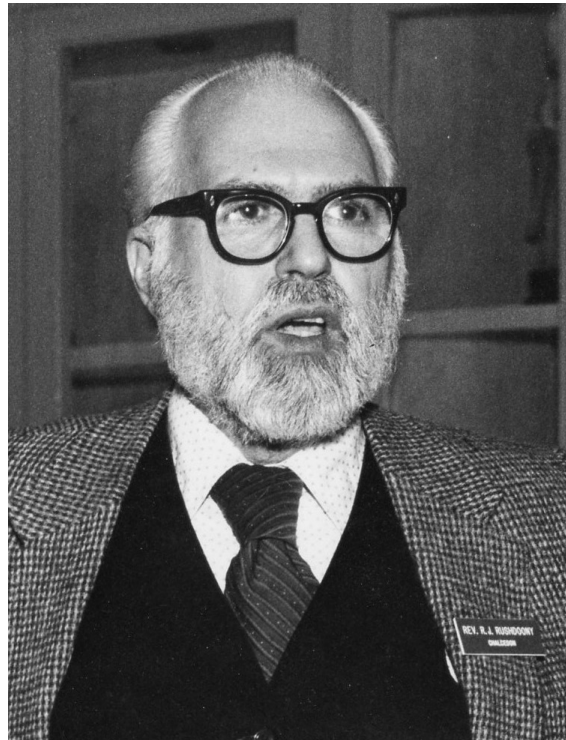


Transcripts of  
**HISTORY of  
THOUGHT**

A Lecture Series by R.J. Rushdoony



## R.J. RUSHDOONY

(1916–2001)

Rev. R.J. Rushdoony (1916–2001), was a leading theologian, church/state expert, and author of numerous works on the application of Biblical law to society. He started the Chalcedon Foundation in 1965. His Institutes of Biblical Law (1973) began the contemporary theonomy movement which posits the validity of Biblical law as God's standard of obedience for all. He therefore saw God's law as the basis of the modern Christian response to the cultural decline, one he attributed to the church's false view of God's law being opposed to His grace. This broad Christian response he described as "Christian Reconstruction." He is credited with igniting the modern Christian school and homeschooling movements in the mid to late 20th century. He also traveled extensively lecturing and serving as an expert witness in numerous court cases regarding religious liberty. Many ministry and educational efforts that continue today, took their philosophical and Biblical roots from his lectures and books.

Learn more about R.J. Rushdoony by visiting: <https://chalcedon.edu/founder>

# The Early Thinkers from Plato to Augustine

R.J. Rushdoony

It is important for us to realize that sometimes the best way to understand a subject is to have a map. Now maps are very important. Maps give an overall picture. I lived in one area once where I knew every road, I knew the ground in great detail throughout that particular valley, but not until I saw a map did I have a true perspective on that valley and its location to adjacent areas. Details sometimes can be very familiar to us, but we need an overall perspective.

Thus, it would be possible for us to go into great detail about Greek philosophers, the Medieval and the modern philosophers, and lose ourselves in masses of interesting detail. As a result, what we shall do is to lay down some of the basic guidelines, and overall map, what are the key issues. Then, as we come to the modern period, what is being done about these key issues in our time. This morning, our subject will be 'the early thinkers from the Greeks to Augustine,' and some of the key issues that were laid down at that time; some of which are still very much with us.

Now first of all, when we begin to think seriously, philosophically or religiously, we think of God as at the top of the entire universe. God is the highest good, God is the ultimate being, and beginning with God we think downward. But this is not so with the ancient world. The ancient world sometimes referred to god, or to the gods, but they did not think of god as the highest and the ultimate being. As a matter of fact, the Christian philosopher Tertullian ridiculed the Greeks and the Romans as well as the Egyptians and all ancient philosophy, because he said: "Their Gods are created by acts of the senate." And he was literally right.

No-one in Rome was a god until he got senate approval. When an Emperor died, whether he joined the ranks of the gods depended on how well the Senate liked him, or whether they wanted to do honor to him, which if his son were on the throne they usually did. Gods were thus created by acts of Senate. Similarly, to cite an expression that we are familiar with, an aspect of all of this was hero-worship. Recently, a historian, a very brilliant and able man, wrote to me about his idea of a book on a modern figure whom he was going to title a 'hero.' And he saw this man as a Christian, and I wrote to him a couple of letters, and in my second letter I spelled out to him my objection to that title. I said first I question that he is a Christian, and second I question the use of the word 'hero.' Because the word 'hero' goes back to the ancient world, a hero was a man who was a demigod, a half-god. And therefore he was an object of worship. He was someone who had by his achievement developed the divinity in himself, so that now he was more than man, he was a demigod. And so, hero worship was a reality.

Now to see exactly where the highest good was in the ancient world, not in God, it is important for us to turn to Aristotle's Politics. And Aristotle begins in the first paragraph of his Politics, Book I, and he declares in the second sentence: "...all communities aim at some good, the state or political community, which is the highest of all, and which embraces all the rest, aims at good in a greater degree than any other, and at the highest good."

Now this is a startling statement. We are not used to thinking this way, and this is why we are so little equipped to cope with the revival of ancient philosophy, the re-enthronement as it were of Plato and Aristotle and other Greek thinkers in our Universities which has happened in recent generations. Their thinking began, not with God, but with the state. So that for them the state was the highest good, and the working God of their philosophy.

Now this of course meant totalitarianism. It meant that the state was divine or a kind of a god, the king therefore had a kind of divinity, the offices within the state and the rulers of the state shared in this divinity, and therefore you could not criticize them, you could not challenge them, you were challenging 'God.'

This is an important fact to remember, because with the revival of Greek philosophy, beginning with Aquinas and especially with the Renaissance and the Enlightenment, we have again this entire reversal of standards. So that for us in the modern world it is not God, who is uppermost, but the state. And after all, what is Marxism but this ancient paganism revived? It begins with the state, the state is ultimate, the state is the highest good, the state is infallible. Or they would say, not the state, but the 'Dictatorship of the Proletariat.'

Thus it is important for us, is it not to understand philosophy, the central problems of it. Because we miss the significance of the anti-Christian movement today in intellectual circles. It is the dethronement of God and the enthronement of the state.

A second essential point with respect to ancient philosophy; for ancient philosophy, being is one and continuous. Now what does this mean? As Christians, as believers in the Scriptures, we declare that God is uncreated being. He alone is God. Men are not gods, men are not divine, we don't have a spark of divinity in us, we are creatures. So that there are two kinds of being in the universe. The uncreated being; God, and the whole world of created being, man and all the creatures, the entire universe. This means therefore there is a vast gap between God and the universe, and the universe, nor any part of it, can ever be termed 'divine.' But in ancient philosophy there was only one continuous world of being, so that the gods, the men, all shared in this divinity.

Now, some people were more godlike than others, the heroes were ones who were at least half-gods. The rulers or emperors very often became completely God. Everyone had a little bit of God in them and it was just a case of developing that in them. So salvation meant becoming more and more a god, whereas for us salvation is accepting the redemptive work of God by faith.

Now, the background of this idea of one continuous being was that being arose out of chaos, and here you have the whole religion of revolution, and that it is working its way up. And since it is evolving, and the idea of evolution is the hallmark of paganism, there was no idea of creation in paganism, whatever they may try to tell you. The way for this evolution to proceed is through chaos. It has to have chaos occasionally in order to step upward. And so, this takes us to the religion of revolution. I won't go into that, we have dealt with that previously, I have a pamphlet on it and I am writing a book on the subject.

But, this concept of evolution, all being as one, and all divine, is again a basic aspect of ancient philosophy, and also of modern philosophy. So, first, the state as the working God of the system, second everything is a part of God, it is all divine, there is no 'God' as such, and Third: Ancient philosophy was strongly esoteric. Now, this they will not teach you in the universities, they don't like to go into this. But it was esoteric. It believed there were levels of knowledge, one level for the common people, the herd, and another level for the elite.

Because certain men are more godlike, the hidden, esoteric philosophy was reserved for them. Let

me cite as illustrative of this, a passage from Benjamin Farrington's, *Greek Science: Theophrastus to Galen*, Volume II, p. 15 ff.

"We are told by an ancient writer that Aristotle gave two kinds of instruction. He gave formal instruction in the morning to regular students, who had given proof of aptitude, attainment, zeal and industry. In the afternoon there were more popular lectures for a wider public. When Alexander the Great, whose tutor Aristotle had been, heard a report that the subject matter of the morning lectures had been published he wrote to his teacher in protest: 'If you have made public what we have learned from you, how shall we be any better than the rest?' Aristotle told him not to worry. 'The private lessons,' he wrote, 'Are both published and not published. Nobody will be able to understand them except those who have had the real instruction.'"

And so he goes on to add: "This makes clear the general character of Aristotle's surviving writings." In other words, they are esoteric, they deal with a world of hidden thought for the elite, for the rulers. And this element is still clear. As Jean Houssaye, a French Catholic writer has pointed out, there is a difference between Communists and Marxists. The Communists are the gullible fools who believe in the dream of a communist Utopia. The Marxists are the ones who in conformity to Marx and Lenin believe in nothing, they want power. And so the communists are the fools that are used by the Marxists in their dream of total power. One Communist saw through this, and he gave a fearful picture of the reality. Orwell, *Nineteen Eighty-Four*. And he said that the only conclusion of all the modern world was this world of total power, a boot endlessly stamping itself in a human face and grinding it down. Sheer naked power. No idealism, no meaning, nothing.

