibility and transfer accountability away from man. To be trapped into answering on either side is to be committed to falsehood.

Much of our politics today is tied up in such trick answers which are the result of wrong questions. These problems arise out of trick questions, questions which falsify the problem and thus magnify instead of solving the crisis.

One of the worst of these tricks or devices which falsify life is the idea that, at the heart of our difficulties, there are some *problems* which need solving. Therefore, we are told, let us face these problems squarely, whether they be economic, racial, or political, and come up with the right answers. We have been trying to come up with the right answers for some time now, with no success, and one college president has expressed the fear that people are beginning to doubt that answers are possible.

Well, there are no good answers to bad questions. It is the questions which must be changed. We do have serious difficulties in the various areas of life, economic, racial, political, educational, religious, and other areas, but the essential problem is *man*. He is a sinner. Man pollutes whatever he touches as long as he remains a sinner, as long as he refuses to ask the first question, "[W]hat must I do to be saved?" (Acts 16:30). This

first question then must be followed by other right questions, so that man can learn to obey and to serve in truth and understanding.

Man's questions must be related to faith, obedience, and action. They must be real questions, essential to life, not games and puzzles which becloud issues. They must recall man to reality, and they must not further his illusions. Like God's question to Adam, "Where art thou?" (Gen. 3:9), they must compel us to face up to what we are and where we are, because only good questions can have good answers.

## Protection Against Men

People are indeed very often a problem to us. More than once, most of us have had some sad and costly experience with the foolishness and sin of men. We can add to that the fact that our own foolishness and sin is very often a problem to us.

As a result, many people have become unduly concerned about protecting themselves, their activities, their groups, clubs, churches, and communities from fools and knaves. Up to a point, such a concern is necessary, but carried to extremes, it is dangerous. There is no foolproof system for keeping such people out. As long as man is in any group, the potentiality for sin and folly is there. To be unduly concerned about protection can become a sin and folly.

The problem arose in the early church in between persecutions. Many members and pastors, faced with the threat of death from Rome, renounced Christ and His church. The churches split over this issue. Should such people be readmitted, or should the church strengthen its requirements in order to try to eliminate all such people?

Many churches took a strict stand and weeded out all problem people. These churches all perished. They had not eliminated problems, because, as long as one member remained, the potential for sin and folly was there.

Those churches which said that a profession of faith was all that could be required, and that sin and folly would have to be expected and dealt with by church discipline in terms of the Word of God, survived and prospered. They had expected perfection, not from man, but from God, and they concerned themselves more with serving Christ faithfully than with protecting themselves from men.

Both sides truly believed in Christ, and both were agreed on doctrine and Scripture. The question was something else, and the answer of action rather than protection gained God's blessing.

We can never in this life protect ourselves fully against men, because we ourselves are men. Taking necessary protections against sin and folly is secondary. What we need most to do is to serve God with all our heart, mind, and being. St. Paul said, "Whether therefore ye eat, or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God" (1 Cor. 10:31). This is the priority, to serve God and to glorify Him.

Our concern should be to do our duty under God and to extend the claims of His Kingdom to every realm of life. The Lord is ultimately our surest defense and protection, and He will protect us most when we are most concerned about putting first things first.

"But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you" (Matt. 6:33).

## Cease Ye from Man

One of the minor pleasures of life is to be able to say (whether we say it or not) "I told you so." I had one such experience when I parked in front of a hotel, and almost at once, a man I knew parked his new car, less than a week old, behind my almost ten-year-old one. He saw me locking my car, as I always do, and laughed, saying, "What's the matter? Don't you trust people?" I told him that, as a matter of fact, I do not, because, as a Christian, I believe that God is right in declaring that man is a fallen creature, a sinner, and not to be trusted.

Well, he went his way, and I mine. About an hour later, I returned to find him swearing and shouting for police help. A drunk from the hotel bar had crawled into the backseat of his car, gotten sick, leaned over the driver's seat, and vomited heavily. The seat was filthy and stank. A police officer took away the sleepy drunk, but the man still had to clean up a filthy seat before he could drive away. He was swearing, angrily and steadily, as he looked for something to use as a cleanup rag. The nearby service station was closed, and the hotel offered only paper towels. I was, to tell the truth, tempted to ask, "What's the matter? Don't you trust people?" Instead, I simply remarked that it was a good thing my car doors were locked, because I was a little closer to the hotel bar door than he was.

In a less amusing form, I have had this kind of experience repeatedly. Men, who insist on trusting man rather than the Lord, get sorry dividends for their faith. St. Paul is emphatic about man without God: "There is none righteous, no, not one" (Rom 3:10), a statement also made earlier by David (Ps. 14:3).

Basically, there are two religions, humanism and Christianity; a faith, trust, and reliance on man, or on God. We either make the foundation of our faith one or the other, God or man. We cannot serve two masters.

Our problem today is not a lack of faith but too much of the wrong kind of faith, faith in man. Hence we look to politicians and educators for salvation rather than the Lord. We act as though each politician can somehow give us paradise, when all he can give us is more of man and his sin. We cannot serve both God and mammon or both God and man. It is time we heeded Isaiah, who declared, "Cease ye from man, whose breath is in his nostrils: for wherein is he to be accounted of?" (Isa. 2:22). If you continue to trust in man, someday, in unhappy circumstances, God Himself may remind you, I told you, in my Word.

# Danger

Words change their meaning, and not often for the better. One such word is “danger.” For us now it means exposure to trouble or potential disaster. The word itself goes back to the Latin *dominium*, meaning lordship or power. In its original meaning, danger meant “ruled by a master,” or to be in someone else’s power other than the Lord God.

Thus, in terms of its original meaning, we are in danger when we are in debt, when the state has too much power over us, or when anyone has any claim on or power over us which is beyond that allowed by Scripture. This means we are in danger because of the IRS, the federal and state bureaucracies, and much, much more. This is danger in its original meaning.

Isaiah 26:13 speaks of this when it declares, “O LORD our God, other lords beside thee have had dominion over us: but by thee only will we make mention of thy name.”

Only when we are under God’s dominion and God-fearing authorities are we out of danger. Then we are in the hands of our only true lord, and we are safe. All rule and authority which does not submit to the Lord Jesus Christ spells danger, and danger leads to death and destruction.

The word “Baal” means lord or master. A Baal was any ungodly lord or master to whom man made submission. All Baal worship, God makes clear, spells danger and judgment. Our society today is Baal-worshipping because it has other gods and masters than the Lord Jesus Christ. It is thus a dangerous world, one ruled by false masters.

Are you in danger?

## In the Mind of Christ

Proverbs 12:5 tells us that “[t]he thoughts of the righteous are right: but the counsels of the wicked are deceit.”

The word “thoughts” here means essentially the plans, principles, and the intentions that we live by, the governing direction of our lives. It does not mean our every thought but the basic governing thinking of a man which reveals itself in action. It is that which St. Paul speaks of when he says, “Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus” (Phil. 2:5). St. Paul is not speaking of a mere profession of faith but of a life so lived that it manifests the governing power of Christ and His Word.

Solomon goes on to tell us that “the counsels of the wicked are deceit.” The word “counsels” has the same meaning as “thoughts,” and “deceit” means “underhanded.” It refers, not to the practices of open evildoers and criminals, but to hypocrites. Such wicked men are deceitful or underhanded in that they profess one thing and do another. They profess to believe in the Lord, but their intentions are to exploit the cover of Christian faith for other purposes. Their “counsels” are thus hidden and underhanded.

All this seems obvious enough, but do we apply it? In an election year, do we go by a man’s promises or his charismatic appeal, all of which can be full of deceit, or are we ready to examine the mind they manifest?

We have not yet had anyone run for office, or apply for a job, or serve as a pastor, on a program of planned deceit. Instead, they offer us fair promises which offer us solutions by programs, but which bring us only more troubles, or more troubles with taxes.

Something is wrong with them, and with us. If we are conned once or twice, our human failings and shortcomings can readily explain it. However, if we are conned regularly, it means that something is radically

wrong with us. It means that our mind and thought is not the mind of Christ but of a fool, a sucker, one who wants something for nothing and gets instead nothing for something.

Either we live in the mind of Christ, or we go on voting ourselves out of one thing after another, including our freedom.

## The Right to Lie?

In recent years, various federal officials have either stated or acted on their belief in the “right” of the federal government to lie to its citizens.

Some people, shocked by these statements, have acted as though this were some strange new doctrine. We find it, however, at least as far back as Plato’s *Republic*, where it is strongly maintained by Socrates and Plato. Truth, said Socrates, is “only useful to men in the way of a medicine”; therefore, “it is plain that such an agent must be kept in the hands of physicians, and that unprofessional men must not meddle with it.” The rulers are the “doctors” and alone qualified to dispense the medicine, truth. “To the rulers of the state, then, if to any, it belongs the right to use falsehood, to deceive either enemies or their own citizens, for the good of the state: and no one else may meddle with this privilege.” Anyone else lying must be severely punished, Socrates held, because the right to lie is a privilege of the civil authorities.

Friedrich Nietzsche, in *Beyond Good and Evil*, declared that “The falseness of an opinion is not for us any objection to it.” In fact, he said that, without lies “man could not live—that the renunciation of false opinions would be a renunciation of life, a negation of life.” Therefore we must “recognize untruth as a condition of life.” In other words, since all life is a lie, and there is no such thing as truth, nor any such thing as good and evil, a lie was a very helpful and necessary tool for rulers to use.

