

Transcripts of
**IMPLICATIONS of
BIBLICAL FAITH**

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>

Implications of Biblical Faith, I

R.J. Rushdoony

Just yesterday I read an account of two twins who had not been together for years who met again. As one flew from Europe to the United States and they greeted one another at an airport. They had not seen each other for years. When they saw one another they broke out into laughter; they were identical twins. They were used to thinking and doing things alike when they were growing up, but now after some years, when they saw each other the startling fact was that they had on identical clothing. Now, there was something in their background that necessitated them, that governed them, that led them to do the identical thing. Well, in a sense that's what we are going to talk about, what necessitates us.

If I climb on this table and jump, I will only jump down, I will not be able to jump up to the ceiling. Gravity necessitates that I go down. Well, ultimately, what necessitates all of us? This is an all-important question, because it tells us what we really believe in. Is it God or nature? What necessitates us ultimately; God or nature? What is behind gravity, that I go down instead of up?

First of all, we have to examine what we mean by the word 'nature.' We are so used to thinking of 'nature' as though it were something; we've been schooled into this, and it is nonsense. Nature is a collective noun, a collective noun. For example, 'furniture' is a collective noun, it refers to this podium, to this table, to the chairs here and so on. So we can say, pointing to that chair there: "that is a piece of furniture." But 'furniture' itself is a collective noun for all the different pieces of furniture.

Now the same is true of the word 'nature.' 'Nature' is a collective noun, there is no such thing as nature, per se. You cannot say: "If I go to Hoboken I will find nature there, and I will see nature in all its fullness." Nature is a collective noun for the sum total of all the things in the universe, it is not a being, it is not a person, it is not a thing, it is a collective noun.

Well, God is not a collective noun, he is a person. And there is a world of difference between a collective noun and a person. God is the supreme being, what kind of being is He? Well, the Bible defines Him for us, and yet it does not. When God met Moses at the burning bush Moses was very upset, he in effect said: "God, who are you? For a long time, generation after generation, my people have been in slavery in Egypt, and you are supposed to be our covenant God, I don't understand you. What is your name?" That was Moses' question: "What is your name?" Well, we today don't understand that question because when we talk about 'names' we talk about a meaningless word that we bear, Tom, Dick, Harry, John, Jane, Jill and so on, without meaning. But in Bible times names were definitions. Your name changed if you changed. This is why we don't know Abram's original name. We know that when God called him out of Ur, He named him 'Abram,' and much later he renamed him 'Abraham,' father of a great multitude. Names therefore changed in Bible times if your character changed.

So when Moses says: "God, what is your name?" God answered: "I am that I am." Or: "I am he who is," "I am the ultimate being," in other words. "I am the source of all definition," all things are defined by God, but He is so great he is beyond all definition. But then He went on to say: "Moses, I am the

God of your Fathers, of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. I am known by my revelation to your forefathers. You can know me truly by studying my dealings with them.” And to us He would say: “You will know me truly if you study my revelation in my enscriptured word, but you can never know me exhaustively.” Because God is infinite, he is eternal, he defines everything that he creates, but He is beyond definition, He is the ultimate being who created all the things in this world.

Now when we speak of God as the ultimate being, we must then stop and consider what being is. For us as Christians, in terms of the Bible, there are two kinds of being; the uncreated being of God, and all created being. The whole of the universe is God’s creation, it is created being.

Now, there is therefore a discontinuity between the uncreated being of God, and the whole universe of created being. But we are the only religion in the world that believes that. We believe it because the Bible tells us so: “All things were made by Him, and without Him was not anything made that was made.” Therefore the whole of the universe is a product of God’s creative word. “In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth.” This means where you take the Bible seriously, where you believe that God is uncreated being, the creator by whom all things were made, there is a gap between God and us, between uncreated being and created being.