Now in view of this, for the ancient world, for Greek philosophy, the cosmos was the state. When we say 'cosmos,' we mean the universe. But for them it was the state. And a 'cosmopolitan' therefore is someone who believes in a world state. That's the literal meaning of the word. Because 'polis' means state. 'Polis,' political. A 'cosmopolitan' is one who believes in a world state, and this state as the ultimate, the highest good, and since it is the highest good there can be no appeal against the state which is ultimate order. Now when you believe in God you can always appeal to God against the state. You can appeal to a higher good, and you can say in terms of what the state does that it is evil, that it is wicked, because you know another and a higher standard. But if there is no standard but the state. If it is God, how can you appeal against it? Whatever the state does is right. By definition it cannot be wrong. You have no appeal.

Now, as we begin to analyze some of the problems that confronted Greek philosophy as they dealt with this, we have to realize that these problems centered themselves around one problem, which is the consistent, the main problem of philosophy. Philosophy today doesn't talk about it because it has surrendered. It can't come up with an answer, we will deal with that at one of our later meetings. Only Christian thinkers deal with the problem. 'The problem of the one and the many.' Now it would be very easy for me to get lost on this subject, because I have been working for over 6 years now on a book about the problem of the one and the many; I hope to finish it this year but I've said that the last two years. What is the problem of the one and the many? The problem is this: what is most ultimate in the universe, in society, in the state? Is it the unity of things, the oneness of things, or is it the particularity, the many-ness, the individuality of things? In other words, is it the state or the individual? Are you going to have collectivism or totalitarianism, or are you going to have anarchism? Which is the ideal state?

Now this problem is a very real one, in every area of life, for example the church. Which is more important; the church or the individual believer and his faith? Now, the Baptists place all the emphasis on the individual believer and his faith. The Catholics place all the emphasis on the church, so they have answered 'the problem of the one and the many' each in their ways, haven't they? Again, with

respect to marriage, what is basic? Is it the bond of marriage, the oneness? That is the Catholic answer, therefore there can be no divorce. Or the modern answer; the individual and his feeling is everything, so that when he loses interest in marriage it is dissolved. You see what happens whatever answer you give. You can carry this into every area of life, and of course today our leftists are divided between the totalitarians and the anarchists. Each of them is giving an answer in terms of their political science to 'the problem of the one and the many.' Some are saying it is the collective whole. They become totalitarians. The others say that it is the individual. They become Anarchists. So your answer to the problem of the one and the many, which is ultimate, which is the truth about things, is all important.

Now, philosophy has tried to answer this in the Western world by avoiding the pitfalls of the extremes into which Eastern philosophy very early collapsed. On the one hand monism, total absorption into the one, so that as in Hindu philosophy, 'Brahma' is everything, the individual is nothing, the goal of the universe is to be absorbed into 'Brahma.' This is mysticism, total absorption into the one, so that this world, the individual, all our problems are nothing, Brahma is everything, the individual is an illusion.

Now, we have had this kind of thinking in our world too, Mary Baker Eddy, was a monist. Her thinking was pure and simple monism. There is no death, why? because there are no individuals. This is the logical conclusion of her thinking which she made, and which many Christian scientists don't realize. There is no death because you don't exist, everything is universal mind, therefore death is an illusion, because I am an illusion. My body is an illusion, my individual mind is an illusion, there is only universal mind.

On the other hand, the one who gives the answer of the 'many' becomes an atomist, he says there is nothing but myself, and Jean Paul Sartre our modern philosopher says God is no problem for me, but other people are! In other words, he is the only one in his world, really. And the problem in his philosophy is to find some place for other people in his world.

So, the answer for 'the problem of the one and the many' is all important, and very early Greek Philosophy began to wrestle with this, for example Parmenides and Heraclitus were monists, given to the belief in the reality of the one and only the one, whereas in Empedocles and Anaxagoras were believers in the many, in the individual, the particulars only.

The answer, by and large, of Greek philosophy after that; to avoid this problem became dialectical. Now Dialectical philosophy tries to say: "We are going to avoid falling into the pitfall of either Monism or Atomism, we will try to maintain these apparently contradictory things in tension. We will say they are both true even though they seem to be contradictory." Now, dialecticism breaks down in time, because it is illogical.

And now let's turn to Plato and Socrates for a little while to see how they wrestled with these problems, and into what context we have to fit them. Plato first of all, then Socrates. Justice for Plato and Socrates was the rule of 'reason,' 'reason' is justice. So that 'reason' rules in men, as the justice over man's nature, and the philosopher-kings, the elite, rule over the people in the state. In other words, the masses are simply irrational. Therefore, since the masses are irrational, they cannot rule themselves, there is no justice, the intellectuals have to rule them, the philosophers. And so you have to have a dictatorship of the elite, this is your true republic. Then you can have a state in which there is justice.

Now, truth therefore, since the state is supreme, truth is what the state does. Since the state is the God of the system, truth is what the state does, and therefore, whatever the state declares is the truth, if the state tells a lie, it is the truth. Now let's listen to what Socrates has to say on this in his Republic. Now it sounds like he is all for truth, but let us listen to Socrates.

“But again a high value must be placed also upon truth. For if we were right in what we said just now, and falsehood is really useless to the gods and only useful to men in the way of a medicine, it is plain that such an agent must be kept in the hands of physicians, and that unprofessional men must not meddle with it.”

That’s a strange statement isn’t it? Truth is like a medicine, only the doctors who can prescribe it properly can handle it. These ‘doctors’ are the dictators, the philosopher-kings, the intellectuals.

“To the rulers of the state then, if to any, it belongs of 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. Nay, for a private person to tell a lie to such magistrates, we shall maintain to be at least as great a mistake as for a patient to deceive his physician, or a pupil his training master concerning the state of his own body. Or for a sailor to tell an untruth to a pilot concerning the ship and the crew, in describing his own condition or that of his fellow sailors. If then the authorities find anyone else guilty of lying in the city,” (Anyone else other than themselves) “they will punish him for introducing a practice as seditious and subversive in a state as in a ship.”

In other words, lying is a special privilege that belongs to the state, because the state is the highest good. In terms of this therefore, the state has the right you see to control all things. So, it follows logically that as Plato and Aristotle outline in the Republic and Socrates, what they say is that they have the right to control births, to dispose of unwanted children, to determine by license who shall have a baby and who shall not, to determine who shall marry whom, and to take whatever woman they want for their own purposes. After all, they are true reason. They are true justice themselves. This is the premise of their faith, and the sad fact is that Christian philosophers maintain this same idea, so-called Christian philosophers, as I’ve found out this past week. Nothing upsets some of these people more than to challenge this premise, they get almost hysterical. It is very amusing.

Now as a result we find when we read Plato’s Republic that there are no laws. Plato in his old age wrote another book, The Laws, this was for a secondary state, in other words, one that hadn’t really come to a standard of justice and reason. But, when a state really comes to its senses and institutes a just order and a rational order, it won’t have laws, it will just have philosophers as the kings or dictators, because since they are reason incarnate, since they are justice incarnate, who needs laws? Every one of them, when he opens his mouth, gives forth divine law. This explains, does it not, not only the dictatorship of the proletariat in the Soviet Union, but our intellectual community today. In our universities and colleges, and unfortunately in our Christian schools and colleges too often, because they have been brainwashed by this entire tradition, and will not face up to the truth of it.

Now, Aristotle stated very plainly in his Politics that education is conditioning. Men and the environment must be totally controlled, the state must govern and the environment totally, even to the point of destroying those that will not fit in; whether babes, or adults. After all, there is nothing unusual about this, because how does Aristotle begin in his Politics by defining man? “Man,” he says, “is a political animal.” “Man is a political animal.” Well, if he is a political animal he is a creature of the state, the state has made him, the state is his God, therefore the state can do with him as it pleases. We when we speak to God in the words of Scripture, we say: “We are Thy creatures, the work of Thy hands, do with us as Thou wilt.” And so, in Aristotle’s world, the man must say to the state: “We are your creatures, do with us as thou wilt. Destroy us, use us, break us up, we are your creatures.” As a result, in Plato’s thinking, it is not God from whence ethics or morality comes but from the state.

So, Aristotle wrote his Politics, and then he wrote his Ethics based on his Politics. The state determines morality, because the state is the God of the system. And isn’t this exactly what we are seeing

today not only in the Soviet Union but in our Supreme Court? And can you change this, just by bucking Washington? You cannot change it until you begin to remake your entire worldview, your faith, until it is premised on Christian conclusions.

Now of course, the dialectic of the one and the many broke down. The attempt to hold the Greek social order from breaking apart did not work. They tried to say both the one and the many are important, but they didn't have any ground for saying it. And so what happened? On the one hand, Greek society went into total statism and you had the thirty tyrants, who ruled with total ruthlessness, they followed the implications of Plato and Aristotle, in fact they were Plato's pupils, they were the philosopher-kings, and so you had tyranny.

But against that rose the cynics, and the cynics said: "We don't like the establishment." The cynics were the hippies of the day. They were anarchists. Diogenes for example was one of the great cynics, and he went around with a lantern in broad daylight looking for an honest man, why? Because he said: "There is no such thing as an honest man. The idea of honesty is a myth, there is nothing but the individual." He didn't sleep in a house, he slept on the floor, in a barrel, anywhere. Because he said: "For man to claim to be what he is, is an affectation."