The so-called “right” to lie thus rests on two basic doctrines. *First*, if we believe there is no God, then we also believe that there is no truth, and also no good or evil, only a world of meaningless things. *Second*, in a world without God or meaning, the state or civil government must then play god and keep men happy by lying to them.

The “right” to lie is thus a belief which rests on atheism, on a rejection of God. Moreover, it makes a new god of civil government by making it man’s new lord.

When the Bible commands that “Thou shalt not bear false witness” (Exod. 20:16; Deut. 5:20), it means that the God of truth requires all men to live by His law and in terms of His righteousness. The God of truth requires man, who is created in God’s image, to bear witness to the truth. To bear false witness is thus not only to disobey God but to deny Him: it is practical atheism. The “right” to lie is then practical atheism, atheism in the rulers and atheism in the people. Christian faith is in the right of truth, and in its inevitable triumph.

## Baal Worshipers

In the week of August 26 through 31, 1974, as the California State Senate rushed to conclude its work, 496 bills were quickly passed with no discussion on the floor. These were approved, without debate, in blocks of twenty to sixty bills. These measures were appropriations and regulatory measures. Every Californian is a little poorer and more regulated because of them.

What happened was not unusual either for California or for other states. About one-fourth of all bills are passed without debate in California, and in some states the ratio is higher. There is discussion and debate, of course, in committee hearings.

Why do such things happen? The primary fault is not in the senators but in the people. All those bills had great numbers of people demanding their passage and believing that the new law would lead the state a big step closer to paradise.

If you have never heard these people testify before a committee, you have missed something. It is a good example of old-time revival fervor. Various groups regard the passage of a bill governing others, or spending money for some cause, as the salvation of man. They are like the prophets of Baal who cried, "O Baal, hear us" (1 Kings 18:26). They come to wake up their Baal, the state, and thereby to save the country.

Next year, there may be 596 bills pushed through the same way, because the legislation demanded is too much for any legislative body to deliberate on. As a result, each year we will be a little less free, and a little more taxed, and so it will continue as long as we continue to be Baal-worshippers.

Not until men look to Jesus Christ for salvation rather than to the state will the trend change. Not until men are governed by God will they seek to

be less governed by the state. Only as men develop more strength through faith and obedience will they cease to try to create it by statist law.

There were 450 prophets of Baal as against the lone Elijah, but it was Elijah who triumphed, because the God of Elijah was and is the living God, but the Baal of the prophets was a product of their imagination. Men who deny the living God will make the state or man their Baal or master. Who is your Lord and Savior?

# The Foundation

Jesus Christ concluded the Sermon on the Mount by declaring that He alone is that rock which is man's only true foundation. If a man's life is built on that rock, Jesus Christ, it can withstand all the storms of life. But if the life of a man or of a nation is built on sand, on man, then it shall surely fall (Matt. 7:24–27).

Napoleon recognized the truth of this and observed, "There will never be a fixed policy of state until there is a teaching body with fixed principles. As long as no one is taught from childhood that it is necessary to be a republican or a monarchist, Catholic or with religion, the state will never form a nation. It will rest on uncertain and unstable foundations. It will be constantly subject to disorders and changes." He also said, "One crushes a religious nation, one does not undermine it."

In other words, for all his faults, Napoleon saw clearly that a nation's first line of defense and its only true unifying power is a religious faith, fixed principles. Without such a faith, anarchy takes over. Every man is his own law. Then the only power left to hold the people together is the brute power of the state and its army.

Napoleon had seen this anarchy and brutal tyranny during the French Revolution and had renounced it. He recognized, therefore, on pragmatic grounds, that only a Christian faith could restore order and unity to the country.

Today, however, we are following the revolutionary route. Every effort is made to eliminate a fixed body of Christian principles from the life of the people and nation. The result is a growing disunity and conflict. As we confront the various fanatical revolutionary groups, we need also to recall Napoleon's comment: "Fanaticism is not the enemy most to be feared, but atheism."

We are building our personal and national lives today on the sands of atheism and humanism. The rock of ages, Jesus Christ, is being locked out of the courts, schools, and churches by foolish men. Shall it be said of our house, too, that "great was the fall of it" (Matt. 7:27)? Or will we return to the only true foundation, Jesus Christ? "Except the LORD build the house, they labour in vain that build it" (Ps. 127:1).

## Political Saviors

According to the German historian, Ethelbert Stauffer, the religious principle of the Roman Empire, from the days of Augustus on, was salvation by Caesar: "Salvation is to be found in none other save Augustus, and there is no other name given to men in which they can be saved."

This helps us to understand the boldness of St. Peter, and the total power he declared rested in Christ, when he said of Jesus Christ, "Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved" (Acts 4:12).

War between Christ and Caesar, the Christians and Rome, was thus inevitable. The state and its emperors claimed to offer salvation. The church declared only Christ does.

We are again in the age of Caesars, of political saviors. All over the world, politicians proclaim their plans of salvation, and the cornerstone of their building is man. Look unto me, these false saviors declare to the peoples, vote for me and be saved.

St. Peter faced a hostile nation whose hope of salvation was in freedom from Rome. Thus the Zealots, or revolutionists, had a large popular following. Salvation for them meant their own political order. For the Roman overlords and their followers, salvation meant Caesar's rule and plan.

St. Peter ruled out, not only all other religions, but all the political plans of salvation with his blunt words: "Neither is there salvation in any other." Christ is unique, and His salvation is exclusive. He is THE way, the ONLY way, Peter made emphatically clear, of salvation, "for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved." There are no alternate routes.

This means that false political saviors will give not salvation but ruin. False religious saviors will only give delusions. Truth is exclusive. We cannot say that two plus two can equal five, or can equal three, because three and five sound close to four. We cannot play games with truth.

Thus, as we are confronted by political and other saviors, we must stand with St. Peter and declare: None other name!

## Praising the Wicked

Praising the wicked, and rewarding them, seems to be the main purpose of our judges and legislators these days.

If this seems too strong a statement, then take it up with God, because Scripture plainly declares, “They that forsake the law praise the wicked: but such as keep the law contend with them” (Prov. 28:4). The law in question is God’s law. If men abandon it, they are deserting not only law but righteousness and justice. They will therefore “praise the wicked” instead of contending with them, instead of trying to control and suppress evil.

Recently, I sat in a courtroom during hearings for two criminals, one caught in the commission of a crime, the other with a car he had stolen before witnesses. They were planning to plead innocent, were going to be provided with public defenders at taxpayers’ expense, and those robbed would get no return in one case for stolen funds, and, in the other case, a possibly damaged car. There was no thought in the court or law of the Biblical law of restitution. The penalty was being paid by the victims, in many hours lost in the courtroom, in lost goods, and in taxes paid. The criminals, both with records, were dealt with very gently, lest it prejudice the case, and the victims and police were questioned at times sharply.

A fair trial is a necessity under God’s law, but a court which continually penalizes the victims is in effect praising the wicked.

We need to ask the question, therefore, as to why men and nations praise the wicked. Birds of a feather flock together, and evil men will show their preference for evil, and guilty men will work to make justice ineffective lest it judge them also.

“Where there is no vision, the people perish: but he that keepeth the law, happy is he” (Prov. 29:18). A Biblical scholar, the Reverend Derek

Kidner, has pointed out that the Hebrew for this verse can be translated very literally as, Where there is no prophecy or vision, that is, no preaching of the Word, "the people run wild." Because there has been very little true preaching of the Word of God, the people run wild. And a wild people will praise the wicked.

## Bramble Men

Jotham's parable of the trees (Judges 9:1–21) is a fitting one for our day. Gideon's vicious son, Abimelech, killed all his brothers except Jotham, who escaped. When Abimelech was having himself made king by the men of Shechem, Jotham, from the safety of a high cliff, interrupted the proceedings to preach a brief sermon in parable form before running away.

This was the parable: The trees foolishly decided to have a king, and the first one to be asked was the olive tree. The olive tree refused: it already had an important and useful function to God and man in simply being an olive tree. Next, the fig tree was asked, and he refused the offer on the same grounds. The vine, next in line, also refused. Then the bramble bush was asked, and he accepted, demanding then that all the trees obey him and rest in his shade! If they did not, said the bramble king, he would destroy them.

What Jotham meant, of course, was this: Abimelech was their bramble king, and, as a bramble man, he expected the cedars, olives, figs, vines, and all other trees, that is, the able men of his realm, to be under him and in his shadow. If they were not, he would use his royal power to cut them down to size.

For a long, long time, now, we have been choosing bramble men in church, state, school, and elsewhere. These bramble men hate men who produce something; they hate the farmers, ranchers, storekeepers, and manufacturers, all the producers of America. They prefer bramble men and they promote them.

They tell the vine, no more grapes, unless you are ruled by bramble men! They tell the olive, brambles are more productive than you are.

The point made by Scripture here through the mouth of Jotham is this: the life of the olive tree, fig tree, and vine is to produce; the life of the

bramble is to be a thorn. The producer produces, and the bramble man seeks power by hurting, retraining, or killing the producer.

The crisis of our day is this: will the bramble men take over and destroy us, or will we overthrow the power of the bramble men? Whether you know it or not, you are on the firing line. But on which side?

## Resources and Advantages

With our economic and natural resources, and our tremendous advantages over all nations, nothing can alter our position of leadership in the world." So claimed a speaker recently, and he could not have been more wrong.