As I said, ours is the only religion, Biblical faith, that believes that. If you were a Hindu for example, you would believe that all being is one, so that, as you rise on the scale of being you will ultimately become a part of ‘Brahma,’ you will be a part of God. Well, this poses problems. If everything is a part of God, then if you are eating any living animal you are eating a part of God, a part of yourself, because you are one with them. So the Hindus don’t eat meat. Well, now they’ve got another problem. Some of their scientists, you may not agree that they are good scientists, but they in their research have come up with the idea, well we would agree with them up to a point, that plants, trees, shrubs, are all living things. Now, they’ve gone further and they have said: “We have studied vegetables, and we find that when you pull a vegetable out of the ground or you break it off and pick, say the tomato or a stalk of this or that, they feel pain.” Well, that poses a problem for a good Hindu, how can he eat something that is a living thing like himself and feels pain and is a part of God? This is a part of the doctrine of the ‘continuity of being’ which we as Christians do not believe. We believe that God created all things in heaven and on earth, that He is uncreated being and we are created being, and the rules and laws for our living are given in His Word, and when He says: “eat!” we eat, and when He says: “This you don’t eat!” We don’t eat. When He says: “this you can do,” we can do it, when He says: “Thou shalt not do this that or the other thing!” we don’t do it. Why? Because the Bible says so, and the Bible is the manufacturer’s book. He made us, and this book gives us his ‘instruction manual’ on how to live, so because we are not God, we are creatures, we go by the owners manual.

Now, if you take the viewpoint of other philosophies or other religions, you will have to say when you look at the world that sin and death are normal, that is what you find in ‘Nature.’ But the Bible tells us that sin and death are abnormal. They came into the world because of man’s disobedience to God, so it is not normal for us to be sinners, nor is it normal for us to die. And our destiny in Christ is to be delivered from sin by His atoning work on the cross.

So it is not the principle of sin that now rules in us, but the principle of righteousness or justice. So we hunger and thirst, not after sin but after righteousness, and in the new creation in Heaven we will know neither sin nor death, because Christ’s work will have eliminated these two great abnormalities; sin and death.

Now humanity; living and dying, is a burden for other religions, and they believe that as we ascend on the scale of being and become gods, all will be better. But God said he made man out of the soil of the ground. The word actually is out of the ‘topsoil,’ so you are not out of the no-good soil that is deep

underneath, you are part of the topsoil.

And it is not finitude, the fact that we live and die that is our problem, but sin is. And when sin is finally overcome, then Paul says: "The last enemy, death shall be destroyed." As I said earlier, sin and death are unnatural facts for the Bible, abnormal facts, they are not the normality.

Well, this will give you a different outlook on yourself, and on healing, and on medical practice, on every area of life and thought, if you see yourself as someone who was made by God to live forever and serve Him, but because of sin now decays and ages and dies. What will this do to your medical practice? The idea among too many doctors is that the body needs a lot of correction. Years ago when I was young, an arrogant doctor (and I am glad there are not as many doctors like that today) said that: "If he were doing it he would make a lot better body." And medical practice tries to correct what is wrong in the body rather than to say: "What are the owners instructions?" "How can we know something more from the owner's manual?"

Well, when I was young, doctors did not believe that stress caused ulcers, now they now better! I recall a doctor telling me, this was forty years or more ago that when he went to medical school, and he was not a young man, if he had said: "stress caused ulcers," He would have been kicked out of medical school, it was just a chemical reaction to be chemically corrected. But as doctors began to understand the mind-body relationship, they began to see that stress does indeed cause ulcers. And since then, we have come to understand much more about the mind-body relationship and its effect on us. We are, Genesis tells us: "Made in the image of God."