The word 'cynic,' incidentally, is cognate with our word 'canine,' dog. It comes from a Greek word 'kynos,' dog. "And so," they said, "men are no different from dogs, why do they pretend to any kind of higher life or anything?" And so, the cynics would openly copulate in public. This Sunday, I heard that this is now taking place, in public, in San Francisco, on the part of our modern cynics. Now, they also went around unwashed, unshaven, hair uncut, they denounced everything around them as an affectation, they said that it was a waste of good meat to bury people, they should have cannibalism, they advocated it openly, and today the film that is the most popular in Los Angeles, which in its second month, almost through with its second month run, *The Weekend*, is a film in which hippies finally push society to its logical conclusion; cannibalism. So that, in this film I am told that when there is an accident everybody pours out and grabs a hold of the victims and starts chomping on them.

Now all of this and a great deal more because it would be beyond public permissibility to describe what the cynics openly did, Publicly! But they were declaring that, since there is nothing except the individual, there is no law governing the individual, he can do as he pleases! Greek society had reached a dead end, it collapsed. But Rome of course repeated the same kind of mistake. Rome had no capacity for anything else, it was caught in the same kind of tension. For it, the state was the highest. For example, Cicero, in his book on laws, *The Republic* and *On the Laws*, as he deals with the state, he takes the Aristotelian, the Platonic view that the state is the highest good, it is the practical God. Of course, they talk about these gods; Zeus, and the other, Jupiter and Minerva and so on, but of course the Senate establishes the Gods, but some of the common people believe in them. And so he says, with respect to the gods, discussing a particular one:

"But whether he ever existed or not has nothing to do with the case, so in the very beginning we must persuade our citizens that the gods are the lords and the ruler of all things, and that what is done is done by their will and authority. That they are likewise great benefactors of man, observing the character of every individual what he does and of what wrong he is guilty, and with what intentions and what piety he fulfills his religious duties, and that they take note of the pious and the impious. For surely minds which are imbued with such ideas will not fail to form true and useful opinions."

In other words, the variation with the Romans was that they were ready to treat the gods as some real powers, who looked down and watched people, but as he says: "We practical politicians have to foster these ideas, it will work better, than say the Greek system, to keep people in line. It is necessary socially, because people will be better behaved if they feel that some gods are up their keeping an eye

on them.” And so, he justified religion in terms of its social utility, and Cicero felt that it was important for senators like himself to go through the motions of being very devout and going to the temple of Zeus or Jupiter, and going through the various services, and making a great parade of public religion. And of course this idea is not dead to this day, and you have your religious establishment in Washington D.C. which never changes these days, Billy Graham.

Now, in terms of Roman thought, some ideas are important to understand their philosophy. Basic to Roman religion was the idea of ‘piety.’ Now, we are familiar with the word piety, when we speak of a man being ‘pious’ we mean he is very devout, he is a good Christian. But the word ‘pious,’ basically a Roman word, a Latin word, meant a man that was dutiful to the state. Since their religion, whatever the façade of the gods was, was basically a statist religion, and their philosophy was the philosophy of the state as God, a pious man was a man who was obedient to the state. A ‘genius’ was one who was filled with the spirit of the divinity of the state, and was a great man in the state, a potential God.

Emperor-worship was the real religion of Rome. No Christian was ever persecuted for refusing to worship at the altar of Jupiter, no Christian was ever, ever given a bad time because he disbelieved in the Roman gods. The Christians were persecuted because they refused to offer incense at the altar of the emperor, that was the real offense, that was the test. They would be lined up and brought before the Roman officials, and there would be a statue of Caesar, or whichever Emperor was there: “go forward and offer incense to acknowledge that Caesar was ultimate.” And this was the issue, Christ vs. Caesar. Who was God? Is it the state, or is it Christ, the Trinity in Heaven. It was impossible, inescapable, for Christianity to avoid conflict. The war between Christ and Caesar was a war to the death, one or the other had to go.

And this is why William Carroll Bark, who is not a Christian, but he is one of the few respectable historians we have around, he is at Stanford, but I might add the history department has shut him out of the history department, they put him into the Latin department. But as he teaches ancient history he says:

“The so-called dark ages were actually ages of light. When the Christian frontier thinkers laid down all the foundations of Western liberty.”

Now isn’t that different from what you were taught? They fought against the power of the state, and broke it, not completely, but they shattered it enough so that Western liberty was able to sprout and be born out of that. Otherwise we would now have nothing but that which Russia represents today, Rome and Greece represented then, and Babylon and Egypt. Totalitarianism without a relief, without any variation.

Now, as against the doctrine of Caesar, the doctrine of totalitarianism on the one hand, and the doctrine of cynics on the other hand, who continued from the days of the Greeks to the fall of Rome, as against the problem of collectivism and anarchism, what was the Christian answer? Well this answer was formulated in terms of the scriptures by the Christian philosophers; Tertullian, Athanasius and Augustine, and stated in the great councils of Nicaea, of Ephesus, and of Chalcedon, and I traced the history of this in my book, *The Foundations of Social Order*. It was the doctrine of the Trinity, the Orthodox doctrine of the trinity. Now what does this doctrine say? The doctrine of the Trinity says that there is one God, but three persons in the Godhead, and it is not the oneness of God that is ultimate or the Trinity of the Godhead that is ultimate, but both the oneness and the Trinity that are ultimate. That there are three persons in the Godhead; all equal, all God, all one, and yet three. So that in the Trinity you have the equal ultimacy, the equal importance of the one and the many; unity and individuality. So you are not caught between the tension of totalitarianism and anarchism, but you have a place both for unity, and for individuality. It isn’t the bond of marriage that is everything, and the individual is nothing, but it is marriage and the individuals. The church and the members and their particular faith. The state



and the citizens, it is perfectly balanced. Then alone can you have liberty with order. Then alone can you have a place for individualism without falling into anarchism, for unity without falling into totalitarianism. This was the great achievement of the councils culminating in Chalcedon. And out of this Western liberty was born. And this is an area of history of the history of philosophy, and of the history of social institutions that has been buried, deliberately buried.

In discussing matters with someone who was teaching with the position of assistant professor in the department of history in one of our state universities, he stated that there was a bitter argument at a meeting over the fact that in their survey course three weeks were given to the Greeks, and one week to the Hebrews and one week given to church history, and the feeling was: "Why that time to the Hebrews (that is to Biblical history) and to church history, it is worthless! Throw it out." Of course throw it out! Because, then the challenge will not be there.

Thus we have, from the beginnings to Augustine, a major revolution in philosophy, from the state as God to God as God. From collectivism and anarchism tearing the world apart, to an answer that made possible unity with individualism, so that liberty was born into the Western world.

Thus we see something of the foundations of the modern world. Next week, or next month we shall deal with philosophy from Anselm to the Enlightenment, how this was carried forward and developed, and what happened, and finally the status of the problem today in our third meeting.

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#### **ENDNOTES:**

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1. "...there was an old decree that no god should be consecrated by the emperor till first approved by the senate." Tertullian. (1885). *The Apology*. In A. Roberts, J. Donaldson, & A. C. Coxe (Eds.), & S. Thelwall (Trans.), *Latin Christianity: Its Founder, Tertullian* (Vol. 3, p. 21). Christian Literature Company.
2. Aristotle, *The Politics* (New York, NY: Modern Library, 1943), bk. 3, chap. 1-5, 125-136.
3. Benjamin Farrington. *Greek Science, Its Meaning for Use*. Vol. 2-Theophrastus to Galen. Harmondsworth, Middlesex: Penguin Books, 1949, 15,16.
4. Benjamin Farrington. *Greek Science, Its Meaning for Use*. Vol. 2-Theophrastus to Galen. Harmondsworth, Middlesex: Penguin Books, 1949, 16.
5. *The Republic of Plato*. New York: A.L. Burt Company, n.d, 86.
6. *The Republic of Plato*. New York: A.L. Burt Company, n.d, 87.
7. Cicero, *De Republica, De Legibus* trans. Clinton Walker Keyes (London: Heinemann, 1959), 389.
8. William Carroll Bark. *Origins of the Medieval World*. Stanford, California: Stanford University Press, 1958.

# Anselm to the Enlightenment

R.J. Rushdoony

[Introduction:]

Dorothy said I got to find a new way to introduce Rev. Rushdoony, I don't know whether I should do a song and dance, or what! So often when we do introduce Reverend Rushdoony we concentrate on his scholarly accomplishments, and you tend to forget there's a very real person behind all of this. For instance, he is the father of six children, four beautiful daughters whom I have met, and two sons. I can't say that they are handsome because I haven't met either of them. The oldest son is married, which adds a daughter-in-law to the family, and, as of a few days ago, is a granddaughter. With five teenagers and young adults remaining at home, it must be a problem of logistics, for Mr. Rushdoony and his extremely talented wife Dorothy to keep up with all the comings and goings of this young group.

In any given week, Mr. Rushdoony travels on the average of one thousand miles, can you imagine that!? For instance, this afternoon after he speaks here, he will fly up to San Francisco to speak to-night, fly back again tomorrow, then go back up again next week. So you can begin to see how he can log this type of mileage in. He personally conducts two regular Bible-study classes, one in Westwood on Sunday morning, the other at Dorothy Evans' home at 7:30 Sunday evening.