The city with the best location in the world is Constantinople, or Istanbul. The trade of the Danube and Central Europe, and the trade of Russia, flows through the Dardanelles. Byzantium ruled for almost 1,200 years, the longest history of any empire, by making use of Constantinople's strategic location. Since the Turks conquered it, Constantinople has declined in power and importance. In that part of the world it is still called "Bolis," or The City, but it no longer rules the world.

The two areas in the world with the richest soil are California's San Joaquin Valley and Egypt's Nile area. California feeds America and exports all over the world. The Egyptian farmers are among the very poorest in the world. A very great natural asset has not made Egypt rich.

The difference between Constantinople then and now, and the difference between California and Egypt, is not in natural advantages and resources. The difference is in faith and character. Without much in resources, Britain dominated the world for two or three centuries. It was the character of its people that made the difference.

The Psalmist declares, "Except the LORD build the house, they labour in vain that build it: except the LORD keep the city, the watchman waketh but in vain" (Ps. 127:1).

Men who believe that America has a great future because of its economic and natural resources are forgetting that Egypt's resources do it no good. There is no resource equal to faith and character, and this

resource we have been neglecting and destroying. We have rejected the Lord as our master builder, and our labors may soon become totally vain.

No weapon of national defense can counteract the destruction of a covenant-breaking people who disobey God's law-word. We must again become like the wise man, who built his house upon the Rock, Jesus Christ, so that no storm or trouble harmed it, for it was founded upon the Rock (Matt. 7:24). Look to your foundations before the storm strikes.

## Freedom and the Vote

Never in all of man's history has a country gained freedom by voting it in. Freedom is not a product of the ballot box.

Tyranny has a long history, and the cruelties practiced by some tyrants over their subjects present sickening reading. No tyrant ever gave his subjects an opportunity to vote him out.

How then has the change been made? By revolution? The long history of revolutions indicates that almost invariably one tyrant is traded for another, usually a far more fearful one. How then does society change?

Society changes only as the members of society change, only as men and women are regenerated by Jesus Christ. Apart from regeneration, a society can have some material progress, but no real advantage or freedom for most men as a rule. The areas of freedom have been the areas of Christian faith, and, as that faith wanes, freedom wanes.

This leads to some very important conclusions. The ballot box has a very important function in a free society, but it can never be expected to do anything more than to reflect the character, the desires, and the will of the people. If the people who vote are of weak or bad character, if their desires are larcenous and envious, and if their will be perverse and evil, the election results will merely reflect their own nature on a broader scope.

This means too that people who expect to reform the state or country by means of the vote, by elections, are headed for failure and disillusionment. Reformation must begin in the lives of the people in order to show up in the ballot box.

Freedom has only come to a people, as they have become, one by one, free men in Jesus Christ. As a people advance into freedom in Christ, they move their society and country into that freedom, and as a people drift into unbelief and sin, their country declines into slavery.

Some years ago, the poet James Oppenheim summed up the issue of freedom in his poem "The Slave," when he wrote in part:

They can only set men free ...

And there is no need of that:

Free men set themselves free.

Is there a free man in your mirror?

## Dictatorship and Freedom

In almost every instance that totalitarianism has taken over a major country, it has done so in the name of liberty. People welcome tyranny in the belief that their liberties are being greatly increased.

In only one direction is their freedom increased, however, and it is the "freedom" to sin. When the Mazdakites took over the great Persian Empire and all but destroyed it, their appeal was to freedom, freedom for sexual communism, and freedom to seize all private property. Greece and Rome had earlier taken the same route: sexual freedom was given increasingly to people while their political liberties were removed, and their properties confiscated by taxation.

The Renaissance was an age of the triumph of dictators and widespread sexual freedom, when men thought they were liberated from God and free to do as they pleased. The triumph of Lenin was both preceded and attended by the rise of sexual freedom, and the same was true of Hitler.

The banner of sexual freedom is thus simply a deception which spells slavery. It leads men to forsake responsibility for license, and freedom for bondage. The increase of this so-called sexual freedom in our day is thus the prelude, if unchecked, for dictatorship and tyranny.

James calls God's law "the perfect law of liberty" (James 1:25), because it is the obedience of faith which makes men strong and free. Freedom to sin is not freedom but slavery. It leads, not to the liberation, but to the enslavement of man and the disintegration of his society.

The only freedom which the sexual liberation movements produce is freedom for totalitarianism and tyranny. The world is being made safe for slavery by all such people.

Our freedom is in Christ. "If the Son therefore shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed" (John 8:36).

## The Fear of Freedom

E. R. Dodds, in his study of *The Greeks and the Irrational*, titles a chapter "The Fear of Freedom." The whole of the ancient world was marked by this fear of freedom. Plato and Aristotle planned states in which freedom was to be denied to most men, and pagan rulers uniformly acted on this principle. Freedom was believed to be a dangerous thing, and only a handful of rulers could be trusted with it.

Through the centuries, men have noticed how fearful men are of freedom and how most men are unable to cope with it. T. H. Huxley said, "A man's worst difficulties begin when he is able to do as he likes."

Certainly, in our day most men pay lip service to freedom but in reality vote against it with their lives and their ballots. Our legislators assume that farmers and farm workers cannot be trusted with freedom, and capital and labor both assume that the less freedom for others, the better all will be.

Men do not like freedom because they themselves are not free by nature. The basic slavery, slavery to sin, is the nature of their being, and they show their slavery in every area of life.

Jesus declared, "Whosoever committeth sin is the servant [or slave] of sin ... If the Son therefore shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed" (John 8:34, 36). The root of slavery is in the nature of man.

We are today surrounded by a slave people because they are by nature unregenerate. They are most at home in slavery, and most comfortable with it. They will vote for slavery because they are slaves. They dislike and fear freedom because they are at enmity with God. Give them freedom and they will vote it out of existence and work in every way to destroy it.

Men fear freedom, because it means life and responsibility under God. The appeal of slavery is that it offers a life free of responsibilities, and this is always the appeal of slavery. Some nations have in the past had as many

as four-fifths living in actual slavery and content with it, because it took responsibility off their shoulders.

The flight from freedom is always first of all the flight from God, who created man to be responsible and to exercise dominion over the earth under Him. The choice is always God or slavery.

## Legislate Morality?

The other night, a prominent lawyer, appearing on television, asked for the repeal of laws against abortion, narcotics, sexual perversions, and a number of other things. "You can't legislate morality," he said, "and it's about time we stopped trying to do it." The man was lying, and he knew it, because all law is about morality. When you legislate against murder, theft, libel, and the like, you are legislating morality. When you institute traffic laws, you are again legislating morality: you are penalizing traffic behavior which may endanger the life and property of another man. In other words, you are enacting specific forms of God's law: Thou shalt not kill, and Thou shalt not steal. Legislation about the forms of court procedure is in terms of the law banning false witness; the purpose of such laws is to further true testimony. Even the salaries of public officials have moral implication: "[T]he labourer is worthy of his hire" (Luke 10:7; 1 Tim. 5:18).

At every point, the law deals either with morality directly or with procedures for its enforcement. All law is enacted morality. Every criminal law says that a certain thing is right, and another wrong. Every law is thus a piece of legislated morality. Moreover, all morality represents a religion, as that every system of law is an establishment of religion. Thus, there can be a separation of church and state, but there cannot be a separation of religion and the state, because every system of law is a religion and a morality in action.

What the lawyer was actually saying was that he hated a Christian law system and wanted to replace it with a system of humanistic law. This is exactly the nature of our legal revolution today. The courts are changing the law by changing the religion behind the law.

What all law does legislate is morality, and you had better believe it before it is too late before you wake up to find the revolution is over, and

you are the new outlaw in terms of the new morality, the new law, and the new religion. This has happened elsewhere, and it is happening here.

## Farm Stealing

Thieves nowadays steal a variety of big and little objects, from jewelry and money to cars and cargo. The thieves operate under a double handicap: first, their thefts are against the law, and second, in terms of the real thefts today, their's is petty theft, with a maximum risk and a minimum profit. The real thievery today, the big-scale stealing, is legal.

One of the deadliest of these legal thefts is of farms, deadly because it destroys the small farmer who is so important to a nation. Some politicians have repeatedly said, in one country after another, that small farms must go. Without resorting to outright confiscation, two methods can be used to wipe out small farms. First, a farm-aid program of supports and grants can be instituted which will actually give more to the big farms and speed up the decline of the small farmer. Second, taxation can be used to wipe out the small farmer and to concentrate land into fewer and fewer hands. Very early in American history, the courts pointed out that "the power to tax is the power to destroy," and, we can add, the power to steal as well.

If a tax supports civil government in its work of the ministry of justice, in the maintenance of law and order and the common defense, that tax is a just and helpful one to all. But if a tax becomes confiscatory, if it wipes out homeowners, small farmers, and small businessmen, that tax is then simply theft. Today, taxation is increasingly used, not simply to finance civil government, but to reorganize and to remake society, to finance social revolution. Someone has humorously described our welfare programs and the war on poverty in these words: "We intend to take poverty away from those who are using it foolishly and give it to those who don't have any."

Make it legal, call it by all the high-sounding names you will, stealing is still stealing, and it is against God's law. If robbing a man of his money at the point of a gun is wrong, how much more so is robbing a man of his farm with all the might of the state?

In the Mosaic Law, there was no property tax. The civil government was supported by a poll or head tax, which was collected from all men twenty years of age and older, and with the same rate for all. The tax thus could not be too heavy for the poor, nor could it ask too much from the rich.

Taxation today is no longer geared to providing for law and order; the more taxes rise, the less law and order we have. Taxation is now the power to destroy, and it is stealing.