What is the image of God in man? We are told we are made in the image of God in Genesis 1:26-28, then in Colossians 3:10, and Ephesians 4:24 it is defined for us in those three passages. The image of God in man is; knowledge, righteousness or justice, holiness, and dominion. In fallen man the knowledge becomes false knowledge, it becomes injustice that man wants, not holiness but evil, and not dominion but domination; so that man works then to do that which is ungodly. He works against God, because what is original sin? It is defined for us in Genesis 3:5, where the tempter says: "Ye shall be as God, knowing," which means determining for yourself, "...what is good and evil." "You will make your own morality, your own laws, you will define good and evil for yourself. In the public schools that is exactly what they are doing in many instances from coast to coast in the values-clarification courses. What they say is: "You will define your own values," They don't use the word 'morality' any more, that's old fashioned, it smacks of the Bible, they use the word 'values.' "Create your own value system, there is no universal right or wrong, no universal value, just establish your own values and live by them. If you don't like what you've chosen, you can switch to another value-system later, you decide for yourself."

Well, one of the consequences of such thinking is that we now have legalized abortion and homosexuality, and are in the process of legalizing right now euthanasia. In fact a book of the early seventies, translated into English representing an avant-garde European opinion which has already become law in some places, is that every kind of perversion should be legalized. And, in fact, that states or federal governments should pay subsidies to the people who practice these things and have been persecuted over the generations, things like necrophilia, making love to the dead. Things like coprophilia which I won't define. All these have groups calling for their legalization, because the goal is to abolish every kind of law and have only one law that makes Christianity illegal. Why? Well, if you believe in God, this is your owners manual and this gives you your law. But if you believe in that mythical entity 'nature,' you will say: "Anything that happens in nature is good because nature is good." You actually have people who have affirmed, beginning with the Marquis de Sade two hundred years ago, and coming right into this century when after being forbidden for about two hundred years, the works of the Marquis de Sade were published with long introductions by scholars on how great they were. And the Marquis

de Sade said not only that abortion and homosexuality and euthanasia should be legalized, but rape, murder, every crime you can think of, robbery! Why? They happen in 'nature,' 'nature' is good, and therefore they should be legal. But if you believe God alone is good, and He sets the standards, he defines the law, then you are going to say: "What God says is right and wrong, defines it for me."

But nature? What does 'nature' say? Why nature, the whole world that of all these things comprehended by the collective noun includes every crime in the book, but it can't be bad. They have to be therefore good because nature allows them. How many of you are familiar with Emile Durkheim? Well, the schools have gone beyond him, because about twenty years ago I was speaking at a Southern university to about two thousand and I asked them how many of them had been assigned (I was dealing primarily with Durkheim's thinking) the Rules of Sociological Method. About two thirds raised their hands. Then I asked them if part of their assignment included the chapter on the criminal as an evolutionary pioneer, and none of them had read it. They only read the chapters that had been assigned.

Well, the Criminal as an Evolutionary Pioneer, written in the 1890's, is a key aspect of modern sociology. That chapter is very important, because what does Durkheim say there? Well, as a sociologist he says that: "The criminal is of great importance to me. We need to study what the criminal does, because the crimes that he commits today that lead to his imprisonment may be the next step in evolution. So if we study the criminal as an evolutionary pioneer, then we will understand the direction that evolution is taking." Logical isn't it?

And once you abandon the God of the Bible and His word as your law, then what Durkheim said is altogether logical. But God says: "There is none beside me, I am God, and there is none else." But now, in modern thinking, evolution and time and chance have replaced God, and the logic of it requires that we follow the Marquis de Sade and Durkheim into a destruction of all law and all morality. I hope this helps you to understand what the universities are teaching, what television and film fair is indoctrinating you with, knocking down the old standards.