Mr. Rushdoony writes a guest editorial for The California Farmer, and that is published twice a month. He also publishes his own newsletter which goes out once a month that is now mailed to recipients all over the country. And this I am informed, is growing at a rate of approximately one hundred new subscriptions per month. As if this were not enough, he is at present writing five new books. He is also president of Chalcedon Inc. Founded for the furthering of Christian higher education, all of this is really a fraction. You know, I am practically panting just telling you about all of this, and he is the one who is doing all this, and he is not even breathing heavily! But I would like to introduce a great Christian philosopher, scholar, and a very great person, the Reverend Rousas John Rushdoony.

[Rushdoony:]

Our purpose in this series on the shapers of the modern mind is to give a kind of road map to philosophical history. Today our scope is from Anselm to the Enlightenment. Now, in order to appreciate some of the problems that appear in this particular period that we are dealing with. It is important for us to understand the relationship between 'noetics' and ethics, or morality. Now, noetics is knowledge; how we know, what we know. What is the relationship between noetics and ethics? There are two possible relationships between knowledge and morality. First, we can hold that man's autonomous reason is able to discern and to know reality without reference to his moral state, that is, it makes no difference whether you are a communist or a Christian, a pervert or a moral man. When the facts are presented to you, you can grasp them, assimilate them, and deal with them impartially and objectively. Now this position of course is the Greek position, that of Greek philosophy, of scholasticism, of Medieval Arab philosophy, of Jewish Medieval and modern thought, and the Enlightenment, of modern thought and modern religion.

The other or second possible relationship of noetics and ethics, of knowledge and morality is that man's knowledge and knowing rests on a common religious premise with his moral concepts. That is, because noetics and ethics have a common foundation with a religious faith they are both a product of that faith, therefore if man is a sinner it is going to make a difference in how he knows. If a man is a communist, it is going to make a difference in what he knows and how he knows. He is going to refuse to accept certain facts. And if a man is a Buddhist, because he is a Buddhist, this is going to govern not only his knowledge but his morality. Have you ever tried to present some facts to a communist? Obviously, he has a different way of knowing things, and a different morality. Therefore, since he has a faith that undergirds his knowledge and morality, he will not accept this fact that which you consider facts.

Now these two perspectives are very important for us to grasp, because we as Christians are the only one's today who declare that there is a relationship between noetics and Ethics, between knowledge and morality. That the two rest on a basic faith. But the rest of the world is trying to say: "It makes no difference who you are, or what you are, as long as you have the facts, you are going to accept the facts." Now, this position of course they turn against us, and they tell us, being sinners: "We reject God, there is no evidence for God. We reject your conservative position, there is no evidence for it." Of course, they are governed by their faith, as they say these things. "We reject your idea that there is a good or evil, there is no such thing as good and evil, and why discriminate?" As I read a statement last night from a very prominent source as against homosexuals that they are another minority group that we've discriminated against. You can go on and on and add these things. And you see, we then, are people who refuse to face the facts. "Any impartial man," they say, "Has them. Accepts them, copes with them." But we blind ourselves by our faith. As a result, this is the great gap between the Christian position and all others, and I submit that the Christian position is the only sound one, and this is why, on principle, these people today cannot have any sense of what reality is, because they hold a position which denies a vast area of reality, and which tells them that theirs is the only sound position. So their minds are closed, they have a mental block and a moral block against a vast area of knowledge. They wear a mask over their eyes, and they tell us we are blind.

St. Anselm with whom we are going to start today, had the Christian position on noetics and ethics, knowledge and morality. St. Anselm's dates are 1033-1109. He was born in Italy and became the great Archbishop of Canterbury. A very tried man, who underwent severe and bitter experiences, in the face of that, maintained his courage, and wrote some of the greatest philosophy in the history of the world.

The basic premise of St. Anselm was this; what you know depends on what you believe. Every man has a basic perspective. Now, my perspective on this room is different than yours. I see that wall and I see you, but you sitting there see this wall and you see me, you have a different perspective. Now when religiously we have differing perspectives, we see the world differently, or else we do not see it at all. Because if you believe, as the Hindus do that the world is 'Maya,' illusion, you say: "All people are illusions, they are phantasms of the imagination, and I myself am an illusion, and the ultimate fact about reality is nothingness, nirvana."

You see in terms of what you believe. And so, St. Anselm said his famous statement:

"I do not seek to understand that I may believe, but I believe in order to understand. For this also I believe that unless I believe, I should not understand."

In other words, Anselm said, basic to every philosophical position is a faith, and I begin with my Christian faith. I believe, in order that I may understand the world, understand myself, understand God. Because, if I do not believe in the Christian faith, then I am believing in a humanistic one, I am believing in myself. And when I begin by believing in myself, my reason, what am I going to do? I am going to see

the world in terms of myself, so I am going to say: "There is no God, he doesn't agree with me when I say that I want my way. And there is no moral law because that doesn't agree with me, I make my own laws." In other words, what I believe is going to govern what I understand.

Then Anselm said in his *Monologion* and *Proslogion*, that God is an inescapable fact, that in fact, thinking is impossible without God. St. Anselm said that all of us when we talk and when we think, think in terms of differences and in terms of degrees. We say: "This is better, and that is not as good, this is higher, and that lower." And he said: "This is an interesting use of language, how can anyone use this kind of language unless they have embedded in their being a concept of the absolute?" Can you put up a ladder against nothing? So that, when you think of degrees, of better and best, higher and lower, you have embedded, written on every fiber of your mind, the concept of God. The absolute, the ultimate good. He who sets the standard, so that we find inescapable this concept of degrees, this idea of differences. We may deny God, we may say we reject any absolute, but we still do not get away from degrees. So that, to modernize his language, the revolutionist says: "I do not believe in God, I do not believe in absolutes." And so you say to him: "Why then are you rebelling? If everything's the same, what you are demanding is not better than what you have, they are all the same."

Lenny Bruce, who died not too long ago, had a famous statement which he said was the truth about reality, and he said: "Whatever is, is right." Everything is right. Well then why was Lenny Bruce complaining against the establishment? Why was he complaining against us? If everything is right, why fight anything? Everything is equally good. And so St. Anselm said it is impossible for the unbeliever to get away from the fact of God, because every time he opens his mouth, he presupposes degrees which point to the absolute. So he said I begin by believing in order to understand. I say yes, I make differences as I look out into the world. Because differences, degrees, higher and lower, good and evil, these are inescapable ideas. And so I start with the inescapable fact of God, and I believe in Him, and therefore I understand what all these differences add up to, what these degrees mean.

Now St. Anselm was the great Christian thinker of the Medieval period, unfortunately now much neglected. Soon after Anselm, the thought of the Middle Ages took another turn. The revival of Greek thinking, Aristotle in particular, Abelard was the great name here, and the revival of some neoplatonic thinking, by Abbot Joachim gave civilization a new turn. Let us first examine the Abbot Joachim, a Cistercian monk, probably born in 1145, and probably died about 1202, so that he died about a century after Anselm.

We hear very little about the Abbot Joachim today, but the Abbot Joachim's thinking is all around us, and undergirds a great deal of our revolutionary ferment today. The abbot Joachim said that there were three ages in history. The first was 'the age of the Father,' the Old Testament period, the period of law, the period of wrath and of judgment and of justice. Thus, in terms of the doctrine of the Trinity, with his three-age theory, the first age for Joachim was the age of the Father, the age of law. The second age was from the year one to the year 1260, the age of the Son, the age of grace. And in this age Christianity came into the world with its doctrine of salvation, and its doctrine of grace. But, he said, now the age of Christianity is nearing its end, the age of the son, and it is to give way to the third age, the third world. Now this third age will be the age of the Spirit, and the age when love takes over. In which the Father and the Son will be dead, and the Spirit now in all men will live.

Now this thinking became intensely popular, and it led to a variety of the revolutionary movements in the Medieval period, it infected a great many prominent people, incidentally Christopher Columbus was a believer in this third-world kind of thinking, third-age kind of thought, and it effect Hegel greatly, Hegel's philosophy, and through Hegel Karl Marx, his thesis, antithesis and synthesis, your three-age period you see, and the Communist revolution to usher in the third world, the third age, the ultimate period, and of course your death of God movement is Joachimite to the core, we've had our age of law and our age of grace and now it's time for the age of love, a one-world order in all men are broth-

ers, in which no longer do the religious differences matter. This kind of thinking infected the church very heavily. And at the same time with the revival of Aristotelian thought, the belief that the state is the true home of man, and the true order, the divine order, again became basic to thinking. And this infected the church as well, so that Innocent III for example, very, very strongly subscribed to this kind of thinking. And it became a period of the powerful concentration of forces both in church and in state.

Similar claims were made by the state, and one of the greatest emperors of all time, Frederick the II of the Holy Roman Empire, whose dates are 1194-1250, subscribed strongly to the Joachimite third-age kind of thinking. And he saw himself as the great founder of this third-age period, and so, he was beyond religion, beyond good and evil, and in his empire he tried to merge the differences, for example, between Moslem and Christian. The Crusades had been fought previously, but he went and negotiated with the Muslims, and had Jerusalem reopened to the Christians, and he was able to do this because he was beyond religion. "After all," as he said to the Muslim Sultan: "Those differences are no longer the differences of our age, let us live beyond the old confrontation in the new era of coexistence." This kind of thinking became very popular as a result of Frederick's work, and there was a time when Moslem and Christian felt that: "Well, we are now beyond the old days of conflict and of confrontation, we are now in the age of negotiation and coexistence." It is interesting that Frederick II called his birthplace 'the New Bethlehem,' and his mother was in all court ceremonies referred to as 'the divine mother' and 'the new Mary.'

