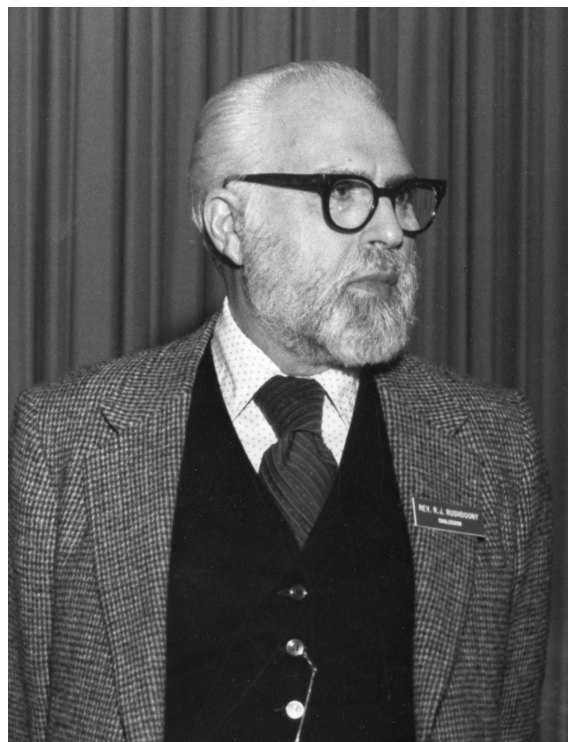


Transcripts of
**CLASSROOM LECTURES:
JACKSON SEMINARY**

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>

Postmillennialism, I

R.J. Rushdoony

Our approach on the matter of eschatology this hour will be theological and philosophical, rather than exegetical. For an exegetical study I would recommend various works such as Alexander's Commentary on Isaiah, Boettner's book on The Millennium, and of course I've written something on the subject, Thy Kingdom Come.

When we examine the subject of eschatology, we find that the whole eschatological perspective has been, through the centuries, very heavily infected by neoplatonic and Manichaeism. So that as the Church, through the centuries, has approached the subject, it has had to do it with a handicap, the handicap of alien philosophies. We shall be dealing with the influence of some of the alien philosophies on the church fathers in passing, as we deal in epistemology, with Justin Martyr, sometime later, I don't know whether it's today or tomorrow. I'm a little mixed up on just where I am in my series, as far as Justin Martyr is concerned. But we have in Justin Martyr, for example a man of very great faith, who died a martyr for the faith, and yet there is no question that some of his statements are so deeply saturated with his pagan background, that you wonder at times how could a man make a statement like this and be a Christian. Thus, we should not be surprised that very often in the history of the Church, we do find very definitively, alien strands in Christian thought. Now the two alien strands we're going to deal with particularly, are neoplatonism and Manichaeism, and first of all, let's consider Manichaeism and what kind of an influence it has exercised on the Church. Manichaeism comes from Mani, the ostensible founder thereof. Manichaeism is related to Zoroastrianism, Mazdakism, and various Iranian dualistic religions. For Manichaeism, instead of there being one God, there are two equal gods. The god of matter, who created the material world, and the god of spirit, who created the spirit world.

Now here you have darkness, and here you have light. Here also you have evil, and here you have good. Now, there is no victory possible in Manichaeism. It is a religion without victory. History ends in a standstill, because both gods, both ultimate substances are equally powerful. You can choose which one you want to serve, so that you can follow the world of spirit or you can follow the world of matter. And very commonly, in the history of dualistic religions, men have chosen one side or another.

We have a long tradition of the infiltration of Manichaeism into Christianity, you have Bogomils, you have the Albigensians, and the cathars, and various other groups that were very influential in the early centuries, and especially in the Middle Ages, that were all Manichean.

Now, the influence of Manichaeism thus meant no victory is possible for either side. History ends in a standoff. You choose sides, and that's the substance of it. You can forsake spirit, or you can forsake matter. There isn't much difference between the two, neither has the victory over the other. St. Augustine, as you know, was a Manichean, as well as a neoplatonist, which is something else we'll consider in a moment, before he became a Christian. And as a Manichean, he was very profoundly influenced by this, and very conscious, finally, of the fact that there was no victory here. There are lingering elements here and there, in Augustine, of Manichaeism, and Neoplatonism, in some of his early works, but he progressively broke with the remnants of this kind of thinking.

Now you find elements of Manichaeism in the Church today. For many people will look down upon the material world, and material things, and speak of spiritual things as though they were alone good.

That's nonsense. There is nothing good, per se, about that which is spiritual. Remember, Satan is a purely spiritual being. So the idea that is so prominent in some circles, that what we need is more spiritual Christianity, is rubbish. That's a latent kind of Manichaeism, or sometimes a Neoplatonism, we'll come to that later. It is not a return to a more spiritual religion that we need, but a return to biblical religion. And the Bible very clearly deals with the world of matter. St. Paul tells us the marriage bed is 'honorable.' It does not regard sex, for example, as Manicheans do, and Neoplatonists also for their own reasons, as something that is either bad, or lower.

When man fell, it was not as the scholastics held, that it was his material being that fell, while his spirit or mind remained unfallen, so that by reason, which is supposedly not fallen, the scholastics felt, you could reason your way back to God. In terms of Scripture Adam fell, the whole man fell. His mind was fallen, his body was fallen, everything in him was fallen, and Jesus Christ redeems the whole man. The whole man is in view in the new creation. The resurrection of the body, is an article of Christian faith, so that we rise again as a whole being, to enjoy life eternally. There is nothing about matter that is evil, per se, any more than there is anything about the spirit, that is evil, per se. This is the Manichean outlook, however. Two alien substances, you take your choice, never the twain shall meet!