## Land of Lawlessness

It was brought home to me recently how far gone we are. The Rev. Richard Wurmbbrand, representative of the underground churches in Communist territories, spent fourteen years in prison before being ransomed and brought to America. Of the underground Christians, he says: they do not look to America to save them. America cannot win a war in little Viet Nam, free its own men of the Pueblo, rid its government of communists, or keep order in its streets. How can it save anyone? The only wish of these persecuted Christians is that we stop wining and dining their persecutors.

For all who love America and its glorious heritage of Christian faith and freedom, this is a sickening fact. But the news confirms it. In 1812, our capital, Washington, was sacked and burned by the British, but we fought and won that war. In 1968, Washington was again sacked and burned, this time by many people on government welfare and on government payrolls, but we will not even admit that we are in a real war, one aimed at our destruction.

The United States is at war, in a life and death struggle, and in this war the United States is its own worst enemy, because it will neither face up to its evils nor recognize the cause of its problems. King Ahab brought all his problems upon himself, and no enemy did him as much harm as he did himself, but Ahab treated his one reprover as his enemy. When the prophet Elijah confronted Ahab with his sin, Ahab's response was, "Hast thou found me, O mine enemy?" (1 Kings 21:20). Elijah was the enemy for telling him of God's judgment! Our own course is often similar.

The promise of God to us is clear-cut: "If my people, which are called by my name, shall humble themselves, and pray, and seek my face, and turn from their wicked ways; then will I hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin, and will heal their land" (2 Chron. 7:14).

Our land needs God's healing. It is sick from all the remedies applied by a variety of quacks and do-gooders. Someone remarked recently that the miracle is that we are still here after so many years of evil. The reason is that our health and power ran deep and strong; we had good roots. In one city of 75,000 where I lived briefly, a longtime resident remarked, "Ten years ago, nobody locked their house doors. Now my husband doesn't let me drive alone after dark." When shall we have such peace again? Certainly, we shall not have it without a return to Biblical faith and to godly law and order. We are hungry for peace, but we cannot have it without the faith which creates a godly society. "Except the LORD build the house, they labour in vain that build it" (Ps. 127:1).

# Beginnings

The Bible begins with this sentence: "In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth" (Gen. 1:1). All things follow from this fact. Because God is the creator of all things, He is their governor, lawmaker, and Savior.

A recently published book began with the sentence, "In the beginning was nature," and, logically developing that idea, denied validity to law and morality, order, meaning, and purpose in life.

These are the two alternatives, but very few want to be logical in following one position or the other. But beginnings are very important: they point us in a particular direction.

One existentialist writer said that, because he rejected God, he had chosen evil as his way of life. He was honest to his basic premises.

In the first century after the time of the apostles, the Christians stressed very strongly in their preaching "the two ways." In the corrupt environment of the Roman Empire, too many people wanted the best of everything, the knowledge and comfort of Christian faith, and also a part in the degenerate prosperity and culture of Rome. The insistent subject of much preaching was a description of the two ways, and the summons, "Choose ye this day whom ye will serve" (Josh. 24:15).

We are in a similar age, and we face the same choice.

# Jonah

I like Jonah, the prophet. He reminds me of many people I know, including myself!

Jonah was commanded by God to go and preach to Nineveh and the Assyrians, whom Jonah hated. He wanted God's judgment on Nineveh, not His mercy. He tried to run away from God and ended miserably in the belly of a great fish. Well, by the grace of God, and maybe indigestion, the fish vomited out Jonah onto dry land, so he had to preach to Nineveh.

Here was an unwilling preacher in an evil city. Yet by God's grace, the people were converted. (For a generation and more, Assyria's evil march ended.) But we are told, Nineveh's conversion "displeased Jonah exceedingly, and he was very angry"

(Jon. 4:1).

Nineveh was hot country. Jonah's shade was a gourd vine, under which he rested. God, however, killed the gourd vine, and so Jonah pouted and complained to God angrily. God then rebuked Jonah for feeling sorry over the death of a gourd vine but at the same time having no pity for Nineveh whose inhabitants numbered 120,000 children alone.

In other words, Jonah had a warped perspective: his comfort was more important than God's work and the lives of untold numbers of men, women, and children. In this respect, too many of us are like Jonah, too much absorbed with our own feelings to think of God and others. God was very patient with Jonah. Pray that He be patient with us.

## Hearing Coyotes

Last week, our youngest daughter and her family were here with us. After the first night, she remarked about the coyotes yipping all night, very close to the house. I have not heard them for years. They are out there all the time, but I am so used to the sound, I no longer hear them. On the other hand, when I visit my daughter, I hear every car which goes up or down the street during the night.

All too often, we hear things without really heeding them. The sounds are there, but we are so familiar and indifferent to them that we hear without hearing, and we pay no attention to them.

This is what it means to be gospel-hardened. An older meaning of that term is someone who hears the gospel week in and week out without really listening to it. One of the marks of such a gospel-hardened person is that he shows no growth, year after year.

Our Lord says, "Behold, I stand at the door, and knock" (Rev. 3:20). His knocking is not a pleading to enter but a summons either to communion or to judgment, and He will tolerate no lukewarmness (Rev. 3:15–16). I am almost always lukewarm to the coyote's voice, unless I think it may threaten the chicks. I dare not be lukewarm to the Lord's voice.

As a nation, we have long tuned out the Word of God. We buy Bibles in great numbers but do not read them. We hear the Word of God, and we listen with sleepy ears. This means that we treat His Word as no more important than all the other words around us.

We need rather to say, when we read His Word, or hear it read in church, Lord, "Speak; for thy servant heareth" (1 Sam. 3:10).

## Majoring in Minors

Back in 1951, I heard the Rev. Earl Harvey of Madera preach a very fine sermon on "Majoring in Minors." Too many Christians, he pointed out, concentrate on trifles while important matters go neglected. This he called majoring in minors.

I thought of this recently when I encountered a young pastor of superior ability who spends his time, like so many others, crusading over trifles. With the world falling apart, he gets very upset and spends time fighting over the wording of an advertisement. Another man spends time fretting over women's hairstyles and dress lengths, while still another frets over Sunday baseball and football on television.

A man who has a race to run does not stop to kill flies. His sense of priorities makes him aware that only the most pressing task can dominate his mind and time. This is not to say that some of these minor issues are not sometimes real problems. The question is not only one of priorities but also of common sense. We do not stop to dust furniture in a burning house; we try to put out the fire. Similarly, in an evil generation, our task is to proclaim God's regenerating power.

Ours is a time of crisis and urgency, and it requires urgent preaching and dedicated living. We cannot be "at ease in Zion" (Amos 6:1), nor can we take undue time for secondary or peripheral matters.

St. Paul felt this urgency in his day, declaring, "[N]ecessity is laid upon me; yea, woe is unto me, if I preach not the gospel!" (1 Cor. 9:16). Sadly, one of the rarer things today, both in pulpit and pew, is the same sense of necessity and urgency.

If we major in minors, we will nag people about dusty furniture in a burning house. If we major in the Word of God, we will call out the word of warning, the way of escape and life. If we major in trifles, we ourselves

have become triflers. If we major in God's compelling Word, we become strong men and conquerors in Christ.

# Change

I can remember well the *California Farmer* in its early days, under various names now no longer used. A hen often paid for a subscription! The farm folks of the post–World War I years read it from cover to cover. It was a very different world then—or was it? Things have changed, it is true, but mankind’s problems are essentially the same, and they can be summed up in one word: sin.

One of my most memorable experiences, shortly after World War II ended, was hearing a remarkable man speak about the new era of the atom bomb. I recall his name, Samuel Moffett, and he concluded thus: The invention of the atom bomb makes no more difference than the invention of the bobby pin as far as man’s essential problem is concerned, his unwillingness to live in faithfulness to God, and to forsake evil.

Mankind makes its own problems, and nothing in men’s environment does men as much harm as men’s own sins do. A fellow pastor, recently counseling a troubled man, found quickly that the man wanted everything in his world to change, but not himself. We cannot change our husband, wife, neighbor, employer, or anyone else, but we can, by God’s grace, change ourselves, and this is where our responsibility lies.

Few things are more distressing to pastors than such comments as this: “That was a wonderful sermon, pastor. I’m sorry my husband was not here to hear it, because he needed it.” It is always easier to remember someone else’s sin! Our essential duty is to correct ourselves, to grow in grace, and to be grateful that, whether we live in 1919, or 1991, it is still God’s world and God’s time, and He does all things well.

## The Invisible Communion

Some of the Proverbs are very difficult to translate, and so we sometimes have very different renditions. Proverbs 14:9 is an example of this. We can understand what it says by comparing three versions. The King James reads, "Fools make a mock at sin: but among the righteous there is favour"; this version, usually the best, falters here. The Douay Version tells us, "Guilt lodges in the tents of the arrogant, but favor in the house of the just." The Berkeley Version has this: "The bond [or interpreter, intermediary] between foolish men is guilt, but between the upright it is good-will."

With the help of these versions, we can understand the meaning of the proverb. There is an unspoken and yet very real communion and community among men. Fools, meaning in Scripture men who deny God and His law, have an invisible bond: their common guilt. They share a bad conscience, a rejection of God and His Word, a common guilt and a rebellion against God's order. This is the bond between them; their intermediary or mediator is sin and guilt; this brings them together.

There is a like communion among the godly, an invisible bond that brings them together. It is a good conscience before God, and a life which manifests the favor, grace, or goodwill that is born of a life in the Lord. As against the arrogance of the ungodly, there is grace and goodwill.