Another thinker who very prominently subscribed to this third age, third world kind of thinking was Dante the poet. Today of course Dante is regarded as a very devout Catholic poet who wrote very devoutly about Heaven and Hell, as well as purgatory. But he was the champion of the Empire against the Church, and his thinking was very much in line with that of Frederick II.

In *De Monarchia*, Dante wrote that the goal of civilization is not faith but peace. So that if faith is not important, then coexistence is. And he wrote:

'The human race is most likened to God when it is most one.'

This sounds very much like our death of God school of thinkers who say: "God is dead but he will be reformed when humanity, which is the true God, is again one. When this dismembered body of mankind is put together in a one-world order, then God having been put together will again be alive, he will be resurrected."

Again, Dante wrote:

"It is clear then that everything which is good is good in virtue of consisting in unity."

Then those who are divisive, who stand in terms of doctrine and creed are therefore evil, because they are against unity. And this is why of course Dante peopled hell in his *Divine Comedy* with all kinds of churchmen and popes. The goal of empire then for Dante is the perfection of the human race, and then the withering away of the empire. This sounds very Marxist, does it not? In other words, you've got to have a super world state. Then this super world state, having accomplished its purpose, and man will live in perfection with his fellow men. And how? Well, in world communism or anarchism. And this is the thesis of the fifteenth chapter of his *Purgatory*. Until then the emperor was man's hope.

In his *Epistola VII*, Dante asked the emperor, when he was hopeful the Emperor Henry would be the one to usher in the third age: "Art thou he who should come, or do we look for another?" the words of St. John the Baptist to Jesus. And then he continued:

“Yet although long thirst, as it is want, in its frenzy turneth to doubt, just because the hour is close at hand, even those things which are certain, nevertheless we believe and hope in thee, affirming that thou art the minister of God and the son of the church and the promoter of Roman glory, and I too who write for myself and for others have seen thee as beseems imperial majesty, most benined, and have heard Thee most clement, when my hand handled thy feet and my lips paid their debt. Then, (That is, as he was on his knees kissing the emperor’s feet) “Then did my spirit exalt indeed, and I spoke silently with myself. I beheld the lamb of God, behold him who hath taken away the sins of the world.”

In other words, salvation by the state. And the Divine Comedy Is the story of this political salvation. At the same time, a little earlier in fact, the great scholastic theologian and philosopher, St. Thomas Aquinas, lived. His dates are from 1224-1274. St. Thomas Aquinas, unlike Dante and Frederick the II and others ,was a very earnest and devout man. He was deeply disturbed about the new radical thinking, he was very much concerned about the Aristotelian revival that Abelard had inaugurated. And so, he felt: “I will try to take the weapons of the enemy and use them for Christ.” And so he decided to accept Aristotle’s philosophy and to build a Christian faith in terms of that. He was like many of those today who say: ‘Well, I am going to try and be orthodox, but I am going to have dialogue with the opposition, and try to build a bridge, and try to use their premises and reach Christian conclusion from them.’ It’s like saying: “I will be an atheist, and use my atheistic belief to reach Christ.” It does not work.

And so Aquinas reintroduced dialectical thinking into church theology. And he began his thinking with the ‘analogy of being,’ which means that man can interpret himself in terms of himself and work from himself upwards. Instead of starting with God and with revelation, and then seeing the world in terms of that, you start from yourself and you are going to work upwards to God.

One of the first premises of his thinking was of course the noetic concept that man’s autonomous reason is able to discern and to know reality without reference to his moral state. In other words, the non-Christian position, that it makes no difference what your religious and moral principles are, you are going to be impartial, you are going to be rational, you are going to see the facts and accept them. Then he held to the unity of being. Now this of course is a concession to the non-Christian position, because the Biblical faith is that there are two kinds of being, the uncreated divine being of God, and the created, human, or earthly being of man and of all creation.

Not only did he hold to the unity of being, but St. Thomas declared that all being is good. Well, if all being is good, what is evil then? Well, evil is a lack of being or nothingness, shades of Mary Becker Eddy. In other words, evil is nothing, it is an illusion. So that, insofar as Satan is real, he is good. He is thoroughly good. St. Thomas argued the only trouble with Satan is that he spends most of his time concerned about nothing. Therefore there is no such thing, you see, as evil, it is nothingness, and you’ve been absorbed with nothingness, when you believe there is any evil, or as Mary Becker Eddy added, death. Death is an illusion together with evil.

So what is evil then? It is nothingness or deprivation. And here, of course, you have the fundamental principle of the liberal thinking. Are they rioting? Well it is because they are lacking something, they have deprivation, so let’s vote millions to Watts and to the Washington ghetto, because these people have been deprived of something. Is your child a hoodlum? Well he has been deprived of love, so give him more love.

In other words what St. Thomas did was to incorporate all the evils of the Greek world, of the pagan world, and make them ‘Christian.’ Moreover, because he held to the noetic belief that man’s autonomous mind is capable by itself of grasping all things, he could not therefore say man’s mind is as sinful

as any other part of man. And when man thinks he thinks as a sinner. So what was his concept of the mind? "Man's mind," he said: "Is like a tablet on which nothing is written." The neutral concept of the mind, now you know where Locke and all of modern psychology got their concept of the mind as a blank piece of paper. A white piece of paper on which nothing is written. Man is passive, and therefore you condition him and you can make him whatever you want.

This is why Catholic theology has always had a problem of rampant liberalism, and they have had to sit on it and say: "Look, you can go no further than Aquinas." Why? Because Aquinas' thinking always leads right straight into total revolution and total radicalism. This is why the genuine conservative in the Catholic church are Augustinians, not Thomists. And one of the most brilliant Catholic professors of political science in a Catholic university in this country, a man who is a good friend of mine, often says: 'All our trouble in our church are due to Aquinas, Thomism has corrupted us, and we've got to get back to Augustine.'

But out of this belief, that man's mind is like a tablet on which nothing is written, you have man as a passive creature who is to be conditioned. Man then is passive as he meets the world, but he is active then with respect to God, which means 'works.' Whereas for us as Christians the reverse is true, man is passive in relationship to God, but active in relationship to the world.

Now, last month we dealt with 'the problem of the one and the many,' and we will come back to it again next month. But suffice it to say that in reincorporating Greek philosophy, scholasticism again reincorporated its problem with the one and the many. And again it had the same breakdown. By the end of the middle ages you had those who held to the Thomistic position, who were universalists, who felt that unity was basic, which of course was the Joachimite or neoplatonic tradition also, ending up at total statism. Unity was the only truth, and therefore the totalitarian regimes of the late Middle ages came into being, and a totalitarian trend in the church which had not existed previously. On the other hand, those who denied unity fell into the pitfall of anarchy, and you had the collapse, by the end of the Middle ages of a vast segment of society into anarchism. The goliards were the wandering student revolutionaries, they were folk singers. They would compose revolutionary songs and go from campus to campus throughout Europe, they were professional students who never went to classes. Their one concern was to propagate their revolutionary ideas, their free love ideas, their nudist ideas, and they actually staged in many cities nude marches to demonstrate their thinking. So that there is nothing new today, we had all of this at the end of the Middle ages and a great deal more. And there were many of these colonies started dedicated to nudism and to free love and to these revolutionary movements. We have many of their folk songs of the period collected by the way, some of them are very interesting reading. We must say that they at least, were better song writers than the ones today.

With the Renaissance this kind of thinking came to the fore, man was now his own goal and his own God. And he no longer needed the pretense of the church, and so he regarded the church with open contempt, and even of course some of the Popes of the day, the Borgia pope and others were flagrant unbelievers, contemptuous of the faith, maintaining their mistresses in the Vatican. Man was now his own God, and how seriously they took this is apparent in George Chapman's play Bussy D'Ambois, written in the Elizabethan period in England. The latter part, when Bussy is stabbed and begins to die, he is shocked as he sees his blood flowing. How can a god die? And it is a very moving scene and it is very real, because this was a problem for them, because after all they were gods, and what a horrible thing that a god dies, that he bleeds. And in Castiglione's Courtier he makes it clear that the true gentleman, the true courtier is his own God and has no God except himself, and the world is his stage. And therefore he makes sure that he is always performing in the presence of men, and therefore he says that the true courtier never risks his life in battle unless he is sure that somebody of importance sees him. It is then that he performs his deeds of bravery, and charges the enemy, when he knows that a prince or a king is an eyewitness to what he is doing.

Machiavelli applied the same kind of thinking to his politics in his *The Prince*. "There is no law, therefore it is the duty of the prince to promote the welfare of the state without regard to law." "Because," he said: "Not right, not truth, but power is the reality." The idea of right, or right and wrong is a myth. Therefore," he said, "terror can be useful, or it can be a mistake." The only thing is, does it work. And if you can use it to make it work without backfiring on you, well then fine. He was a total pragmatist, in other words; truth is what works.

Incidentally, Lenin strongly recommended Machiavelli in his book *Left Wing Communism*. Machiavelli said that there are two ideas in conflict in the world. The one is that which holds that the way men ought to live is the right way, and the other, the way men live is your truth. And he said: "The way men live is the reality." So, you drop overboard ideas of good and evil, right and wrong, and you move in terms of reality.