On the other hand, Neoplatonism, which was a development of a philosophy of Plato, and particularly in Plotinus, took a very different view than Manichaeism, although it had certain resemblances. Again, it had two substances, mind and matter, or ideas, forms and matter. But instead of seeing them as two alien substances that were irrevocably different, it saw them in dialectical tension as higher and lower, so that mind, or idea, and form, was higher and matter was lower. And so progress, growth, in Neoplatonism was to forsake the world of matter, and move upward into spirit. And the more spiritual you became, the closer you were to truth. In terms of Neoplatonism the world of matter was the world of meaninglessness, irrelevance, and evil. Although it did not go so far as Manichaeism, in seeing the radical cleavage of the two. What you did in the realm of mind was determinative. And if you were not ruled by matter, you could deal very casually with the realm of matter. Thus, in the dialogues of Plato, we have actual accounts of the fact that at one of these meetings where they were chatting about philosophy, Socrates was engaged in homosexual play with one of the other people in the dialogue. Now, here was the great philosopher, the great moralist, of Greece. But what was the problem there? None! Because there was no urgency, no necessity to be bound by it, so it was not a matter of moral offense in Socrates, from the Neoplatonic perspective. Had he, however, felt a lust and been driven by his vice, that would have been different. But if you treated it casually, it was not really a sin. And this is why you treated fornication casually. It was not regarded as an offense among the Greeks. You were treating it as nothing. It was a part of the world of matter, it was irrelevant, it was lower. And just as you don't take care of Kleenex as you do, say, of your shirt, when you take your shirt off, you put it in the wash and when it is laundered you put it away carefully, it's something to be treated with respect. But a Kleenex you use and you throw away. So it is with the body. So the appetites of the body are to be treated casually and carelessly, and there's no sin in that, it is only when you are compelled by the world of matter, and bound to it, that you have evil. So the idea of sin, in Neoplatonism, again is very radically anti-Biblical.

Now, for the Neoplatonist, the goal of man is to escape from the world of matter. Plotinus, who was a great figure in Neoplatonism, deeply regretted the fact that he had a body, and he longed for the time when he would be freed from the flesh. Thus, you have, both in Manichaeism, and in Neoplatonism, a fundamental disrespect for the material world. In Manichaeism it is the creation of an evil god, not of the good god. Therefore there is no concern about the redemption of the material world. It cannot be overcome, it cannot be redeemed, it is a perpetual enemy. In Manichaeism, the material world can be transcended, and the goal of history, and the goal of man, is to transcend matter and to become pure spirit. And therefore, the more the body decays, the better off you are. The church fathers, who went into the desert, were Neoplatonic. I have a little paperback that's coming out soon: Flight From

Humanity is the title, *The Influence of Neo-Platonism on Christianity*. And in it I cite some of the wild and extravagant practices, aesthetic practices that were normal for some of these desert monks. Of course, the desert monks were simply copying the pagan aesthetics who preceded them. Who were Greek and Roman, who were under the influence of Neoplatonism, and therefore running away from life, from the world. Now the influence of Manichaeism and Neoplatonism in the church, led of course, in the early centuries, to an emphasis on the monastic clergy as against the married clergy. For centuries the church had a married clergy. It was some centuries later before the idea of sacerdotal celibacy for all clergy was instituted, and it was not until after the Reformation that they really made it stick for the clergy. The reason for it was, of course, the horror of the world of the flesh, under Manichean and Neoplatonic influences.

For some centuries, in the Church of Rome, the monks were regarded as the real clergy, and they were called the regular clergy, and the parish priests were called the secular clergy. He had an inferior status, because after all, he still compromised with the world. He married, he lived in the world, he was not truly spiritual. There was a distrust of the family. It was only as a result of the influence of the Reformation, the strength the Reformation had, because of the development of the family, that the Church of Rome began to develop the cult of the holy family, and made a great deal of St. Joseph. So that the cult of St. Joseph has, since the Reformation, been the Catholic answer to the Protestant development of the family and family worship.

Now it's not surprising that the eschatology of Rome very strongly reflected Manichaeism and Neoplatonism. In the Church of Rome, the goal was escape from this world. The emphasis was on the misery of man. Preaching emphasized what a sinful thing it was to live the life of flesh, and to enjoy the pleasures of this world. Now it's very interesting to note that during the Puritan era in England, scholars tell us, one of the favorite texts of the Puritans was: "and Isaac was sporting with Rebecca, his wife." And this was used over and over again, there are some really marvelous sermons, I've read some, by the Puritan preachers in England, to preach that marriage is godly and the marriage bed undefiled. That God made the whole man, and we are to rejoice in the things of mind and body as we use them under God. And there are some really beautiful sermons on this subject; I quote a passage from one of them on precisely this text in my little paperback on Neoplatonism. But you see you have moved into an entirely different world, the minute you come into this Puritan atmosphere. Instead of being joyless, and instead of being hostile to the body, the Puritans were the ones with whom the body came into its own. The usual caricature of the Puritan applies, not to the Puritans but to their successors in New England, the transcendentalists and the Unitarians. You see, when the term 'transcendentalist' was picked up, they were not thinking of transcending to God, to a supernatural realm, but transcending the material world in terms of Hegel's 'geist,' mind or spirit, or soul.

And you're probably familiar with the famous story of Margaret Fuller, one of the leading transcendentalists, who found it a problem that there was a universe, a material creation, and she could never overcome the feeling of horror: "why should such a horrible thing as matter, body, material creation, exist!?" And finally she wrote, with an air of great resignation, that she, she said: "I accept the universe," with resignation. And Carlyle's famous answer was, "Egad! she'd better!" I think however, Daniel Webster's answer was very much more to the point. On one occasion, in, at Mt. Hope in Rhode Island, there was a conference, and in those days they had big, big old-fashioned outhouses with a little divider and you walked in and you went to this side if you were male, and to that side if you were female. And Margaret Fuller was in there on the female side, when Daniel Webster walked in, and it was a horror to Margaret Fuller, to have a body, and for the body to have any kind of urge. It was so degrading, so humiliating. So she had slipped out when she thought no one would be there, because this was a traumatic experience for her, because it brought home to her the horrible fact that she had a body. And Daniel Webster came in and he noticed her over there, and he averted his head and rumbled as he headed for the other side: "Madam, we are fearfully and wonderfully made!"

Now, you can see why, with this kind of background, you had the pessimistic worldview that characterized the Middle Ages. The despair of this world, the feeling that the best thing man could hope for was to be delivered from the body. And this, of course, progressively colored the medieval worldview, so that as the Middle Ages deepened, even in the attitude of worship, we see the difference. At the beginning of Western Europe, after the fall of Rome, we have some pictures of people as they worshiped, drawing from the like, and they're very remarkable. We see them in church praying like this. With their hands outstretched, a very historic and Biblical form of prayer, to receive, you see, you pray expecting to get something. And their faces looking upward, to receive. But at the end of the Middle Ages, we have pictures of worshippers, and they're hunched over, like this, in fear. There is no hope.