There is a verse in the Bible: "Whoso breaketh a hedge," sometimes translated 'fence,' "A serpent shall smite him." That's a marvelous verse. What does it refer to? Well, a 'fence' in Bible times was a hedge, a hedge-fence. On the borders of your field you would plant and this used to be true in England although those hedge-fences are now being destroyed. You would take a strip around the borders of your field, let us say from here to the blackboard, and plant shrubs there and trees, so that you had a few feet of solid growth. Well, and interesting thing would happen with these hedge-fences. They would provide a place for birds to nest, there would be all kinds of insects hovering around those shrubs and trees that the birds would feed on, and underneath there would be a good place for snakes. They would not be exposed to the open field and to the cattle and to the plow, so this hedge fence of a few feet would have all kinds of wildlife in it including snakes, poisonous snakes. Well, if during the night you wanted to break an opening through that hedge-fence to let your cows go into your neighbors field and graze on it, you took a very good chance of getting snake bit. "Whoso breaketh a fence a serpent shall smite him."

Now the Bible uses that to say "When you break God's law which is a fence between good and evil, out of it will come a judgment against you." A good verse to remember.

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ENDNOTES:

1. 1 Corinthians 15:26
2. Genesis 1:27
3. Isaiah 46:9
4. Ecclesiastes 10:8

Implications of Biblical Faith, II

R.J. Rushdoony

In our first session we discussed the meaning of the fact that God is the creator. Let us go on now a little further in the same subject to discuss the purpose of creation. There was no need in God. You and I have needs because we are creatures, we need certain things, and our goal is to get those things that we need so that we live constantly with expectations, with plans, with hopes, and with desires. But there is no need in God. Revelation 4:11 says: "All things were created for His pleasure." Not because He needed anything but because it pleased Him to do so. Psalm 19:1 says: "The heavens declare the glory of God, and the firmament showeth His handiwork." All things are manifestations of the glory of God, and of his creative power. God created things in the space of six days, there is no getting around the plain language of Genesis one. People have tried it from the early days of the church.

You must remember that evolution is an ancient myth. The Greeks believed it, and therefore they found that the Bible was an embarrassing book. When they were converted they tried to get around Genesis one, to spiritualize the days, to make them long ages and eons upon eons, and it embarrassed them as they went through the Bible that God spoke in His Word about such things as diet, and rules regulating how you live. Some of the early church fathers who were more Greek than Christian like Gregory of Nyssa, actually spiritualized everything from Genesis through Deuteronomy. When he got through with it, there was no history, only a great many allegories that meant strange and fanciful things. They were embarrassed by Genesis One. They were given to a belief in process. We will come to that tomorrow, but for the present just to say, they could not believe in a creative act, God said and it was done. God declared: "Let there be light and there was light." All these things were impossible to the Greeks, for them, man was essentially the creator, man was the governor.

Now, the previous hour I began by saying that every school of thought has a place where things begin, where the order of necessity originates. So, if you believe that all things came out of a mythical entity, a collective noun called 'nature,' then nature is going to govern everything, and this created a major problem in human thought. Because with the Enlightenment somewhere around 1660, when civilization in the west shifted from the primacy of God to the primacy of 'nature.' They did not like the idea of God, why? Because God was the creator and the predestinator, because if God is literally the creator, if he made all things in heaven and on earth, all things operate in terms of His word and His purpose. That makes predestination inescapable.

The Bible tells us, and the Westminster Confession insists that God predestinated all things, yet without violence to secondary causes. So that, we are responsible creatures, and yet God has numbered the very hairs on our head. Now, I don't know how many hairs you have on your head, neither do you, nor do I know how many I have on my head, although they are a lot fewer than they were sixty and seventy years ago. Well, God knows. He has numbered all the hairs of our head, He has determined everything we do, and yet I am a responsible creature, I am responsible for what I do, I am guilty if I do wrong. That's a mystery to us, we can't understand it. But philosophically you cannot escape from the fact of the primary determination of all things by God, and the contingency or freedom of secondary

causes, and the Westminster Confession very, very strongly affirms that.