Incidentally this has nothing to do with the history of philosophy, but much of his life Machiavelli was simply a clerk in the bureaucracy in Florence. Later on he became a diplomat, and that was when he got clobbered and got into trouble, he was now in the firing line. But he spoke of the power of the bureaucracy very tellingly, and he said: 'We who are the little underpaid clerks in the bureaucracy were the real power, because we could bottle up things, and gum them up and process them indefinitely, and we could have the Lords of Florence come and dance attendance on us, and say: "Well what's happened to this document and this paper and that paper? It was supposed to have been approved long ago?" "Well, I will check, it may be in this department, or in that department, and we will track it down sir." And they could keep the most powerful men of Florence and the most powerful rulers waiting on them endlessly, and take vengeance for their poor pay. And so he says: 'The powers of a bureaucracy are beyond estimation by most people.' Thus, by the time the Reformation was born Europe had reached a point where it lived not in terms of what men ought to do, but in terms of what men do. In terms of sin, in terms of anything goes, in terms of pragmatism. 'Truth is what works,' and if terror works, then it is the truth for you. And if terror backfires on you then it is not the truth for you.

With the Reformation there was a new direction given to society, and at this point it is important to say something about both Luther and Calvin which is normally neglected. The three great Reformers of the period, or let us say four, were Luther, Calvin, Zwingli and Cramer. But when you list those 4 names you immediately know that there is a difference between two and two of them. Luther and Calvin are the two great figures and Zwingli and Cranmer, and I am fond of Cranmer, are not of the same stature. Why? Zwingli and Cramer were basically churchmen concerned with the church, and in spite of what Lutherans and Calvinists nowadays try to tell you, Luther and Calvin were not churchmen, basically. They were Christian thinkers. They were only secondarily, at best, concerned with the church, they were primarily concerned with the reformation of Christendom, with the reordering of all of life in every sphere, in terms of biblical faith, in terms of a Christian philosophy. Luther was a professor, Calvin was trained in law.

Now as they approached society, they felt first, the primacy of the Word of God is basic to every area, second salvation is the work of God, not of man, third God is prior to man and therefore the eternal decree to historical action, fourth man is passive in relationship to God, God has saved him. It is the work of God entirely, but man is active with respect to nature. And so you had a tremendous period of explosive activity did you not, men moving out to the four corners of the world, and age of immigration, into the New World. Of tremendous scientific activity. Of energy, imperialism you might say, in every domain, because man now moved out into the world in terms of a strong, an aggressive faith, aggressive in terms of the world, passive with regards to God.

And finally, for Luther and Calvin, not man the philosopher, or man the scientist is prior, but God is



prior. Not Autonomous man, but autonomous God. God alone is independent. Man is at all points dependent upon God.

This was the Reformation. And its effect was immediate; on church, state, and school. But unfortunately, the Reformation very quickly was limited to the area of the church, and counter-forces took over in society, and then in the church. As a reviving scholasticism began to infect the church, and you had after Luther, Melancthon with strong traces of scholasticism in his thinking, and a progressive return to scholasticism in Lutheran circles, and then a progressive return to scholasticism in Reformed circles. An interesting development too, 'ecclesiasticism' in both areas, in other words, primarily concerned with the church rather than the gospel in terms of the whole world.

And so it was that very quickly the older kind of thinking began to revive. Philosophy again went back to autonomous man, and the new starting point was with Descartes, René Descartes. Now Descartes was himself basically a very pious Catholic. So that, when he worshiped in church he was a very devout and humble man, but in his thinking he was thoroughly non-Christian. Because his starting point was not God, not the Christian faith, but autonomous man, and of course you remember from your courses in philosophy his great starting point was 'Cogito Ergo Sum' I think, therefore I am. The analogy of being. I will start with myself and work upward, and I will prove then that there is a real world out there and that there is a real God. The basic thing is that reality exists only so far as man the philosopher and man the scientist establishes it, and Descartes was basically a scientist and a philosopher of science. So, it is only that which the scientist says exists which does exist. And Descartes felt that he had proved that God exists, but if some other scientist comes along and proves that God does not exist, because it is man the scientific thinker who establishes reality.

So, the expert autonomous man is thus the new working God. Scripture says God spake the word, and the world was created. God said: "Let there be light, and there was light." But Descartes said in effect: "I will say there is God, and then God exists. But if I next say God does not exist it disappears." Man became the new working God. The result was the Enlightenment. Man now, as the scientist, as the scientific philosopher, determining the world. We will deal more with the enlightenment next time, but to summarize now the five basic perspectives of enlightenment philosophy on the world, and these points are not mine, they are the work of Doctor Louis Bredvold, in his book; *The Brave New World of the Enlightenment*. Dr. Bredvold does not share our position, and it is interesting I read in the past week an attack on Dr. Bredvold, which said that he was a very fine thinker but he had a lapse of insanity, you might say of conservatism, of reactionary thinking in this book *The Brave New World of the Enlightenment*.

At any rate, what did Bredvold summarize philosophy in The enlightenment as holding too? First, the rejection of the past and of history. It's not important any longer. How do you approach the world, well not in terms of history and knowledge about history, but in terms of social science, the science of the scientific control of man. And so, you no longer teach history now you teach social science, the science of the control of man.

Second, the rejection of institutions and cultures. After all, what difference does it make whether the white man in America has produced a great culture and the Negro has produced nothing, this is meaningless. The scientist doesn't consider cultures and institutions, they are of no importance, he is interested in the facts, and the fact is the naked man. So when you take all these away from the white man and from the Negro, what is the difference between them? Just a little color. Now I am not caricaturing his position, this is the statement of one of our most distinguished contemporary historian,; in my forthcoming book *The Biblical Philosophy of History*, I have a chapter on the rejection of history by the historians in which this attitude is taken precisely with regard to the Negro. The Negro and the white man in the United States. Strip both of them of everything, and what is the difference between

them? Well isn't that something! Isn't that something! Well what is the Negro, if he is not his past and his intelligence and his achievements? And what is the white man if he is not exactly what he has produced here in this country? And if you take away from us everything that our past has given us, our physical inheritance, our abilities, who are we then? I'm no longer myself. If you deny to me everything that my inheritance has given me, everything that my thinking has given me. But this is the essence of the enlightenment position, the rejection of institutions, of cultures, of all these things.

Third, for Enlightenment philosophy, evil is not in man but in the environment. So it isn't the rioters or the delinquents to blame but it is there environment, and you are their environment.

Fourth, and I am quoting now:

“By changing human institutions, human nature itself will be born again.”

As Christians we believe that man is born again through the work of the Holy Spirit in the heart of man, it is the work of God, it is an inner transformation by the Holy Spirit. But in terms of Enlightenment philosophy, human nature itself will be born again by changing human institutions. So, what we need then are millions of dollars in Watts, and in Washington DC, and in Ghana, and in North Vietnam and South Vietnam, and those people are going to be born again.

And fifth and finally, this must be done by the new managers of society, the scientific planners.

This then is the position of the Enlightenment. An enlightenment philosophy governs us today. It is the faith of Washington DC, and of the courts, and of Sacramento, and of City Hall and of the county board of supervisors. We are, therefore, in the midst of a religious war, a philosophic war. They are at war against our faith and our philosophy, and they are fighting us in terms of this Enlightenment faith and philosophy. The issues of our time therefore are ultimately and basically and essentially religious. We cannot cope with the world of today by just presenting facts. You can present facts until you are blue in the face, and they will vote out one set of Enlightenment reformers for another set of Enlightenment reformers. They are still going to try to change men by changing their environment, believing that men will be reborn that way, still believing that the answer is another set of men in Sacramento, or Washington, or another set of laws.

One of our finest conservative state senators, said to me within the past week, he said: “My biggest problem is that most people...” (and he said ‘My district is made up of conservatives’) ...think that the answer is a new set of laws, and a new set of rules.” And he said: “We didn't have these problems thirty years ago when we had fewer laws than we have now.” “Our problem,” he said: “Is a religious and moral breakdown, and no set of laws that I can enact in Sacramento can change the fact of that breakdown. We have enough laws now; we don't have enough people who believe in them.”

We are therefore in the midst of a religious war, and the beginning of a Christian reconstruction of philosophy and of society begins therefore by acknowledging that the issue is religious, and then reordering life and philosophy in every sphere of life, in terms of Christian faith and Christian philosophy.

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**ENDNOTES:**

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# From the Enlightenment: Rise of Deism, Darwin, Kant, Hegel, & Lenin

R.J. Rushdoony

A very important history of the enlightenment was written this past year by the historian Peter Gay. One of the things that marked the significance of this work was that Peter Gay openly acknowledged, in fact developed the fact that the Enlightenment had been through and through anti-Christian. In fact the great shame of the modern world said these enlightenment thinkers at the dawn of the modern era, was the church and Christianity, and therefore the purpose of these thinkers was, and their slogan was, to 'erase the shame,' wipe out, blot out the shame of Christianity.

While the Renaissance had been pagan to the core, but it was a paganism that lived at peace with the church. The church had been captured, the popes were Renaissance popes who freely took part in the general skepticism and immorality. But that peace of church and paganism ended with war, the Reformation. Now with the Enlightenment, a new assault began by subversion.