Now, it's not surprising, as some writers lately have been telling us that with Puritanism postmillennialism came into its own. Now, as I point out in my little paperback, when Cambridge University was taken over by the Platonists, the Cambridge Platonists, Puritanism was killed, because they were the training ground of Puritan thought. But, until that happened, because they went to the Reformed faith, they were Calvinist to the core, they did two things that are of very great significance. First; they said: "God created Heaven and Earth and all things therein, God is the Creator of mind and body, so both are alike, were made very good. Both alike were redeemed by Jesus Christ, both alike have a destiny in Christ. Both alike are to reign eternally with Christ in the new creation, because the resurrection of the body is an article of our faith. Therefore the triumph of Christ is not only spiritual, it is material also. It is in history as well beyond history." Thus they were postmillennial to the core. And second; they had a program for the conquest of the world. Scripture, Biblical law. I have a book forthcoming, I hope in April, according to the book binder it'll be ready, it's a nine hundred page book which is preliminary study, I will have a second book in maybe five or ten years, Institutes of Biblical Law. Because this was the program. God had given a law, whereby the earth was to be subdued by His saints, and all things brought into subjection to God, through His law-Word.

The Law therefore was a plan of conquest. The whole framework of the Law is postmillennial. Go back and read Deuteronomy twenty-eight. The promises concerning obedience and disobedience. Incidentally, that was the place where once, when the oath of office was taken, men opened the Bible in this country. You see, the idea of an oath is purely Biblical, the requirement of an oath of office in the United States in the Constitution is Biblical. A few years ago, I noticed that one of our Presidents, when he took the oath of office, took it on a covered Bible, which was fitting, but it used to be a closed Bible I mean, but it used to be before an open Bible originally, Deuteronomy twenty-eight. Because you took the, when you take an oath, this is its meaning, and Dr. Meredith G. Kline, who doesn't share my eschatology, has done some brilliant work on oath and covenant. It's out in book form, I'm not sure of the title, but you'll have it here in the library. Now, the substance of what he points out is, that when you took an oath, you swore to obey God and the covenant law. And you thereby invoked upon yourself the blessings of God's promises for obedience, and His curses for disobedience. It's a magnificent chapter incidentally, and if you've never preached on it, those of you who have churches at present, you most certainly should. Because God says:

"...if thou shalt hearken diligently unto the voice of the LORD thy God, to observe and to do all his commandments which I command thee this day, that the LORD thy God will set thee on high above all nations of the earth: And all these blessings shall come on thee, and overtake thee, if thou shalt hearken unto the voice of the LORD thy God. Blessed shalt thou be in the city, and blessed shalt thou be in the field. Blessed shall be the fruit of thy body, and the fruit of thy ground, and the fruit of thy cattle, the increase of thy kine, and the flocks of thy sheep. Blessed shall be thy basket and thy store. Blessed shalt thou be when thou comest in, and blessed shalt thou be when thou goest out."

And so on, and then the curses, which are similar. The exact opposite for disobedience.

“Cursed shalt thou be in thy going out and thy coming in... and the fruit of the field and the fruit of thy body.”

In other words, God is totally operative in the whole man in the whole world. And where He is obeyed, there is total victory in every realm. Now these two emphases of Puritanism led to a tremendously optimistic outlook. It has been of late pointed out by Iain Murray in *The Puritan Hope* and Hulse in his book on *The Restoration of Israel*, how the great missionary effort of the last century and of the century before, was postmillennial in his faith and impulse predominantly.

Another fact of interest that has been developed of late by some historians in this country just beginning to be published, is this. The Puritans who came here were predominantly, not universally but predominantly, postmillennial. They came here self-consciously determined to establish God's new Israel, or new Zion, as a hope for the world. To have an opportunity to do here what they could not do in the mother country, to build a nation in terms of God's law word. And to make it the stronghold from whence all the nations were to be conquered. They had thus, a missionary task. A world mission. Now when they lost that hope and became amill' and premill', they began to decline. Then, with a man who, not always consistent in his Reformed theology, but at this point he was sound, he revived postmillennialism; Jonathan Edwards. Samuel Hopkins, and Joseph Bellamy. Men like Bushmen and others, American historians who don't even know the word 'postmillennial,' but who none the less point out, that because they revived the original eschatology, an eschatology that was optimistic, an eschatology of conquest, it was their followers who made possible American Independence. And some have gone so far as to say, without this revived eschatology there would have been no war of American Independence, and the United States would be today another Ireland. That's the impact that this eschatology had. It was an eschatology of victory, which is the title I gave to the republication of Dr. Kik's writings. And I recommend that very heartily to you, Dr. Kik is a very able writer, or was a very able writer in this field. Now I've tried to give you something of the theological, philosophical premises that under-gird eschatology.

ENDNOTES:

1. "Marriage is honourable in all, and the bed undefiled..." The Holy Bible: King James Version (Electronic Edition of the 1900 Authorized Version., Heb 13:4). (2009). Logos Research Systems, Inc.
2. "Isaac was sporting with Rebekah his wife." The Holy Bible: King James Version (Electronic Edition of the 1900 Authorized Version., Ge 26:8). (2009). Logos Research Systems, Inc.
3. "I accept the universe," said Margaret Fuller. Some one reported this remark to Thomas Carlyle. "Gad! she'd better!" Strong, A. H. (1907). *Systematic theology* (p. 369). American Baptist Publication Society.
4. George Howe, *Mount Hope*, *A New England Chronicle* (New York: Viking Press, 1959), 193. In Rousas John Rushdoony. *The Nature of the American System*. Vallecito, California: Ross House Books, 1965, 98n.
5. The Holy Bible: King James Version (Electronic Edition of the 1900 Authorized Version., Dt 28:1-6). (2009). Logos Research Systems, Inc.
6. The Holy Bible: King James Version (Electronic Edition of the 1900 Authorized Version., Dt 28:19). (2009). Logos Research Systems, Inc.
7. The Holy Bible: King James Version (Electronic Edition of the 1900 Authorized Version., Dt 28:17-18). (2009). Logos Research Systems, Inc.

Postmillennialism, II

R.J. Rushdoony

Let us begin with prayer. Our Lord and God we come to Thee today mindful of the abundance of Thy mercy. We thank Thee that Thy Word is true, and the Word of truth has been given to us to light our way. We thank Thee that by Thy grace we are a new people in Christ Jesus. That all Thy promises to us in Him are yea and amen. Make us ever joyful in Thee and in Thy word, in Jesus name, Amen.