Well, there is a realm of necessity. The Enlightenment did not like the idea of being necessitated, 'predestined' to use the theological term, by God. So they rebelled against the concept of God and said: "We will be under nature, not under God! We are creatures of nature!" But what happened? They could not escape from necessity. So what did they have? Determinism, naturalistic determinism, and it culminated in a book which perhaps is no longer taught because it's a problem, La Mettrie, a French Philosopher, who wrote; *Man a Machine*, have any of you ever heard of it or read it? Yes, a few of you, alright. La Mettrie in that book has a person totally committed to a materialistic and naturalistic philosophy of life wound up with a more rigid predestination by nature than the Bible has by God. At least in the Bible we are still responsible creatures even if predestinated, a mystery we don't understand, but which we have to accept. But in La Mettrie's world, you are totally determined by nature, so that you are a machine. This ended up with so rigid a naturalism, that when I studied in the mid-thirties psychology at Berkeley at the University of California, (a required course) the textbook I had in those days spoke of 'consciousness' only in one sentence where it dismissed it as an 'epiphenomenon,' nothing real. And I thought to myself: "They've got themselves into a fine pickle." They cannot even admit that we have consciousness any more, because of their naturalistic philosophy. Well, this has become a problem to the naturalists. What can they do if they begin with god, they end up in determinism and heaven or hell. If they start with nature they end up with the most rigid determinism imaginable, but they are a machine, they don't even have consciousness, how is man going to be free of God whom they hate, and nature which they thought was freedom from God but puts them under a worse kind of bondage? Does anyone know what the answer is? It is one which has come about just in the last quarter century; the artificial life.

The artificial life, the life that is against nature. What does that involve? It begins with abortion, you deny life, but it requires a lifestyle that is 'unnatural' to use the term in its older sense, homosexuality. Let me read to you from the November 18 1995 *Spectator*, an English weekly, and the author is David Starkey, a homosexual. He denies God, of course, and he denies nature; we don't want a natural world, we are against nature. What are we for? The artificial life. This is how he concludes:

"But the fact that our sexual orientation is artificial does not separate us from modern society, on the contrary modern society is the most artificial thing there is. That is what distinguishes its comforts from the state of nature which as Hobbes pointed out: 'Life was nasty, brutish and short.' We homosexuals should rejoice in modernity, we should be proud that modernity has been created by homosexuals!"

Do you understand where it is leading them to? They have got to have a life against life, against God, against nature, against everything that is natural, and they feel that as gays their lifestyle is the epitome of that, and it is geared to death. So they begin by rebelling against God, then they rebel against nature, and now they are in rebellion against life. They act as though it is a matter of pride to have AIDS, but at the same time, somehow it is the fault of the Christian community.

Now as we go through Genesis 1, as God creates on the conclusion of each day He says that it is 'good.' And then when all things are finished, He pronounces everything 'very good.' 'God blessed all six days, because all creation as He made it was made in relationship to himself, to serve Him, to fulfill His will and to glorify Him. A creation that God Himself said is 'very good.'

This led Calvin to say in his commentary on Genesis 1: "Man was rich before he was born." Man was rich before he was born. And man is still rich, he only has the task of reclaiming the wealth that is his in Christ. But man has renounced his wealth, because he has renounced God. He seeks to replace God with chance, but that's an impossibility! You know, Doctor Van Til, the greatest thinker of this cen-

tury, once observed that man has only two choices; God or chance. It's really no choice at all, because if all things are chance, then there is no possibility of anything having any coherence. If things are chance, time could stop, it could go backwards, we could grow younger, the whole idea is ridiculous! It is impossible, and chance, if you are logical, adds up to nothing.

When I was young Bertram Russell a British philosopher who was very, very anti-Christian, a terrible thing happened to him, by the way, one of his children, a daughter, grew up and became a missionary. That was a fate worse than death for Bertram Russell, he never talked about it. At any rate, she wasn't a very good missionary, but she was a missionary. But at one time Bertram Russell said, this was back in the late twenties when I was young, he said: "If you had a given number of monkeys and a given number of typewriters, in time, by chance, those monkey's would reproduce every work of William Shakespeare." Just by chance. Oh! Well where would the monkey's come from? And where would the typewriters come from? And what would make the typewriters work more than two minutes for the monkey's, who wouldn't know how to put paper in them? The whole idea was ridiculous. Chance produces nothing, but those, as Van Til said, are your only logical alternatives, the God of the Bible or chance, and chance is ridiculous!