The central point of this proverb is that there is a division between these two kinds of men. While it is invisible, it is very real, and more powerful than many things on the surface. The question for us to ask ourselves is this: in which camp are we?

## Good Preaching

Two or three years after World War II ended, an elderly pastor took me to lunch one day. He was one of California's outstanding pastors, soon to retire. He saw little good in the years ahead because the church was going "soft." People, he said, felt that with the depression of the 1930s, and World War II dominating much of the 1940s, they wanted no more seriousness but only sweetness and light.

All men, he said, are sinners, either lost sinners or saved sinners, and they need the blunt hard Word of God to keep them from being settled on their lees, satisfied in their sins and shortcoming. But people now wanted to "feel good," and they wanted no "negative" word from the pulpit, even though almost the whole of the Bible is "negative" towards man and his desire for a self-satisfied peace.

I thought of him recently as I again heard a complaint about a pastor's plainspoken preaching. I was reminded of what Isaiah said: "[T]his is a rebellious people, lying children, children that will not hear the law of the LORD: Which say to the seers, See not; and to the prophets, Prophecy not unto us right things, speak unto us smooth things, prophecy deceits" (Isa. 30:9-10). The demand in Isaiah's day was for "positive" preaching by priests and prophets. They wanted sweetness and light, lies, not the Word of God. They did get from most religious leaders the preaching they wanted, but from God they got judgment.

Will this be true of our generation also? Will we get "our kind" of preaching, but God's kind of judgment? Time is running out. Here ye the word of the LORD! Tell your pastor, give it to us straight, and thank him for it, and for his love in Christ. Remember, our Lord says, "As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten" (Rev. 3:19).

## The Name of the Lord

In a very interesting verse, Genesis 4:26, we are told that a son was born to Seth, “and he called his name Enos: then began men to call upon the name of the LORD.” The great Hebrew scholar Cassuto said of this verse, “There is a parallelism of both language and theme: a human being is called by a name suited to him—Enosh; and God is called by a name befitting Him—LORD (YHWH).” To understand what it means to call on the name of the Lord, we must understand this verse.

Enos or Enosh means mortal. Seth thereby defined man. He had come to know that fallen man was born to die, and he gave his son that name as a sign. It was a reminder to a loving father that the best of children are born into a world of sin and death. It was also thereby a witness that there is no hope in man, or in generation, only in regeneration. Seth thus defined all men, including himself, as a witness to his faith.

At the same time, “then began men to call upon the name of the LORD.” The name of the Lord is a name God declared and revealed concerning Himself, beginning in Eden (Gen. 2:7), but most fully to Moses (Exod. 3:13–14). It means He Who Is, the self-existent and eternal God.

This means that to call upon the name of the Lord is much more than prayer and worship. It means to know Him as He is, as He reveals Himself in His Word. Instead of approaching God in terms of our thinking, we approach Him only in terms of His Word and revelation.

Seth no doubt at times called his son, “my darling boy,” “son,” and other loving terms, but, by naming him Enos, he always reminded himself what man really is, all men, including his beloved son and himself.

Similarly, many people approach God, not in terms of His name, but in terms of their wishes. Some years ago, in the 1950s, a prominent actress

spoke of God as “a living doll.” She was not calling on the name of the Lord, only her imagination.

To call on the name of the Lord is to see Him only in terms of His Word and His Son. The living God is the God who has named Himself, and revealed Himself. Call only upon Him. Or will it be said of us, as Isaiah said of the worshippers of his day, “[T]here is none that calleth upon thy name” (Isa. 64:7)?

## Christ vs. Caesar

One of the dramatic and revealing scenes of early church history, repeated tens of thousands of times, comes to us out of ancient documents. On July 17, A.D. 180, in Carthage, the Roman Proconsul P. Vigellius Saturninus had before him on trial a Christian, Speratus of Scilli in Numidia. Speratus was ordered to renounce his faith and to "Swear by the genius of our lord the Emperor!" Speratus, like thousands before and after him, chose death by declaring, "I know no imperium of this world. I know my Lord, the King of kings and Emperor of all nations."

What was the issue? Rome insisted that it was ready to grant religious liberty provided that any church or religion acknowledged the Roman emperor as lord and the right of Rome to control, regulate, tax, and issue permits for churches. The Christians refused this kind of freedom as no freedom at all: it would make the church the creature of the state. This was the cause of the conflict between Rome and the church. The issue was lordship: who is the Lord, Christ or Caesar?

The same issue is with us again. One federal or state agency after another seeks to control the church and the Christian school and to make the existence thereof dependent on the state. The outcome of any surrender to the state's claims is totalitarianism.

In the Soviet Union, the constitution guarantees religious liberty more precisely than in the U.S. It also guarantees freedom of speech, the right to assembly and petition, and much more. All these "rights," however, are nonexistent.

Are we headed in the same direction? Very clearly, we are, unless again many thousands of Christians make a stand like that of Speratus in the year of our Lord 180. Will you?

## King John's World

According to many modern historians, King John of England was a great king, one of England's best. When some of us went to school, we had a different story taught us. The younger brother of Richard the Lionhearted, John was seen as a knave, as a disloyal brother, and as a king who lost much of England's overseas realms to France. Why then do historians today see John as a great man?

Well, the reason is a strange one. John's reign saw the major development of a record-keeping bureaucracy! It was the birth of government red tape, and, to all too many scholars, this means efficiency! One business firm recently went into bankruptcy, and its record keeping was a model of efficiency, according to the court. But its paper files did not make it a success, however.

King John's problem was himself. As Solomon says, "The way of a fool is right in his own eyes: but he that hearkeneth unto counsel is wise" (Prov. 12:15). John kept good records, but he had trouble with people, because John's way was always right in his own eyes, and he despised wise counsel.

Today we live in a bookkeeping world, where record keeping is demanded by federal and state governments of everybody. To be a farmer means being also a bookkeeper for civil authorities, and state and federal agencies have mountains of data banks and records. We are surrounded by millions of King Johns in the uncivil civil service, and we have intellectuals whose answer to problems is the creation of another record-keeping agency. Wisdom has become a data bank instead of godliness and common sense.

How will it end? King John had troubles, and Solomon says, "[A] companion of fools shall be destroyed" (Prov. 13:20). How much more so will the fool be brought to judgment! In brief, salvation is not by computers

and data banks, and only fools will think so. It is from the Lord, and it results in sound faith, good character, and godly works, not a file of statistics and records.

## Our Professional Thieves

Just yesterday a friend who has had some battles with taxmen, which he has always won, had another such visitor. This new auditor told him that he was there to stay until something could be found.

Others, of course, have had similar experiences. Stories like this anger us. We want to call these taxmen professional thieves, and more. Are we right?

Well, only to a degree. True, taxation is increasingly becoming a form of legalized theft, and the taxman a shakedown artist. But whom is he working for? And who makes him do these things?

Whenever and wherever we want special services from civil government, or subsidies, aids, and grants, we are asking and ordering civil authorities to go out and collect the funds for these things from our neighbors, and to collect them forcibly. If we outnumber others, we get most of the loot; if we are outnumbered, we are the robbed and not the robbers.

The fact that the taxman does it for us does not alter our guilt: we are the boss thieves.

Now, the Bible plainly says, "Thou shalt not steal" (Exod. 20:15). This means it is a sin if we steal, or if we order someone, like a taxman, to do the stealing for us. If we make theft a virtue for us, then it will also be seen as a virtue for others; if theft is for our welfare, others will soon see it as good for the general welfare, and soon citizenship and voting become a license to steal. Our society then becomes a lawless jungle, because the godly foundations thereof are destroyed. Sooner or later, there is a judgment on all sin.

The counsel of God still stands: "Let him that stole steal no more: but rather let him labour, working with his hands the thing which is good, that he may have to give to him that needeth" (Eph. 4:28).

# The Death of Herod Agrippa I

One of the Bible's most dramatic stories is in Acts 12:20–23. King Herod Agrippa I declared himself to be the true messiah and dressed himself in silver cloth, so that when he appeared publicly, the sunlight was reflected in a dazzling manner. The people hailed him, according to both Acts and Josephus, as a god, and their flatteries were shouted with enthusiasm and vigor. In that same hour, Herod was struck down by God and soon died an agonizing death.

History records a further fact which Acts does not mention. The proud troops of Herod, who had grown powerful and prosperous under Herod, now turned on him. The soldiers and civilians, who had very recently hailed him a god, now sacked his palace, seized his two young daughters, Marianne aged ten, and Drusilla six, raped them repeatedly, and started a wild general celebration with the loot from the palace.

Herod had been a crowd-pleaser. He had rebuilt cities, public buildings, and other facilities, had spend money liberally for the general welfare, had been very favorable to his troops. None of Herod's public works had altered the fact that he was essentially a tyrant. All the cheers and flattery the mob and the troops had given Agrippa I were only because they believed that Herod Agrippa alive meant more handouts. Herod Agrippa dead meant no more handouts, and they proceeded to ravage the palace and his daughters in a vicious and degenerate orgy.

"[H]e gave not God the glory," Luke says of Herod Agrippa (Acts 12:23). Herod's policy had been directed toward establishing his own glory and, with his public works and welfare policy, to make the people ready to proclaim him the messiah as against the crucified Jesus. For one brief day, the mob shouted, saying of Herod Agrippa, "It is the voice of a god, and not of a man" (Acts 12:22), and God struck him down. The false messiahs get both the evil crowds and also judgment.

The Herods of our world have no future. Do you?