Dr. Smith suggested that in this hour I continue the subject of postmillennialism. We studied last week the theological and philosophical underpinnings of the position. Now let us consider it, very briefly of course, from a biblical exegetical position. There are a number of books and material that are well worth reading. Boettner's Millennium is an excellent one, OT Allis' Prophecy and the Church is an excellent critique of the Scofieldian dispensational premillennial interpretations. Roderick Campbell's Israel and the New Covenant, is an important study. Alexander's Commentary on Isaiah is a classic in the field, and also TV Moore's Zachariah, with his available, as is Alexander also I believe, from the Banner of Truth trust. Iain Murray's The Puritan Hope, my book Thy Kingdom Come which is on Daniel and Revelation, and a number of other books. I mustn't forget Marcellus Kik's, The Eschatology of Victory. All these will give you far more on detailed exegesis of the postmillennial position. I can add another commentary that's good in this area, and that is Alexander's Psalms. I mention Psalms because I shall deal with that specifically in this hour.

Too often, as eschatology is treated, people deal with a few classic texts, and I'm going to avoid those, I've given you these books as references whereby you can check out interpretations including mine of Daniel and Revelation, of Thessalonians, of Isaiah, of Zachariah, and many of the other classic texts that deal with the subject. But in reality, the real answer is to be found from one end of Scripture to the other. One of the stories I like by the way, in this area, is told by Dr. Charles Woodbridge himself. Woodbridge is perhaps the Dean of fundamentalists, premillennialism thinkers in this country, a very fine man. And a very close friend of J. Gresham Machen, who was a postmillennial. And Machen thought highly of Woodbridge, in fact remembered him very generously in his will. However, as Woodbridge himself told this story to me on one occasion, he said that he was for some years very anxious to convert Machen to premillennialism, and he said finally he was thoroughly squelched by Machen and he never brought up the subject again. And he said as they were walking along one day, he propagandizing him on this or that aspect of the premillennial position. And Machen said: "Well Charlie, I could accept premillennialism if it weren't for one thing." So Woodbridge said: "I eagerly asked: 'What is it?' figuring I could settle it in a moment, one thing." Machen said: "It isn't in the Bible, Charlie."

Now, the Bible from beginning to end is saturated with its eschatology, it shows throughout. For example, when we read Genesis 3:15: "And I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed, it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel."

'Bruise' or 'crush,' means here the destruction of the head of Satan. And where the head is crushed, the power is gone. And this is the essence of this statement. And St. Paul fixed this up Romans 16:20, and says: "then Satan shall be bruised under your feet shortly, he shall be crushed under your feet." This was the Christian hope.

But let us turn to the Psalms to see something of what the Psalter tells us. First of all, one of the things

that characterize the Psalms, beginning with the first Psalm, is the principle that there is a way that leads to life and a way that leads to death. And that, inescapably, the principle of life means flourishing, it means victory. The man who walks in the counsel of the ungodly is like chaff, "which the wind driveth away." Therefore: "the ungodly shall not stand," we are told, in the judgment, nor sinners in the congregation of the righteous. So that, as a principle, the ungodly have no place in God's creation. They are ultimately destroyed. But the man whose delight is in the law of the Lord is: "...like a tree planted by the rivers of water, that bringeth forth his fruit in his season; his leaf also shall not wither; and whatsoever he doeth shall prosper." A fundamental premise, therefore, of Scripture is here set forth. The way of the ungodly is not going to prosper under God, and finally in the judgment, it means total destruction. But the godly are like trees that are planted by rivers of water. They shall prosper. In Proverbs 8, the concluding verse, thirty-six I believe, again we have this same kind of principle set forth, as we do indeed in the Sermon on the Mount, that: "He that he that sinneth against me wrongeth his own soul, all they that hate me love death." To turn from God means to be governed by a will to death, the principle of suicide, of self-destruction. Thus, as we go through Scripture, we see continually this parallel. The way of the ungodly leads to death, culminating in the judgment, the way of the righteous is the way of prosperity, of life. They shall be fat and flourishing, we are told.

But let us look in particular at the second Psalm, I want to spend a little time on that, because it is of such great importance. This Psalm is one of the two most quoted portions of the Old Testament, in the New. The other is the passage in Isaiah, the vision of the Lord high and lifted up, where the hardening of the hearts is referred to, that "hearing they shall not hear and seeing they shall not see," "lest they turn and be converted." Apart from that passage, nothing else in the Old Testament is more quoted than Psalm 2. So that the position of Psalm 2 is echoed repeatedly as essential to the gospel and to the epistles.

"Why do the heathen rage, and the people imagine a vain thing? The kings of the earth set themselves, and the rulers take counsel together, against the LORD, and against his anointed, saying, Let us break their bands asunder, and cast away their cords from us.
He that sitteth in the heavens shall laugh: the Lord shall have them in derision.
Then shall he speak unto them in his wrath, and vex them in his sore displeasure.
Yet have I set my king upon my holy hill of Zion. I will declare the decree: the LORD hath said unto me, Thou art my Son; this day have I begotten thee. Ask of me, and I shall give thee the heathen for thine inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for thy possession. Thou shalt break them with a rod of iron; thou shalt dash them in pieces like a potter's vessel. Be wise now therefore, O ye kings: be instructed, ye judges of the earth. Serve the LORD with fear, and rejoice with trembling. Kiss the Son, lest he be angry, and ye perish from the way, when his wrath is kindled but a little. Blessed are all they that put their trust in him."

Now this Psalm gives us, in capsule form, in the best concentrated form of all of Scripture, the biblical philosophy of history. And what does it say? It tells us that the heathen, and commentators have made clear in some translators that this means the ungodly nations, the powers of the world, they rage, and the people, the Gentiles, the unregenerate, imagine a vain thing. They set themselves up, and they take counsel, or some have translated this, and this is interesting: "they conspire together."

Now, as against many conservatives who are strong on conspiracy, we must say that as Christians we do believe there is a conspiracy, the conspiracy of Satan against God. And like any and every conspiracy, it is doomed, because the idea of conspiracy is to determine the course of history, and only God can do that. So whether it is the conspiracy of men or the conspiracy of Satan, they: "imagine a vain thing." Thus we must say, whether it is to Satan, or to the communists, or to the atheists, or to any other group in the world, when they dream of capturing control of history, of dominating the world, of saying this is ours, they: "imagine a vain thing." Their conspiracy is against the Lord, and against His

anointed.