But evolution seeks also to replace order and design in the universe with mindless coincidence, and that is nonsense. Order and design clearly indicate the creator, and mindless coincidence? That is impossible! It would mean the whole universe is one vast coincidence with a remarkable design that is a product of nothing.

In one homeschool trial in the state of Texas, the deputy attorney general wanted to prove that I was not a good witness after my testimony had really upset him, and he wanted to classify me as one of those silly people who takes the first chapter of Genesis literally. And so he asked me: "Do you believe in a literal six-day creation?" and I said: "Yes I do. I don't have enough faith to believe in all the miracles of evolution, trillions and quintillions of miracles; everything out of nothing, design out of chaos, life out of non-life." And I went on to cite all the things that contradict scientific belief. I said: "I don't have a mind capable of believing in so many miracles, it staggers me. It is much simpler to believe what God says." He didn't like it, and the judge, whatever he believed, held up his hand over his face because he started to laugh at the discomfort of the deputy Attorney General.

Of course it is a mindless idea. It is a silly belief, evolution is. There is nothing scientific about it! It requires trillions of miracles. Somebody asked Darwin once how he accounted for the eye, how did it evolve? What was it before it could see? After all, at every stage it was supposed to be something. And he admitted that the evolution of the eye seemed to be an impossible problem for evolution, but that didn't stop him from believing in it. You see, it does not make sense! The reason why people believe in such nonsense is because of their hatred of God: "We will not have this man to rule over us!"

Do you know that Darwin's; Origin of Species, have any of you ever tried to read it? It is a dull book! It is a stupid, illogical book! It is punishment to read it! I was a teenager when I read it, and in those days I believed that if you were a serious person you knew what the opposition was writing about, so I stuck with it and got through it, and it was terrible, and his second book was even worse, which, by the way, is one of the most racist books ever written, that is why you don't hear much about Darwin's thinking, because in it he developed with the evolution of the various races, and his racism really came out. Evolution assumes a vast potentiality out there, that existed when there was nothing, and out of this vast potentiality, which had within it the potentiality of all the universe as we know it, everything emerged. That vast, nameless potentiality that was behind the very first atom or sub-atom that suddenly appeared out of nothing, was somehow equal to God! Strange, isn't it? He did not want God, but he wanted everything God had for this nameless vague potentiality.

We live in a world where the only possibilities are those the Bible speaks of. And only the God of Scripture is real. The god of the modernists is an idea, not a reality. He offers ideals that men have summed up and say: "These are the things that are wonderful and good and true..." and so on. He can inspire, but he cannot govern because he did not create, he is an outsider if he exists at all to the universe. Only the God who is the creator can govern or necessitate or predestine, and if this vague collective noun 'nature' is the source of everything, 'nature' is going to determine. And because we are supposedly products of nature according to modern thinking we are a bundle of impulses and of ideas and of drives. In my day, we didn't have minds when we took psychology, we just studied the human drives. Well if you are only a driven creature driven by your drives; hunger sex and what not, they used to list the drives, then you are a product of some drives. There is nothing more to you than that, but if you are a creature made in the image of God then mankind has a future, and glorious one! But, at present, we are going downhill at an accelerating pace. Because the direction of modern thinking, to use Van Til's very, very important phrase, is: "Integration downward into the void." Integration downward into the void.