## The Choice

In Joshua 24:15, Joshua summons Israel to make up its mind whom they will serve, whether it be God, or something else. He begins with these words, "And if it seem evil unto you to serve the LORD, choose you this day whom ye will serve." We can paraphrase this: "If it seems wrong or harmful to you to serve God with all your being, make a choice now as to whom you will serve." In other words, stop halting between two opinions.

Centuries later, Elijah confronts the people with a like challenge: "How long halt ye between two opinions? If the LORD be God, follow him: but if Baal, then follow him. And the people answered him not a word" (1 Kings 18:21). The spirit of compromise was deep in them.

Today we have a like unwillingness to make the choice. People are unwilling to commit themselves clearly and openly for or against the Lord. They prefer to halt between two opinions and to be responsible for neither.

Throughout history, such a spirit of compromise has been the prelude to the death of a society. When men are unwilling to make a stand for their faith, they quickly disappear into irrelevance, and more earnest men take their places.

We live in an era which calls for courage and resolute choices, not moral indecision. Our crisis is very real, and so too is the summons: "Choose you this day whom ye will serve."

## Thy Light Is Come

When Zacharias, “filled with the Holy Ghost,” prophesied concerning the meaning of the coming births of our Lord and of John the Baptist, he spoke with joy of the impact of those two miraculous events (Luke 1:67–79).

The coming of John and of the virgin-born Jesus meant, first, redemption or salvation, “a horn of salvation for us.” He brought to the word “salvation” the symbol of a horn, meaning “power.” Salvation is more than deliverance: it is a rebirth into power. Second, one of the meanings of salvation is victory, and Zacharias said that God through Christ “would grant unto us, that we being delivered out of the hand of our enemies might serve him without fear.” The words “fear not” resound through the Christmas story: the angel’s reassurance to Mary (Luke 1:30), the angels speaking to the shepherds (Luke 2:10), and the summons to us to serve the Lord victoriously and “without fear.” Third, we are told that “the dayspring from on high hath visited us, to give light to them that sit in darkness and in the shadow of death, to guide our feet into the way of peace” (Luke 1:78–79). The dayspring is the morning star, the symbol of dawn, and a sign used of old to indicate a new world order, because the King has come.

Clearly, Christmas means the beginning of a new world in Christ, a world of salvation, victory, power, peace, and of a life without fear. But this is not the world we see in our city streets, or abroad. On the contrary, defeatism, fear, and impotence mark our age: all around us, men lie in a Christless world of darkness.

Men have their choice of these two worlds. Yet they are ready to celebrate Christmas and then continue as though Christ were dead. When the lovely Christmas carols are sung and ended, their cold fear returns, and

the darkness grows deeper. For them, life and the world are in sunset or darkness, not in the time of the dayspring from on high.

But John tells us that, though “the light shineth in darkness ... the darkness comprehended it not” (John 1:5). The Greek for “comprehended it not” can also be translated to mean that the darkness has not put out the light. It shines in darkness triumphantly; it overcomes the darkness, and the darkness cannot extinguish it. Therefore, looking down the centuries, Isaiah commands us, saying, “Arise, shine; for thy light is come, and the glory of the LORD is risen upon thee” (Isa. 60:1). The future is ours; none can dim nor put out that light. The only question is, are we the people of the light?

## The Truth and the Lie

Our Lord declares, "I am the truth" (John 14:6). Knowing Him who is the truth is important: the knowledge requires us to reorder our lives. The truth compels us to govern our lives by its reality, not our imagination, nor by a lie. Years ago, I knew a man who had once been rich and was now totally penniless. He simply refused to accept the reality of his condition and ended up in a mental institution. He was completely logical in conversation except on one point: he insisted and seemed to believe he was still rich. It had led him to write bad checks and to trouble his family by his rejection of reality.

The better we know Him who is the truth, the less we will tolerate a lie, or give ground to him who is the father of lies (John 8:44). Men like to believe a middle ground exists between the truth and lies, but it does not, and almost all languages lack a word for that supposed middle ground.

Too many people do not want to commit themselves to anything, especially not to the truth. Of course, they prefer not to be identified with the world of lies, so they try to live in an imaginary neutral realm. This in itself is living a lie. The truth is too rigorous for them. They prefer an uncommitted life.

Recently, a woman who was sexually harassed by a supervisor, openly and coarsely, was at once defended by a fellow employee who was a man. Later, on promises apparently of job advantages, she withdrew the charges, and subsequently her defender was fired. This young woman found advantages in choosing a lie, despite several witnesses, and she will in time reap the evil rewards of a lie.

The truth requires sacrifices; a lie offers advantages usually. But the greatest consequence of a lie is what it does to the liar.

# Pruning

There is no mistaking how God deals with us. Our Lord says that we are like branches of His vine, and “Every branch in me that beareth not fruit he taketh away: and every branch that beareth fruit, he purgeth it, that it may bring forth more fruit” (John 15:2).

I thought of this recently when I learned that homes, which once had an increased value if close to a grade school, high school, or college, today often have a lower value because of that same proximity. The reason is the undisciplined character of modern students, and their proneness to vandalism.

“Pruning” in our lives is a process of chastening and disciplining. Undisciplined children are unloved children because love seeks the best for the loved, not indulgence. The best is often what a child likes least, because “Foolishness is bound in the heart of a child” (Prov. 22:15).

The Lord God is no different with us. He knows how and where we need growth, and His “pruning” in our lives comes out of His love and grace. “There is no wisdom nor understanding nor counsel against the LORD” (Prov. 21:30). We need therefore to submit to His “pruning” as necessary for our growth in Him.

## Whom the Lord Loveth

The Canadian scientist and Biblical scholar, Dr. Arthur C. Custance, refers often to the remarkable meaning of the Hebrew word *paquadh*, which has the double significance of “to punish” and “to care for.” When David asked, “What is man, that thou art mindful of him? and the son of man, that thou visitest him?” (Ps. 8:4), he used the word *paquadh*, translated “visitest.” It can mean, “What is man that thou carest for him?” or “What is man that thou chastenest him?”

Custance observed, “A kite will not fly unless its flight is restrained. The moment you let go of the string the kite comes down. And a contrary wind is essential. The principle in all these situations is the same. Restraint is essential to forward movement. It is fundamentally true that for man, perfect freedom lies ultimately in perfect obedience to perfect law.”

The problem of our time is that so many fail to see this and, in fact, believe that total freedom alone leads to progress. A week ago, a small boy was flying a kite on a nearby hill. The string slipped from his hand, and he shouted to his friend, “It’s getting away!” Instead, of course, it crashed to the ground and crumbled.

Even at that early age this boy believed that, without restraint, the kite would soar instead of crash. Our age is beset by a deep and unreasoning belief that the absence of restraints will enable men to soar best. Many youths are regularly destroyed by this insane belief.

St. Paul knew better. He declared, “For whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom he receiveth,” and then added, “But if ye be without chastisement, whereof all are partakers, then are ye bastards, and not sons” (Heb. 12:6, 8). It is a mark of love and protecting care when a parent imposes restraints upon a child and punishes him, and the same is true of God.

The visitations of God thus are not penalty but blessing. Just as those of us who had godly parents who knew how to exercise the right kind of care, chastening, and restraint over us, are richer and stronger for it, so are we also the better for God's visitations.

The kite that is turned loose is not the free-flying kite. It crashes. It is the restraint of God's love which is our truest freedom.

## Man's Sole Purpose

In 1 Corinthians 15:32, St. Paul quotes a popular saying in part; in full, the pagan proverb was, "Let us eat, drink, and be merry, for tomorrow we die." This expressed the faith of many within the Roman Empire. It was not new with them. We know that it goes back at least to ancient Babylon. In the Gilgamesh Epic, a barmaid tells Gilgamesh, "Eat, drink, and be merry, for this is man's sole purpose." This saying comes up when a civilization is dying and loses its will to live.

Many around us now share the same belief as that of the barmaid of a few thousand years ago. These people refuse to face up to the problems of our time with faith in the Lord. Their answer is to enjoy life while they can. As a result, they leave behind them a legacy of emptiness and death.

Paul's answer to this pagan proverb is, first, the reality of the resurrection. We are created by God for eternal life, for the resurrection, not for death. Second, God gives His people "the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ" (1 Cor. 15:57). We are people destined for eternal life and victory. Third, we can be "stedfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labour is not in vain in the Lord" (v. 58).

This is why Paul saw his present distress as nothing compared to the victory that was his in Christ. Man's sole purpose is to serve and love God, to glorify Him, and to enjoy Him forever.

## The False Focus

Some church people make it difficult or annoying for other Christians to go to church. On Sunday evenings a friend goes to church alone; her husband's back condition does not make it possible for him to attend both morning and evening worship, and he attends only in the morning. Without fail, however, some will bustle up to ask, And why isn't your husband here tonight? In another case, one man who attends church very faithfully tries to sit toward the back in order to slip out quickly. A widower, he wants to worship the Lord; he is not interested in remarrying or in fellowship, simply in worship. All the same, many people have plans for him, and they telephone him, or try to waylay him to involve him in various church activities.

This involves a false perspective. The purpose of Christ's church is not to fulfill human needs as we see them or to fill up the pews, however fine these goals may be. The purpose of Christ's church is His Kingdom and His righteousness or justice (Matt. 6:33), and our human needs and concerns cannot take priority over this. Too many people in the church want to limit the meaning of Scripture to what it does for us.