Every ungodly movement is aimed primarily against the Lord and against His anointed. And here again, speaking of conservatives, we must say that in defending what you do, you are defending the minor thing and in terms of Saul's armor, when the real defense must be of the faith, with the Lord's armor. "Let us break their band asunder and cast away their cords." Let us dispense with God's world of law, let us dispense with the restraint of God and His order, let us create our own paradise of earth, a paradise without God, the kingdom of man. And what is the response of God? Now this is one of the most magnificent verses in all of Scripture. And I counsel you to memorize this Psalm, and to remember it when you feel low. "He that sitteth in the heaven shall laugh. The Lord shall have them in derision." This is what we need, to share in God's laughter as His people. So as we face the conspiring of the all the world of powers against God and His anointed, we share in that heavenly laughter. The confidence in the absolute and sovereign God, before whom the nations and the isles are as nothing. That no one can for a fraction of a moment, deflect history from His predestined course. "The Lord shall have them in derision."

And rightfully so. And so should we. We should not fear, "...though the mountains shake, though the mountains be moved into the seas, though the earth tremble, for the Lord of Hosts is with us, the God of Jacob is our refuge." The derision of God, for all the vanity of man as he seeks to oppose God, should be ours also. We should be "more than conquerors in Christ." Then shall He speak unto them in His wrath, vex them in His sore displeasure. We have a picture of God laughing in amazement at the insanity of man, then pronouncing His judgment upon them from all eternity, in His sore displeasure. "Yet have I set my King upon my holy hill of Zion." It is decreed, nothing can shake it. I have established my throne, my capital, it is Zion. Out of my true Church, the Invisible Church, I shall reign. my Son, ordained from before the foundation of the world, shall reestablish that which Satan tried to overthrow in Eden. my Kingdom, I will declare the decree. "...the LORD hath said unto me, Thou art my Son; this day have I begotten thee." Just before, God the Father speaks, now God the Son speaks. And of course, these are the words we have at the baptism also. Christ speaks here, but God says to Him in His incarnation: "Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten thee." You are now my appointed Heir, to rule the world, and this is my decree from before the foundation of the world, therefore: "Ask of me, and I shall give thee the heathen for thine inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for thy possession." The whole world is therefore committed to Christ as King.

Now some people say, but our Lord said my Kingdom is not of this world, what does that mean? It meant simply this. Was He the King Israel was expecting, whose kingship was of men? No! He did not deny that He was the King, the rightful heir of the throne of David. When He was confronted with this charge, he said: "thou sayest it." You've said it! But His Kingship was not of this world, it was not derived from men, even as His priesthood was not of this world, but of the order of Melchizedek, that is, directly from God. Melchizedek's priesthood was without father, without mother, that is, it was not inherited as the priesthood of Aaron. It came directly from God. Melchizedek had a father and had a mother, but he did not derive his priesthood from father or mother, from hereditary, from man, from the will of the flesh, but directly from God. And so the priesthood of our Lord was of Melchizedek. The order of Melchizedek, the same kind, directly from God's eternal ordination. And so is His Kingship. Though indeed He was of the house of David. Yet He specifically denied that His was a Kingship that Israel could confer. And when men tried to seize Him by force and make Him King, He refused to be made King by men, or of men. Because He was already King - of God. So the uttermost parts of the earth, the Gentiles, the heathen nations, are His inheritance. And so God speaks: "Thou shalt break them with a rod of iron, Thou dash them in pieces like a potter's vessel." Now the comparison of a rod of iron and a potter's vessel is quite a dramatic one. The utter hopelessness of a potter's vessel, a dish, resisting a rod of iron, that's the imagery. So hopeless is it for the nations of the world to dream of resisting God. Of resisting the dominion of Christ. Who shall establish all things under His power.

Isaiah gives us a vision of that, the heart of his book after dealing the atonement, he goes on to speak of the conquest of the world by the people of God. And how again the world will resemble, more and more, a paradise. So that the sinner having died at a hundred will be accounted to have died young, in other words, the lifespan will again be very long. We're not told how long, whether it will be as long as before the Flood, but that it will be very long. "...the desert shall... blossom as the rose." The waste places of the earth will again be habitable.

There is reason to believe that before the Flood, the whole earth, from Pole to Pole, was inhabited. The evidences are of a very semi-tropical climate. In the Siberian area mammoths were frozen instantaneously with buttercups in their mouths. And in the Czar's regime, the meat was still good, and it was sometimes served to foreign dignitaries when they were there, the meat of animals from before the Flood, frozen. The Antarctic reveals, underneath the snow and ice, a tropical or semi-tropical world that once existed before the Flood. Very interesting, there's a book that was written a few years ago by a scientist who had been an associate of Einstein. A professor in California with whom I was discussing the book said, it is ignored, even though the credentials of Hapgood are very good, because it says something that doesn't sit well with the modern world. Well what was it? And this is just a by the way, but I think it's such a delightful point that I will bring it up. Not too many years ago, in the papers of a Turkish admiral who died during Columbus's life time, an old map that this Turkish admiral, Piri Reis, had collected, was discovered among his effects. Now the map went way back before Piri Reis' day. So it antedated Columbus. And the map very obviously, shows some very remarkable things. It had North and South and Central America, and it had the Antarctic world very carefully charted. There were also all kinds of computations that they couldn't decipher, they couldn't figure out. The Pentagon asked for it, and they turned it over to, finally, to Hapgood, and he had a whole group of graduate students work on it for a period of years, until they decoded it. They found that not only did it have an accurate mapping of the entire world, including Antarctica before there was any ice on it, but also they could compute both longitude and latitude, and a good many other things. So it was a real shock.

Then they began collecting a lot of old maps everywhere in the world, and they found that there was a great deal of such knowledge that went back twenty centuries or so BC. That apparently at that time, they had an extensive knowledge of the whole world. And they apparently knew how to communicate with each other. So, he comments, Hapgood does in his book, *Maps of the Ancient Sea Kings*, that there is a myth or legend in the Bible about men at one time having one language all over the world, and it must echo some dim truth, because there's evidence of this in the maps. Well, of course what we would have to say is, that these maps were made by men in the days not too long after Noah, within a few generations, when the ice had not settled on the Antarctic and they charted the whole world. But they had developed a great deal of technology before the Flood, and still retained some of it, and gradually lost it later. Because one of the interesting things is, some of those ancient civilizations had a technology that was subsequently lost. At Mohenjo-daro in India, they had sewer lines and running water in the houses. At Knossos in Crete, they had, when Moses was not yet on the scene, hot and cold running water, and flush toilets in the palace, a high civilization.