The new faith that was propagated by the Enlightenment was deism, a substitute Christianity. Now deism paid lip service to the God of scripture by saying that indeed there is such a God, although its perspective was essentially unitarian, and it went on to say that this God did create the universe, at some unknown date in the remote past. But this God, having created the universe, like a watch maker who makes a watch and then has nothing more to do with the watch, is now an absentee landlord, as it were, from the universe, and has nothing more to do with it. So that, since the time of creation, there has been a general social evolution of man and society, and God, although he is there, has nothing to do with the world. As a result, the Greek idea of evolution was reintroduced into Society. Now it was not until Darwin that biological evolution was formulated, but very early in the seventeenth century and especially in the eighteenth, the doctrine of social evolution was formulated and developed at great length.

Immanuel Kant, as the great Enlightenment thinker, expanded this concept of isolation from God by developing to the nth degree the concept of 'autonomous man.' Man independent from God, whose reason is the ultimate judge. Reason in Kant is the arbiter, the judge over all things, so that all things are brought to the bar of man's reason, and man sits in judgment over whatever gods may be as well as all things in the earth.

God was thus outlawed from the world by Deism, and by Kant from scientific and from rational thought. From now on, scientific and rational thinking, by definition, did not include God, in fact you became anti-rational and unscientific, if you at all included God in your thinking. So that to this day, all thinking which pretends to be intellectual, excludes automatically God from all consideration. You find this even among so-called 'conservative' thinkers who are nominally Christian. For example Russell Kirk is now a professing member of the Catholic church, and yet you will not find him making God the premise of his thinking, because to do so would be, in the circles in which he moves, intellectual

suicide. God is something you bring in after you've paid lip service and bowed down to the gods of science and of reason. God is as it were, something that cannot be made central. He is outside the thinking, only after you have gone the route with science and with rational philosophy can you make a bow in the direction of God.

Now as we come to the beginning of the eighteenth century, on the threshold of the world as we know it today, the thinker who caught up all these tendencies in himself and gave great expression to them was Hegel. For Hegel, God, whom he brought back into philosophy is now redefined. The old God is to all practical intent dead. The God of Scripture is no more, there is no longer a God to whom you can pray, no longer a God who can work on men, or govern them by His grace, or absolutely predestine them by His sovereign decree. The God of Hegel is the historical process, it is 'reason' in History. So that, wherever you find reason developing and working, there God is manifest in history. Now without saying a word, Hegel had very definitely said that the philosophers and the scientists are the ones who best manifest God in history, as far as individuals are concerned. And the state that is a rational state, a scientific state best exemplifies God in history, in fact, the goal of history is the incarnation of reason or of God in history as the state.

And thus, modern statism began to come to focus in its modern concept. The state as the incarnation of God in history. There is no God beyond the state, because the state is the embodiment of God; that is the rational, the scientific state. Now all that was necessary for Marx to add to this was the scientific, socialist state, as the embodiment of reason is the only God in history. Others were also to add that instead of being a particular state, it was the universal, the world state. Hegel said that it is the most powerful, the most dominant state in history that manifests God. Moreover, Hegel laid the groundwork for a one-world order because he said the particulars, the individuals are in themselves nothing, they must unite with one another because the Union, the one, alone is truth.

History thus, for Hegel, is God's will. What man's reason works in history is the work of God, the intellectual, the scientist, is thus the manifestation of God in action, to put it in Hegel's words: "The march of God in the world, that is what the state is." In other words, the state is God walking on earth, it is the only god there is. Thus, we see, in terms of the new philosophy, history is moving in terms of a new incarnation. For us as Christians, history from the fall to the birth of our Lord moved to one end, the manifestation, the incarnation of Jesus Christ the son of God. And from His death and resurrection to the second coming, it moves to the manifestation of Christ's law-Word in history, so that all things can be subjugated unto him, so that every thought and every area of thought can be brought into captivity to Christ.

This new philosophy, the philosophy of the modern age says that: "that Christ of Scripture, that God incarnate, the triune God is dead, that history is moving to incarnate a new God," and of course this is precisely what Altizer, Hamilton, and van Buren and the other death of God thinkers are talking about, as well as Rubenstein. They say: "God is dead, and we must bury the old God. Then, as we have a unified world, the brotherhood of all men, God will be reborn," that is he will be incarnated again in this triumphant world-state. History, thus, moves to a new incarnation.

Now, Jean Jacques Rousseau added another aspect to this philosophy; the democratic aspect. He declared that the general will, that is the will of all the people, manifests this hidden God, this inner reason, this purpose of history, and this general will becomes incarnate in the leadership, so that 'the democratic consensus' will reveal this new God. So that now democracy as the manifestation of this God, 'the voice of the people is the voice of God,' who has added to this belief in the coming incarnation. Moreover, since there is no God out there, we are in this perspective, 'beyond good and evil.' Good and evil are categories that belong to the Bible, and because there is no God out there and the only God is the state, the idea that there is a truth and an error is fallacious.

So that, Friedrich Nietzsche, as he spoke of the superman and of this great future world order, the incarnation as it were in the superman and the super-state of this God in history declared:

“The question is, how far an opinion is life-furthering, life-preserving, species-preserving, perhaps species-rearing, and we are fundamentally inclined to maintain that the falsest opinions (to which the synthetic judgments a priori belong), are the most indispensable to us, that without a recognition of logical fictions, without a comparison of reality with the purely IMAGINED world of the absolute and immutable, without a constant counterfeiting of the world by means of numbers, man could not live—that the renunciation of false opinions would be a renunciation of life, a negation of life. TO RECOGNISE UNTRUTH AS A CONDITION OF LIFE; that is certainly to impugn the traditional ideas of value in a dangerous manner, and a philosophy which ventures to do so, has thereby alone placed itself beyond good and evil.”

We saw of course that in the statism of Plato, the lie was a necessary tool in the hands of the true God, the state. Now again, as modernism eliminates the God of Scripture it again goes back to the lie, only this time it says there is no truth, and in effect there is no lie, you are beyond good and evil. And what the Christian calls a lie may be the most valuable thing under the sun. As a result, the modern state and the modern scientist, the modern planner, has no compunctions about lying. After all, he lives in a world beyond good and evil, and occasionally his lie is an embarrassment, because there are enough of us who still believe in the old God and the old truth to trouble him, but basically, he is moving in a world ‘beyond good and evil’ according to his thinking.

Now what Karl Marx added to this thinking was that this incarnation is in the dictatorship of the proletariat, and the kind of activism that is needed is revolutionary activism. In other words, activism takes the place of God’s grace and the believer’s response to that grace. It takes the place of prayer. Activism was statist activism in Hegel, in Marx it is now revolutionary activism. And this is the role of reason or of God in history, revolutionary activism. So that, there is the inevitability of the dialectical process, the inevitability of revolution for the Marxist, it is inevitable because it is the working of the God of their religion, and of course a God by definition cannot be frustrated, what he decrees is inevitable.

For Marx therefore, heaven is in the realization of this incarnation. When this God triumphs, when the scientific socialist state finally becomes fully manifest, fully incarnate, then Heaven is here, paradise has arrived, but it is interesting that in the process there must be a hell decreed in order to make it possible for men to realize where Heaven lies. Marx wrote in his early writings: “The criticism of religion ends with the doctrine that man is the supreme being for man....” That is, man is his own God.

“It ends, therefore, with the categorical imperative to overthrow all those conditions in which man is an abased, enslaved, abandoned, contemptible being.”

That is, everything which says that man is not God, because any philosophy or any religion that says that man is not God makes him an enslaved and a contemptible being. Man must be his own God.

Then he goes on to say:

“For a popular revolution and the emancipation of a particular class of civil society to coincide, for one class to represent the whole of society, another class must concentrate in itself all the evils of society, a particular class must embody and represent a general obstacle and limitation.”

He goes on at great length to develop this point, but you get the point. To make one class, that is the scientific socialist planners and revolutionists, the embodiment of God, the embodiment of the dialectic

tical forces of history, another class must represent everything that is an obstacle, everything that is evil. So that the capitalist must be made to represent the demonic, the satanic in society, and to have heaven, a hell must be created for this demonic element and they must be relegated to it. Thus now we have the idea of the state as the new God, revolution, scientific socialist revolution as the means of achieving this God in history, of incarnating him.

The next step was provide about the same time by Charles Darwin who dropped God as the source, as 'the great watchmaker.' Remember we pointed out that deism began the whole of the modern movement by saying: "Yes God started it, but God has had nothing to do with the world since, it has evolved on its own." Now, with Darwin God was dropped. The world began out of nothing and evolved from some primordial spark of life which in itself evolved out of nothing, so that God was entirely dropped. Marx and Engle's greeted Darwin's Origin of Species with great delight, and declared in letters to one another that now socialism had been made inevitable. With the old God out of the scene, the new God would become man's only hope. Because, after all, man is going to have a God. God is an inescapable category of thought, and you will either have God in the Biblical form or you will have a God fashioned after your own imagination. And the God which is the God created by the imagination of modern philosophy, is this God; the state.

As a result, Darwinism became central to all of modern thinking. He was greeted with delight. Darwin's Origin of Species sold out on the day of publication. This was what the world was waiting for. Instead of having a resistance, this is a myth created by the textbooks, it was met with open arms on all sides; only one bishop stood up against it in the Church of England. Churchmen almost everywhere greeted it with open arms, Queen Victoria herself welcomed it. We are given some very peculiar notions about Queen Victoria, as though she were the epitome of everything conservative, which is definitely not true.