Over thirty years ago, Herman N. Ridderbos in *When the Time Had Fully Come* described modernism as, first, a departure from "the expressed word of God," and second, as existentialism or subjectivism, reducing the meaning of the faith to what it can mean for us as individuals.

Any reduction of Christianity to what it can do for the soul of man only is halfway into modernism, because the focus has shifted from God to man.

What is the focus of your faith?

## Honest Work

Paul, in writing to Titus, declares, “And let ours [our people, all Christians] also learn to maintain good works for necessary uses, that they be not unfruitful” (Titus 3:14).

Our people, Paul says, must learn (as one commentator rendered it so ably) “to practice honest trades,” to do good work in their callings to avoid being “unfruitful,” or idlers. Paul is here restating in different words what he wrote in 2 Thessalonians 3:10, “For even when we were with you, this we commanded you, that if any would not work, neither should he eat.”

The early church took care of needy members, of widows and orphans (Acts 6:1–6), but it did not tolerate members who refused to work. The two ages of welfarism have been the Roman Empire and the world of the twentieth century. Paul does not comment on the ungodly; he does not expect virtue from them. He does, however, insist that Christians must be governed by God’s law, and this means responsible work and living.

Christians are to be workers, not idlers, and, in their work, they must manifest an honesty and responsibility that does credit to Christ’s church and to themselves.

To Paul, honest work was an important matter because it was and is important to God. In other words, dishonest work is offensive to God. Is He offended with you?

# Taxation

Pastor S. M. Schlissel of Brooklyn, New York, once called my attention to 1 Chronicles 21:1, King David's sin in numbering the people, and to the comment by Biblical scholars some generations ago. The scholars, who saw David's census as evil, wrote: "The sin of David numbering the people consisted in its being either to gratify his pride to ascertain the number of warriors he could muster ... or, perhaps, more likely still, to institute a regular and permanent system of taxation, which he deemed necessary to provide an adequate establishment for the monarchy, but which was regarded as ... an innovation on the liberty of the people."

Today, a California state senator telephoned me to say that during the discussion of a new tax bill, he had asked a simple question, "What about the morality of this tax?" All looked at him blankly, and then continued as though he had said nothing.

Early in the history of the United States, however, John Marshall warned, "The power to tax is the power to destroy." Nothing has changed that fact. God declares plainly, "Thou shalt not steal" (Exod. 20:15). Some countries have actually raised income taxes to compel large landowners to sell their farms. This is theft.

But the answer is not a tax revolt, but a return to morality and faith. Our civil governments are bad because we the people are immoral, and we get the kind of rulers we have earned and deserve. Change begins with us. Only then is it effective.

## The People of Salt

In a very important sentence, our Lord tells us that we are to be “the salt of the earth” (Matt. 5:13). For us now, salt is a flavoring agent, to give a better taste to foods. For most of history, salt has been a preserving agent, to prevent corruption. Some years back, I did my share of preserving fish, beef, and other things in a salt brine for later use. For Christians, to be the salt of the earth means that they are to preserve it from the corruption natural to fallen man. This means that they are to be active in every sphere to affirm Christ’s word and way and to bring all things under His government.

Our covenant with God in Christ is called “a covenant of salt” in Scripture. Thus, King Abijah in 2 Chronicles 13:5 declares: “Ought ye not to know that the LORD God of Israel gave the kingdom over Israel to David for ever, even to him and to his sons by a covenant of salt?”

In Christ we have perpetual peace with God the Father because a covenant of salt means a preserved and maintained peace. At the same time, in Christ, because of this covenant of salt, we have a perpetual duty to serve Him and to establish His reign and peace over all men and things. This is why, when our Lord tells His disciples and church that they are now the men of His covenant, the men of salt, He immediately tells them their duties. They are to be “the light of the world,” and all men must see their “good works” which glorify the Father (Matt. 5:14–16).

To be Christ’s people means that we have a duty to bring every area of life and thought into captivity to Christ, to be His salt, His preserving power in the world, and His light, His rule, life, and way at work.

## Love and Obedience

In a very telling passage in his commentary *Leviticus*, R. K. Harrison writes, "Obedience is at the heart of both the old and the new covenant, and this, rather than love, is God's prime demand of His followers. The Christian is urged to bring every thought to the obedience of Christ (2 Cor. 10:5), and to see obedience as one mark of a sanctified personality (1 Pet. 1:2)." From comments like this, it is easy to see why Harrison's study is so deservedly popular.

Of course, our Lord is emphatic on this also: "If ye love me, keep my commandments" (John 14:15). The test of love is obedience to God's Word.

Obedience requires action, and this is why it is often unpopular. No one is obedient who does nothing or who disobeys. On the other hand, our age has turned love into sentiment and sentimentality, and too often has separated it from action. About a hundred years ago, Ernest Dowson wrote a poem that has been very influential. The novel *Gone with the Wind* takes its title from Dowson's poem, which is about sexual infidelity. Dowson's claim in the poem is that, despite his strayings, "I have been faithful to thee Cynara! / In my fashion." Dowson was trying to prove that he was faithful to Cynara because even when in bed with other women, he thought of her. If Cynara bought that nonsense, she deserved what she got in Dowson.

Our Lord denies us the right to define love in this sickly and evil fashion: "If ye love me, keep my commandments." Love is obedience, and disobedience is not love but contempt. This is why obedience is so basic to the Bible: it demonstrates that we are the people of grace and that we love our Lord.

## What Is Man Like?

When we look at the history of the Israelites, God's chosen people of old, we find that in Egypt they faced harsh slave labor and a ruler who ordered that all their male babies be killed at birth. This was hardly a recommendation for the pharaoh's Egypt.

All the same, when the Israelites ran into problems in the wilderness, it was not God's miraculous deliverance they remembered, nor the evils of Egyptian slavery. Rather, they recalled the fish "we did eat ... freely; the cucumbers, and the melons, and the leeks, and the onions, and the garlick" (Num. 11:5). For these things they were ready to abandon God, Moses, and freedom and return to Egypt.

Is man any different now? Are we not abandoning both faith and freedom for the security of slavery? Whenever the state Legislature is in session or Congress meets, we become less free because we ask for measures that give us our version of leeks and garlic while limiting our freedom.

The generation that left Egypt was ordained by God to die in the desert because they were unfit for freedom. Will we too perish in a desert of our own making because we reject the responsibilities of faith and freedom?

# Treaties

One of the more emphatic commandments by God is against treaties and alliances with heathen or ungodly nations. These laws appear in Exodus 23:32–33 and 34:12–16, and Deuteronomy 7:1–4. The prophets denounce the kings for such alliances, usually called covenants in those days.

The reason for this strong condemnation by God of all such treaties is an obvious one. If a people are ungodly, then their conception of truth is very different from that of Scripture. Lenin said that words are to be used as a weapon of warfare. Language can thus be converted into a tool for deluding and conquering peoples.

God requires us to recognize that a faith or a religion is a life-governing force. Each religion has its own particular goal, and its own realm of meaning. Truth for some religions is ultimate nothingness; for us it is Christ. Between these two views of truth, a great gulf exists, so that when a discussion of ultimate truth takes place between these extremes, there are different meanings for truth.

From Old Testament times to the present, we have a long history of disasters when nations have unequally yoked themselves with godless nations, and God has judged both the rulers and the peoples for such acts of apostasy.

There is no reason nor ground for believing that the Lord God has changed His mind lately, or that He has grown modern and favors unequal yoking!

## Priorities

An English writer, Graham Dawson, has written on the necessity for Christians to be mindful of the spiritual importance of material things. The trouble with modern thinkers, he says, is their failure to see the relationship between the two. As a result, they are hostile to the producer of wealth, and they favor expropriation as the means of helping the needy.

To the contrary, he says, "The creation of wealth is, indeed, the most fundamental social service of all. It is no exaggeration to say: Charity begins at work." Thus Christians need to be creators of wealth in order to further the Lord's work, materially and spiritually.

Life is our time for work, for "the night cometh, when no man can work" (John 9:4). The discipline of work is neglected in our day. It is tragic that in a time of greater prosperity than in a generation or two ago we have used that prosperity for recreational rather than Kingdom purposes. Men have shifted their priorities from the Lord to themselves.

It should not surprise us, then, that we have today a society that is lawless. If men will neglect their duties to the Lord, they will neglect them to one another. We have the results all around us.

Our Lord declares, "[S]eek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness" (Matt. 6:33). As long as men seek first their satisfaction and their own welfare, the Lord's work will suffer, and our fellow men will be forgotten. Our priorities must be commanded by the Word of God.

# Impatience

Some people are very impatient. A relative of Pope John VIII, a ninth century pope, was anxious to seize some of the pope's possessions. Finally because he grew weary of waiting for John to die, he poisoned him. Because the dying pope took too long to die, his relative speeded up matters by beating out his brains with a hammer. (The *Catholic Encyclopedia* finds this episode horrible and is unwilling to believe it entirely, but a distinguished Catholic historian, Friedrich Herr, and other scholars, assure us it really happened.)

Dr. Herr tells us that Pope John VIII "fought a desperate battle against the Saracens and the inroads of anarchy." Now an act of anarchy had ended all his efforts to stem anarchy.

Today again we face increasing and radical anarchy. Anarchy and lawlessness abound wherever men want something and refuse either to work for it or to wait for it. Wealth, progress, and peace all represent work, if not our work, then someone else's work. What we inherit may not cost us work, but it does represent the work of someone else.

The barbarian and the anarchist want a shortcut to all things desired. They seek to eliminate the work behind wealth, progress, and peace, but what they actually eliminate, by bypassing work, are the very things they desire. Without work—wealth, progress, and peace disappear.