Now, to return to: "...the uttermost parts of the earth for thy possession." The whole world again, according to Isaiah, is again to blossom like the rose. Everything is again to be under man's dominion, this time godly dominion. And so the word is, submit yourselves! Here's the King who can break the nations in pieces like a potter's vessel. "Be wise now therefore oh ye kings, be instructed ye judges of the earth," David now speaks, inspired of the Holy Spirit. And so he counsels the nations and rulers: "serve the Lord with fear and rejoice with trembling, kiss the Son lest he be angry and ye perish from the way, when His wrath is kindled but a little." Now, when he summons them to "kiss the Son," it means to bow down as before the King of kings, an Emperor, and kiss His feet. To prostrate themselves totally before Him, Lord and sovereign, begging His mercy for their sin, and totally committing

themselves to Christ the King. “Blessed are all they that put their trust in Him.” Now this Psalm gives us the biblical philosophy of history. And it’s a dramatic picture. A picture of Christ as King, who shall triumph, and who shall rule to “the uttermost parts of the earth.” This is a post-millennial Psalm, very obviously.

ENDNOTES:

1. The Holy Bible: King James Version (Electronic Edition of the 1900 Authorized Version., Ge 3:15). (2009). Logos Research Systems, Inc.
2. The Holy Bible: King James Version (Electronic Edition of the 1900 Authorized Version., Ro 16:20). (2009). Logos Research Systems, Inc.
3. The Holy Bible: King James Version (Electronic Edition of the 1900 Authorized Version., Pr 8:36). (2009). Logos Research Systems, Inc.
4. Isaiah 6:10
5. The Holy Bible: King James Version (Electronic Edition of the 1900 Authorized Version., Ps 2:1–12). (2009). Logos Research Systems, Inc.
6. The Holy Bible: King James Version (Electronic Edition of the 1900 Authorized Version., Is 35:1). (2009). Logos Research Systems, Inc.

Calvinism: World and Life View

R.J. Rushdoony

Let us begin with prayer. Almighty God our heavenly Father, we give thanks unto thee that we have inherited, in Christ Jesus, so great a heritage. Strengthen us in our most holy faith, that as we face a world in crisis and in ruins, we may reconstruct all things in terms of thy word, thy grace, and thy truth. Bless us with this purpose, in Jesus name, Amen.

Some of you may have heard a little story that I told yesterday, and if so, bear with me, because I feel it is so important it should be repeated and remembered. Yesterday, in talking to a nurse who works at the Jackson Emergency Hospital, she told me something that distressed me very greatly. She said that for the fair amount that she has been working there, she has seen many, many people brought in from accidents, from very serious and critical injuries, carried to the table, and only once did she hear anyone in that situation mention the name of God or pray. What this means is that to all practical intent, for most people here God is dead. He is not alive to them and a part of their lives. I think this is a very serious fact. I would have expected such a statement, say, from San Francisco, or New York City, or Chicago, but I would have been less likely to expect it from Jackson. There is a higher percentage of church membership here. But what it does indicate is that while many men here profess an evangelical faith, in a real crisis they do not think in terms of it. So that what they lack is a Christian mind. A mind whose responses are first and last in terms of Christ and the sovereign God. In terms of the Word of God.

In other words, for them there is no world and life faith. There is no faith that has the answers across the board for everything. Christianity has become to them, life insurance; protection against Hell. So that we are indeed in crisis. The Reformed faith made its impact on the world precisely because it did present that. A world and life system. And its uniqueness was that it was virtually alone in so doing. At the time of the Reformation, you had Lutheranism, you had Anglicanism, you had Anabaptism and you had the Counter-Reformation. But the very power of the Reformed faith was that it alone presented a world and life view. The other faiths, or churches, had behind them powerful princes; powerful German princes, the Habsburgs, the English crown, and so on. But the Reformed faith never had a powerful prince behind it, a powerful, national face. Its strength was purely in terms of the fact that it presented an answer so that the Christian mind was possible. Having said that, let's turn to an entirely different matter.

I have a number of Catholic friends, very devout, very earnest Catholics, some of whom will no longer go to the Church. They feel the church has abandoned them and the faith. Some of these people will not farm or plant until first a priest, if they can find nowadays a good one, comes out and blesses the field. I know that in San Francisco when I was a student, there were many of the old fishermen there, who would not go out with a new boat or at the beginning of a fishing season, until a priest came out to bless the boat. I know that not to long ago a very devout Catholic friend gave us, for Christmas, a blessed candle. And said we are facing a troubled time, a troubled age, and a particularly saintly old Irish priest, very feeble, very godly man, she said, blessed this candle and I got one for myself, be-

cause we need the blessing of the Lord.

Now of course to us, this kind of practice is not Scriptural, it is superstitious. And yet it represents something very important, and the history of it is very important, because you did not have this kind of thing in the early part of the Middle Ages, oh there were relics of it here, survivals out of paganism and the church made accommodation with it in this locality and that, but basically this was not a serious factor in the life of the church of Rome, until the high Middle Ages. It was then, that on a massive basis, the use of images and the whole paraphernalia of the popular devotional life came into being. As a matter of fact, the church fought it. Fought it hard and long, and then finally accepted it, and made it a part of its life because it was so helpful in keeping a hold on the people. Now, why did it rise in the way that it did, and in the manner that it did? The answer is that precisely as scholasticism arose, this also arose. Because scholasticism on the one hand, with its Greek, its Hellenic presupposition, cut the ground out from under the biblical world and life view. But people want an answer to everyday life, from their faith. And so when, in the church now, they were not getting the Word of God, they were getting a preaching that was based on Aristotelian philosophy as mediated by the scholastic philosophers, that no longer spoke the Word of God to their everyday life, then it was the images, then it was the candles, then it was having the priests come and bless the field, or bless their cattle at calving time, or some such thing. It was the urgent need of having a world and life covering in terms of their faith.