One of the very famous bits of statuary widely circulated in countless forms in the last century pictures an ape holding a human skull and contemplating it. This little bit of statuary, which perhaps you can find in antique shops, was reproduced in vast quantities and circulated everywhere in the Western world. It took the place of the cross in many homes. This particular one was on Lenin's desk, and still remains on his desk in the Kremlin. Robert Payne in his book on Lenin, The Life and Death of Lenin speaks of this as having had the significance of an icon, a religious symbol or Lenin. And it meant for him that man can be used, that even as this ape contemplating a human skull was a primitive crude animal who was the forerunner of man, so man today is, by comparison to the man of the future, an ape, and an ape need not be treated with much respect. An ape can be used, he can be treated as an ape to make way for the future man. And so in terms of this, Lenin felt justified to lie to the masses, to murder them ruthlessly, to abuse them in any way possible, because they were the raw material, the apes out of which the great man of the future was to be molded by the scientific socialists, like Lenin and his associates. This statue, therefore, was the religious symbol for the modern tyranny.

About the same time also Comte the sociologist gave birth to modern sociology and positivism. For Comte history had three stages; the first stage is the religious stage where man has all kinds of myths to account for the origin, the 'why' of things. The second stage is the religious stage which is still religiously oriented, but man is thinking a little more rationally, but he is still asking questions as to the 'why' of things. But the third stage of history, the modern stage, is the scientific stage, and this third age is the one which will lead to the glorious future. In this third age, man is no longer childish, he is no longer religious, he no longer asks 'why,' he no longer wants to know the reason behind things, he is only interested in the 'how' of things. How do things work? How can I control man? How can I control nature? The morality, the religion behind things, the 'why' of things, the right and wrong of things is thus an obsolete question. It is the mark of an immature mind, of a childish mind, of a mind which is still in the primitive stages of evolution, a mind which has not come into the 'third world,' the third age,

and so cannot think rationally and sensibly.

Thus, not only was God declared to be dead, but any question that raised the 'why' of things, the truth of things, the rightness and the wrongness, the morality of things, was by definition a childish question. Thus, when we object to the modern state and its lies, when we raise moral questions, religious questions, we are revealing to these people who are the sociologists, the planners, that we are still in the primitive stages of man's evolution, and are by definition primitive, not to be regarded. We are unable to grasp the real problem, which is the 'how.' How to control man? How to make things work? therefore there is no point in paying any attention to us, and even though we may sometimes prevail in voting, might be the majority, the democratic consensus is against us, because if we truly listened to the evolving God in us, we would be where they are, so they have the right to say that we are wrong, and that they know what we really want, because if we were not so primitive we would be wanting what they, representing the third world, declare to be the truth. This is the meaning of the concept a democratic consensus. Comte thus with his positivism and with his sociology, abolished from all rational consideration, the question of morality and religion.

Freud added to the modern perspective when he declared that to abolish God we must also deal with the question of guilt, by making it a scientific question. To touch on this briefly because I go into it at length in my study on Freud, Freud said that as long as men feel guilty and turn to religion for an answer for their guilt, they will turn to God. So that all scientific attempts to abolish God will fail until science says the question of guilt is a scientific question, and the psychologist or psychiatrist gives an answer to it rather than a pastor or a priest. The answer to it is that man has three basic urges, based on the fact that he was once in the primal horde, that he was a caveman, a savage. He had a desire because the fathers drove out the sons from the pack to kill his father, to eat his father, and to commit incest with his mother and his sisters, and these represent the three basic instincts of man. And this is why man feels guilty, because he has these things, this is the will-to-life in him, and his guilt feeling because he did this centuries ago gives him this feeling of guilt that he goes to religion about. So that, the only thing to do with any person who comes to you with these feelings of guilt about what he has done, is to tell him that this guilt is just an evolutionary hangover. Now this is what our mental institutions do today, so that a criminal who is given over to the care of a mental institution is 'cured' if he loses his guilt feelings about his crime, in other words he is released as a much more dangerous person, because now, as a modern man, he lives beyond good and evil, beyond the belief that there is any crime.

John Dewey, as another thinker in this school, declared that the purpose in a society must be to formulate first of all the Great Society, which is a step to the Great Community which incarnates reason or God. And all law in this great society is positive law, it is what the state enacts. There is thus no law beyond the law. This is a myth. The Christian, of course, believes that the law of God stands beyond the law of man and is a judge over it. But in terms of this legal positivism, of John Dewey, there is no law beyond what the state enacts, and therefore to challenge the law as unjust is nonsense. It is itself, the totality of justice.

Some years ago, about the turn of the century, a Russian philosopher and theologian, Vladimir Solovyov, who was not by the way orthodox or at all trustworthy, but was at times discerning, declared: "the Russian intelligentsia produced a faith based upon a strange syllogism; man is descended from the apes, therefore we must love one another."

Now, this to us sounds very strange. We can take of course Vladimir Solovyov's statement and say not merely the Russian intelligentsia but all modern intelligentsia believe man is descended from the apes, therefore we must love one another. If this sounds strange to us, Robert Payne in his study of The Life and Death of Lenin says that this statement by Solovyov really sums up the faith of Lenin and most



modern revolutionaries. Why? To quote Robert Payne:

“Solovyov was saying in effect that the Russian intelligentsia that science would produce the reign of love among men, and Lenin, who never tired on insisting against all the evidence that Marxism was purely scientific in character, firmly believed that once the Marxist state had been established, then and only then would men be able to live together in peace and concord.”

What do they mean then that man is descended from the apes, therefore we must love one another? That man has evolved so far, and that man is going to evolve further under the leadership of science. In other words, now man is now going to control his own evolution, and in the course of it eliminate all these problems that man has today of hatred, because man the scientist his own evolution is going to bring about great changes in man's nature, and all men are going to love one another and there will be paradise on earth, heaven on earth. Science will thus in this modern faith produce the new man. Man is still half-ape, man must evolve further, in other words man must be changed, and he must be changed by science. Man cannot be changed by the God of Scripture since he is by definition dead. The new God, or the new God who is in process of being incarnated in the state and its scientific socialist planners, must change man. Does science change man? Well it is trying. How? Well, consider the attempts at tampering with the genes in order to make a new kind of man, so that at will the scientist can produce any kind of person of any sex, any type of intelligence, or as many arms or feet, or as many heads as they choose. Or the attempts at mind tampering with drugs, and the tremendous interest in drugs. Is it any wonder that the young generation has gone in for LSD and other drugs? After all, everything that science is teaching them in the schools indicates that there must be a change by means of science, and that drugs are one of the instruments of this change in man.

Consider also the attempts at changing man by electrical control, so that in some mental institutions they are actually putting in sockets into the skulls of people to attempt to control them by the means of electrical impulses. Consider also the attempts at creating life, at creating test-tube babies. Of course, in every one of these areas what you read in the papers according to some scientists who are Christian is nine-tenths propaganda and one tenth fact. It is propaganda because they believe this will be done, and they want us to believe it will be done. But all these attempts are governed by the recognition that man must be changed, not that man is a sinner. He is good but he is incomplete, he is not fully evolved, and therefore he must be changed. Man must take control over his evolution and man must remake himself.

We must say therefore, that the left, the revolutionist, the radicals, move with a religious realism. They recognize that man needs to be changed. And, at this point we come face-to-face again with the impotence of conservatives. The left says: “man must be changed and we are doing everything we can to change man. Since there is no God out there, since God is dead, the scientific socialist state must remake man.” And what does the conservative say? “Let's win this election.” Conservatism refuses to face up to the basic religious issue. The left is religious. That's why it declares with such passion: “God is dead!” That is why it says with such passion: “by revolutionary activism we must bring the new God to birth.” They are religious, and fanatically religious. They know it's more than a matter of winning an election, it is a matter of religious faith, of changing man. In that, and that alone they are right. And not until Christians come back to the basic religious issue is there any hope. “Except a man be born again he cannot enter into the kingdom of God.” And, having been born again, a man's responsibility then is to proclaim the crown rights of king Jesus. To establish the law-Word of God in every realm and in every domain. “For except the Lord build the house, they labor in vain that build it.”

But one of the characteristics of the modern age has been that the church has steadily withdrawn to the inner world. It has said: “only things spiritual are our concern.” And yet the law-Word of God speaks to every area, it has rules not only with respect to the life of the state and the life of the family

and the life of the farmer, but even with regard to our eating and drinking. It speaks to the whole of life, but we have withdrawn to the inner world, and now the enemy has invaded the inner world, and psychiatry and psychology has staked the inner world of man as their territory, and there is nowhere for the church to go except back to the Word of God, back to the whole of life, back to a reconquest of the world in the name of Jesus Christ.

The shapers of the modern world have proclaimed the death of the God of Scripture, and are working to bring to birth the God of their imagination. The one-world state. But their God, the closer he comes to birth, the closer the monster chaos approaches. The vision of William Butler Yeats was a very real one. When he spoke fearfully of the second coming, this time of a monster slouching towards a new Bethlehem, waiting to be born.

The world thus is moving in terms of modernism, towards the Bethlehem of the Beast. But we under God are summoned to reestablish the new Jerusalem as the governing principle of all of life. The principle that the kingdoms of this world must become the kingdoms of our Lord and of His Christ.

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## ENDNOTES:

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