According to St. Paul, true hope is born out of tribulation, which teaches us to work patiently for our goal, and patience gives us the ability to learn from our experience. Out of this mature experience, a solid hope is born, one of having the blessing of God (Rom. 5:1-5).

This hope gives us a confident faith in God's saving power. The promise of the good, full, and rich life in Christ, a fresh Canaan blessing, comes to such patience, for through patience we "inherit the promises" (Heb. 6:12).

We have a generation today which seeks all the promises of life without faith, work, patience, or morality. Because of its radical anarchism, these new barbarians are destroying the foundations of everything they profess they want. Like that relative of Pope John VIII, they are poisoning the source of that wealth, and trying to beat out its brains.

They will be no more successful than Pope John's kinsman. He was caught in the act, and dropped dead in terror. But Rome experienced generations of anarchy.

## Idleness

In 1632, Elizabeth Joceline gave this advice in her work *The Mother's Legacie* to her unborne Childe: "Be ashamed of idleness as thou art a man, but tremble at it as thou art a Christian ... What more wretched estate can there be in the world? First, to be hated of God as an idle drone, not fit for His service; then through extreme poverty to be contemned of all the world."

These words sound strange in modern ears, but Puritan preachers emphasized that labor was a privilege and a duty to one's neighbor, to society, to mankind, and to God. The Bible tells us that man had work to do before the Fall, cultivating and protecting the Garden of Eden (Gen. 2:15). Twice in *Paradise Lost* John Milton stressed this fact.

In 1642, the Rev. Edward Browne spoke of work and the careful stewardship of one's property as something done "for the glory of God and the good of others." When men worked honestly, they furthered their own welfare, the society they lived in, and God's purposes for their lives. On the other hand, those who lived in idleness harmed themselves and society.

All this and more was commonplace teaching once. In 1645, when Hugh Peters returned to England from New England, he said of New England, "I have lived in a country where in seven years I never saw beggar, nor heard an oath, nor lookt upon a drunkard: why should there be beggars in your Israel where there is so much work to do?"

The fact that idleness and vice were none too common in the years after Hugh Peter's departure explains why the American colonies quickly became a commercial and seagoing power which traversed the world in trade. The steady rise of America to world power had behind it the Puritan teaching on the privilege and duty of work.

Today, almost the only parts of the world where the same teaching is heard, although with very limited response, is in the Soviet Union, in Red China, and also in Japan. Elsewhere, the emphasis is on leisure, retirement, and fun and games. Work is regarded as a bore.

Absenteeism from work is highest on Mondays, lowest on payday, a fact which tells us much about how people regard work. More and more young men judge a job in terms of its pension and retirement plan rather than in terms of its opportunities.

Two hundred years ago, the clergy would have said that a people so inclined are headed for decay, want, and disaster. They would have insisted, and indeed often did say, that a people disliking work would soon find their life and world impoverished.

Were they right? Your answer will not change reality as God made it, but it will have much to do with your future—and the nation's.

## Law Enforcement

Recently California State Senator “Bill” Richardson shared with me some data released by the state Bureau of Criminal Statistics. In 1970, the major crimes reported in California were 652,393. The total number of adult felony arrests was 214,836. The district attorneys, filing only when they felt a conviction was quite likely, filed 71,850 charges. There were 59,257 total dispositions, of which 49,950 resulted in convictions with 9,307 not convicted.

Of the nearly 50,000 convicted (of whom many were men with records), only 5,025 were sent to prison. The rest were put on parole, probation, or, in one way or another, processed without a prison sentence. Thus, as against the total felonies, less than 1 percent prison sentences followed. In spite of a rise in crime, many of our state prisons are not filled to capacity.

As Senator “Bill” Richardson pointed out, the courts are in part to blame, but so are the people. The juries are notoriously lax in most cases. A friend reported that one associate, a responsible federal official, served on a jury recently and excused his laxity by saying, “After all, it could be me next time.”

This is the heart of the matter. The decline in law enforcement reflects the decline in the moral standards of the people. All too many men and women are unwilling to support strict law enforcement, because they are afraid that their son or daughter might suffer the consequences. The number of parents with delinquent or problem children who are hostile to law enforcement is staggering, and their conduct is often shocking. Some police report almost as many problems with angry parents as with their hoodlum children.

Recently, I encountered a situation where several housewives from “good” families deliberately broke the law. The storekeeper was helpless. The police were too busy with more serious crimes to be able to help him

out, and any attempt at prosecution would have cost the storekeeper a great deal of money and ill will—enough to destroy him. The law was broken, as many other laws are broken, and nothing could be done.

There is a reason for this. Only when law breaking is a minor factor in society can the law really be enforced, because the basic form of law enforcement is the moral character and conduct of the people. When a growing percentage of people become godless and lawless, law enforcement begins to collapse, because the only thorough policing in any society is the moral policing of a godly conscience. When people are godless and lawless, no police force can provide law and order.

If an irrigation ditch leaks at one or two small points, the leaks can be checked readily. If the whole levee collapses, you are in trouble. This is our problem today. The levee of Christian character is showing signs of disappearing. The problem of law enforcement is now bigger than the police can handle. It requires a revived and vigorous Christian faith and character, and a renewal of our private and national life. David once cried out, "Help, LORD; for the godly man ceaseth; for the faithful fail from among the children of men" (Ps. 12:1). Only by God's grace, and by a return to His law-word, can we again have a godly society.

## Lawless Law

A recent news item stated that a court in Kirby, Great Britain, ruled against Amanda Egan, age ten, who was crossing over a crosswalk on roller skates. A truck struck her, but the court ruled, because Amanda had been on wheels, she lost her rights as a pedestrian and had no right to the pedestrian crossing or to damages.

Of course, had Amanda been skating elsewhere in the street when struck, she would have also lost, because the court would have ruled that she had no right to the street.

The court, in this case, because of a technicality, the wheels, deprived Amanda Egan of justice. The court was lawless in the name of the law. The law was used to pervert the purpose of the law. We should not be surprised at this.

Last month, a state official told me that the law itself means little. "If," he said, "I owe you a thousand dollars, it makes little difference whether you have my signed note for it, or just my word. The note is worth only as much as my word is. If you go to court against me, it will cost as much or more to win, and winning is no guarantee you can collect. The note and the law are no better than your character and mine."

This is the heart of the matter. If men are not godly, the best-intentioned laws can serve ungodly and lawless ends. This was true in Amanda Egan's case, and in many other cases. The law becomes a force for lawlessness when the people and the courts are ungodly.

To trust or hope that a new law is the answer is to be a fool. I know people who have spent years and money agitating for new laws to remedy all manner of problems, and they cannot understand why matters get worse. They insist on believing that another election and another law will somehow solve the problem.

The Psalmist wisely saw the issue: "Except the LORD build the house, they labour in vain that build it: except the LORD keep the city, the watchman waketh but in vain" (Ps. 127:1). New and good laws without new and godly men are like houses with roofs but neither walls nor foundations: they cannot stand.

We have some bad laws on our books in America, but also thousands of good ones. We were a godly people before we passed many of those laws; we have neither been made better nor preserved from ungodliness by having them.

Laws are good, in their place. But first and last, we need godly men and soon. God, give us men!

# The Author

**Rousas John Rushdoony** (1916-2001) was a well-known American scholar, writer, and author of over thirty books. He held B.A. and M.A. degrees from the University of California and received his theological training at the Pacific School of Religion. An ordained minister, he worked as a missionary among Paiute and Shoshone Indians as well as a pastor to two California churches. He founded the Chalcedon Foundation, an educational organization devoted to research, publishing, and cogent communication of a distinctively Christian scholarship to the world at large. His writing in the *Chalcedon Report* and his numerous books spawned a generation of believers active in reconstructing the world to the glory of Jesus Christ. Until his death, he resided in Vallecito, California, where he engaged in research, lecturing, and assisting others in developing programs to put the Christian Faith into action.

# The Ministry of Chalcedon

**CHALCEDON (kal-SEE-don)** is a Christian educational organization devoted exclusively to research, publishing, and cogent communication of a distinctively Christian scholarship to the world at large. It makes available a variety of services and programs, all geared to the needs of interested ministers, scholars, and laymen who understand the propositions that Jesus Christ speaks to the mind as well as the heart, and that His claims extend beyond the narrow confines of the various institutional churches. We exist in order to support the efforts of all orthodox denominations and churches. Chalcedon derives its name from the great ecclesiastical Council of Chalcedon (AD 451), which produced the crucial Christological definition: "Therefore, following the holy Fathers, we all with one accord teach men to acknowledge one and the same Son, our Lord Jesus Christ, at once complete in Godhead and complete in manhood, truly God and truly man..." This formula directly challenges every false claim of divinity by any human institution: state, church, cult, school, or human assembly. Christ alone is both God and man, the unique link between heaven and earth. All human power is therefore derivative: Christ alone can announce that, "All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth" (Matthew 28:18). Historically, the Chalcedonian creed is therefore the foundation of Western liberty, for it sets limits on all authoritarian human institutions by acknowledging the validity of the claims of the One who is the source of true human freedom (Galatians 5:1). The Chalcedon Foundation publishes books under its own name and that of Ross House Books. It produces a magazine, *Faith for All of Life*, and a newsletter, *The Chalcedon Report*, both bimonthly. All gifts to Chalcedon are tax deductible. For complimentary trial subscriptions, or information on other book titles, please contact:

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