Thus you see, when you deal with these Catholic practices, it doesn't do any good to lash out at the simple folk for their superstition, that isn't the answer. They're trying to supply a lack in the teaching in the Church. And today you have the same thing rising in a far worse fashion. People are again being left without a world and life view. The Catholic church is no longer providing it in any way. You all know that a few years ago, about two years ago it was, the Catholic church deposed a number of saints including Saint Christopher, and you've all seen the Saint Christopher medallions that used to hang from the rearview mirror of so many cars that Catholics had. It was a crude way of saying: "I need a world and life view, I need a faith that goes with me wherever I go. That applies in every situation." And then suddenly the church said there is no Saint Christopher, that's a myth. I know from Catholic friends what a hornet's nest they stirred up with that, and the kind of scene that was actually created in one or two churches. And the Catholics are not used to having that kind of challenge to authority that they did have, what had they done? In the name of a humanistic faith, they had cut the ground out from under the people, even with respect to their popular substitutes, which gave them a world and life coverage. Not a view, but a coverage. So what has been springing up to take its place, another world and life view, of the demonic sort, occultism. So now it's spirits, satanic forces, the witchcraft movement, the occultist movement, which says here, every day, as I move around, these spells, these incantations, these spirits, govern and guide. It's a world and life view that they are providing. Very clearly, very unmistakably, a world and life view.

And we cannot understand it unless we appreciate that fact. So you see, the remedy to these things is not to say right off: "well that's bad," it is. Or: "that's superstition!" It is. But it makes no difference than if you tell a person who comes to you, assuming you're a dentist just for a moment, and says: "I have a bad toothache, I think it's abscessed," and you look at it and say: "indeed it is! Thank you, goodbye, that'll be ten dollars." You don't have to identify his toothache, and that doesn't cure it, you see. And occultism doesn't go away for being told it's superstitious, and images and candles don't disappear because we describe them for what they are, any more than a description of a toothache makes it go away. The answer has to be a world and life view.

Now, in this book, John Calvin in his socio-economic impact *The Constructive Revolutionary*, by Fred W. Graham, which I just picked up and I browsed in it, it looks good, although I don't think I agree with a great deal in it. I'd like to read a statement he makes. He says,

“It is true that the great debates within religious bodies have been over such purely theological doctrines as double predestination, the presence (or absence) of Christ at his Table, and correct modes of church polity. But—partly because we live in a period when such doctrines are not of consuming importance, and partly because Calvin expressed his own mundane interests clearly and urgently—It try to balance the better-known theological position of the Reformer with a lucid statement of his social and economic thought and the application of that great mind to the problems of his tiny Alpine city-republic. Indeed, his secular thought is often seen to be critical of his theological thought. This worldly stress is not at all foreign to Calvin’s thought. On the contrary, the message of what we might call Christian secularity was preached several times each week from the pulpits of Geneva’s three churches—St. Pierre, the Madeleine, and St. Gervais. To insist that Calvin’s thought is grasped in the main by a study of Total Depravity, Limited Atonement, Double Predestination, and Irresistible Grace is simply to distort his thought and to study a dead torso rather than a revolutionary thinker.”

Now, there’s a great deal of truth in what Graham said. I preached the message I did in chapel this morning, as a preparation for this class. So, that was preached as an introduction to what we’re going to say now. My point there was that the Pharisees sought sociological justification, not theological justification. In my book, *The Politics of Guilt and Pity* I have a chapter on Calvin in Geneva, *The Sociology of Justification*, in which I deal with the fact that justification, sociologically, was a relevant concern of Calvin’s. First; theological justification and then a sociological justification. But all that the people of the Counsel of Geneva wanted was sociological justification, and here was the conflict. Calvin was intensely concerned about society. But he was not primarily concerned about that, he was concerned primarily about God. And because he was concerned about God, he was concerned about society. Now what happened in Geneva was this, very briefly. Geneva was a small city-state. But it was important economically. Its life was collapsing. It was a city that commercially had a great deal of importance, but it was losing its ability to function because the moral caliber of life was collapsing. And if you don’t have law and order, moral law and order, law and order in the streets, you cannot function. Now the Council of Geneva was primarily interested in maintaining a functioning city-state. They did not want to be in ruins. The Catholic Bishop had been unable to make the city function. It was collapsing into moral anarchy. And so they were interested in the Reformation from a purely pragmatic point of view.

Calvin was called in to be the social engineer, as it were. “Provide us with some kind of social order. But don’t demand too much of us.” Now the Council ruled the city, the idea of Calvin as a dictator is ridiculous. In fact, they didn’t even allow him to become a citizen or give him a vote until they knew he was dying. And then they thought it was safe to give the old man the vote, make him a citizen. What they were concerned with was order. “Help us to function!” Europe at that time, as Schmitt has pointed out in his study of Calvin, was honeycombed with secret societies, all aiming at revolution. Many of them championing such things as free love, many of them holding ideas, such as the Adamites, that all men needed to get back into the Garden of Eden was to throw off all clothes, they were nudists, and, before the end of the Middle Ages incidentally, there were many parades of these Adamites, nude down various streets in Europe. Defying the city fathers in the name of an anarchistic faith. Everything, you see, was falling apart! Morally, every kind of perversion was being championed by one secret group or another, every kind of practice was being justified, the witchcraft movement, occultism was all around then, JB Russell in his *Witchcraft in the Middle Ages* has pointed out what a fearful thing it was, with their belief in, and practice of, human sacrifice and cannibalism and much else. Here are some councilmen, running a city, who’re businessmen, who say: “Look, we’ve got to have law and order or things are going to fall apart. Calvin, can you provide us law and order? Go to it! But don’t step on our toes in the process.” They wanted the order Calvin could provide, but they didn’t like Calvin. First chance they got they got rid of him, and then found they could not do without him. And Calvin had to be threatened by one of his former associates with the judgment of God if he didn’t go back

and do his duty, and he did. He did go back.

Why was it they could not do without Calvin? Well, the reason was that Calvin was providing a world and life view. A world and life view. This is why Calvin had conflicts with the Council, in a way that Luther did not have with his prince, in a way that Cranmer did not have with Henry VIII. And in a way in which the Catholic church and the Catholic state did not have conflicts. Why? Because Calvin, with his world and life views said: "since God is sovereign, all areas must be godly; every area must be under the jurisdiction of God and His Word." So the Word of God is not a church word. It is not a church book. Now this is one of the greatest sins of the modern church, evangelical and reformed, it has reduced the Bible to a church book. The Bible is not a book for the church alone. And if we reduce it to a church book, we are denying its essential meaning. The Bible is a book for every man in every area of life, it's a book for the individual, it's a book for the family, it's a book for the state, it is a book for the businessman, it is a book for every area of life. As a result, because God is the sovereign and absolute God, His Word is a total Word. Thus, the requirement that Calvin insisted on was that the state must be godly. Every area of civil government has as great a requirement of obeying Scripture as the church does. Now Calvin was not saying that the church must rule the state, and he was denying that the state had a right to rule the church. What he was saying was that the state had an obligation to obey God. And this of course was impertinence in the eyes of the princes. And the eyes of rulers all over Europe. They regarded this as a very, very revolutionary doctrine.

For a minister of God to stand up and instruct princes? Of course, this is what Ambrose and others had done in the early Church. St. John Chrysostom, so boldly again and again rebuking the Emperor, this was once routine, this was the prophetic word of the Old Testament. And certainly every pulpit in the United States that claimed to be reformed and evangelical, should have, when the Supreme Court came out with its decision on capital punishment and on abortion, have preached the Word of God, concerning those things. And said to all the members there, that: "thus saith the Lord!" to the Ahab's in Washington.

Now this is the requirement that Scripture makes of the state. This is why the kings of Israel and of Judah in their apostasy were so unhappy about the prophets, because the prophets were saying that civil government must be godly. And again, schools must be godly. The school as much as the church or the state must be under the Word of God. So the idea of a state school which doesn't recognize God is not Biblical at all. The Bible is as much a book for the school as it is for the state. As it is for the Church. And as it is for the covenant man. And so the necessity of Christian schools. An urgent necessity. Christian schools that are in every subject governed by the premises of Scripture. Similarly, with regard to vocations, the idea of the Christian calling. Now you probably read, when you were in college, in history, unless they dropped that from too, they drop so much now a days that it's hard to keep track of it, how in the seventeenth century in England and America, books like The Christian Cobbler, The Christian Shepherd, The Christian Farmer, The Christian Merchant, were being published in great numbers, and had a tremendous audience. And how commonplace it was, in those days, for every layman who was a businessman, or a workman, to read and memorize most of the book of Proverbs. When I was still a small boy there was an element of this yet, in that you used to be able to get little pocketbook editions of the book of Proverbs. But Proverbs were once very widely used that way. The Christian man and his calling to know the Word of God.

Then the family. The family is a covenant sphere. At this point let me digress a moment, there're many people who feel the idea of spheres and sphere laws originated with Abraham Kuyper, this is not true. Kuyper was a great thinker who did formulate and develop the idea, but in the Colonial era, you had the same idea, only they didn't call it sphere laws, they called it 'covenant.' The personal covenant and salvation. 'The civil government covenant,' 'the family covenant,' 'the church covenant,' and so

on. So they saw all these areas as covenant-areas, you see. And in American colonial literature, there's so much said about covenants, and man being in a covenantal sphere as he moved from one area of life to the church to the home, to his work, to school or state. The family therefore under Calvinism, became a tremendous force. So important a force, that Rome felt that it was a major threat. The Reformed family grew to such tremendous dimensions in its influence, it was a protective force, it gave the child, and it gave the husband and the wife a security; it was like a fortress! It was like a university that trained its children in the faith, it taught Catechism, it gave them a body of doctrine, a world and life view. One reason why I don't like the Sunday School. It's taking over and building what the family ought to do, and so we've crippled the family by saying, look, you don't have to do it, we'll do it for you, we'll teach your children. It used to be, at one time, that the pastor or 'dominie' called on each family once a year, or if the church were too large, the elders called, to see how much Catechism the children had been taught by the family.

And they were rebuked and disciplined if they had not done so. What did Rome do? They were so shocked by the strength of the Reformed family, that they organized a cult to try to counteract it, and to create a parallel development in their own circles. The cult of the holy family. The Saint Joseph cult. They made of St. Joseph a figure of some importance, which he had not been previously, and they stressed the holy family in a new way to try to create the same kind of strong family within their own circles. But as the sociologist who just died recently, Eugen Rosenstock-Huessy, pointed out, it did not succeed to any appreciable degree as in the Reformed circles, in Catholic circles.

Again, in the sciences, the same feeling that the world and life view of the Reformed faith required them here to develop the implications of their faith. Most of the men who were founders of the Royal Society in England were Puritans. A number of the great scientists of the early centuries, a very large percent, were Reformed men. Dr. Hepp of the Netherlands wrote a book on this, some years ago, on how extensively the sciences of the modern era began in Reformed circles.

The same was true of the area of the arts and so on. So that the tremendous power of the Reformed faith was precisely because it had a world and life view. It had a total answer in every area in terms of the plain statements of Scripture, the implications of the sovereignty of God. And this was its strength, and its weakness now is that it doesn't have that, it isn't using it, it has it there implicit in its standards, but it's reduced the Bible to a church book, and the faith to a church faith. So that the Christian, Reformed or unreformed, can go to the emergency hospital, and never think of God until a minister comes around.

One thing more, and then I'll open the floor for questions. I think I referred to a fact which some of you may have heard me, I think in conversation, I'm forgetting by now what I said and where I said it, I've been speaking steadily for two weeks now, but a very delightful Catholic political scientist whom my wife and I have known for some years, and he has read my books and agreed not to comment on them and I've agreed not to comment his, he's a very charming man. But he wrote not too long ago, in *Modern Age*, a very remarkable article. He said the future of the world depended on two men, and their influence on the modern age, two men of Geneva. Jean-Jacques Rousseau, and John Calvin. And he said, on the one hand, you have in Jean-Jacques Rousseau, the faith in the natural goodness of man and in the totalitarian state, totalitarian democracy, the general will, the state as man's savior. He said that this is what is on the march in every country in the world and is destroying the world. He said on the other hand, you have in Calvin a belief that man is a sinner, but that there is a sovereign and total God, who absolutely governs all things and has the answer in every area of life. And he says as a Catholic I am not happy about taking my choice between these two men, but there's no question in my mind, I have to hope that it is the position of John Calvin that triumphs. And of course, Doctor or Count von Kuehnelt-Leddihn is saying there, implicitly, that here is a world and life view. The world has to have one today, or it will go into a Dark Ages. I think he's right.

ENDNOTES:

1. Graham, Fred W. The Constructive Revolutionary. Richmond, Virginia: John Knox Press, 1971, 11,12.

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These professional transcriptions were made possible by permission of the Chaldedon Foundation and the support of Nicene Covenant Church and Grace Community School.

A special thanks to Nathan F. Conkey, whose unparalleled dedication and labor made these professional and polished transcripts a reality.

Additional thanks to the “Mount Olive Tape Library” and “Christ Rules” who participated in the recording, storing, and digitizing of RJ Rushdoony’s lectures as well as the creation of the original lecture transcriptions.