That's our direction. Every year we see things moving further and further in the wrong direction, simply because our statist education is evolutionary, our statist education reduces man to a bundle of drives, impulses and so on, and people go through school seeing that they are no more than an advanced ape. A few years ago, about ten years ago or so, one public school superintendent who didn't have the answer, he apparently was not a Christian, but he spoke very strongly against a book that about a quarter of a century ago was put into use in high schools from coast to coast. It was the book *The Naked Ape*, have any of you read that? Yes a few of you. *The Naked Ape*. That's man. and he said from the day it was introduced into the schools, he saw in the school where he was superintendent (or in the city where he was superintendent over the schools) a rapid deterioration in the character and conduct of the students. After all, if you are a naked ape, an ape doesn't have any morality, why should you? Why not express your nature? And so we have today the naked ape all around us, or the clothed ape.

Well, the Bible tells us we are made in the image of God, and that Jesus Christ regenerates us in that image, so that in the place of a fallen image, we have a renewed one so that we can serve and glorify God. It tells us that creation is an act, not a process. Modern theology is process-theology, it has reduced all things in the world to process. Creation is replaced with process, a slow gradual development. But life is not like that! We grow, by leaps and bounds at times, other times slowly. Sometimes the light suddenly dawns, we are born again! We grow, we rejoice in growth when before we didn't. It is not process, but it is growth. It is growth by the grace of God, it is change by his miraculous power.

I spoke earlier this morning about the idea of 'nature,' that it is a collective noun, but that idea has been breaking down. Is there a 'nature?' Is there a unity of any kind?' Late in the 1950's, the university of California system, all the universities in the state, had a new President, Clark Kerr. And Kerr, in lecturing at a major British university, talked about multiverses and multi-universities. He rejected the idea of a 'universe.' Why? Because the idea of a universe points to one God, one creator, one world. 'Uni-' means one. And to him that was a relic of biblical thinking. The Bible speaks of one universe created by God, of one Lord, one faith, one Baptism, one, one, one, a unity. And he said: "We live in a world of multiverses." We have no way of knowing that in these many multiverses all out there in space, the same rules, the same laws apply as they do in our system. This meant that everything is possible, except the biblical God and the biblical faith.

So, one of the first degrees they granted after the 'conversion,' as it were, to a multiversity where anything is possible except God because that points to a university, was a degree in magic! Everything is possible except the God of the Bible and what is in His Word. Now that's the kind of world we live in. All you have to do is turn on television and you get stuff about UFO's, space peoples who have

landed, about people who have gone out into outer space with some of these ships, it is all possible if Clark Kerr is right, and we live in a multiverse because of course there is no God, therefore there can be no universe. Every possibility except God and truth, a world in which de Sade sets the ethical tone, a world in which we can do as we please, because all things are possible. This is the world we get if we reject Genesis 1.

A world of process, and a multiverse. This is why you have to choose whom you will serve. You have to make up your mind that the Bible is exactly what it says it is the word of God, and that God did what He said He did, created all things in the space of six days, or having cut your anchor with God and His truth you are going to drift into the world of multiverses, of any kind of truth, a world in which anything goes, and a world in which men have said we are going to escape God and we are going to escape nature by the artificial life. By the artificial life, the gay lifestyle, in which nothing is true.

Have you noticed of late that the gays who were twenty years ago angry if you called them 'queers' now calling themselves the 'queer nation?' It is because they have decided: "Life must be artificial, therefore to be queer is to be against God and against nature. Wonderful! We want the artificial life-style." Turn your back on God and that is where you have to go. You have got to give these people credit! They are seeing the issues better than a lot of our Christian schools and colleges and churches. They know what the choice is, and they have chosen it.

But God, in the beginning created the heavens and the earth. Marvelous, says it all! We can rest in the fact that our creator has established an order that man cannot overturn. We can rest in the fact that he who created all things in the beginning has all things in their conclusion in mind and our place in it. We are not left in the dark. "Known unto God are all His works from the foundation of the world." We live and have our being in Him.

Well, the net result of all of this is that, because we are God's creatures we have to do His will. We have to recognize that we are not here to please ourselves. That may come as a shock to you because I hear so often people saying : "Well, I want to get something out of life before it is over for me, and this is what I want." What you should want is what God wants, and our lives here are a short span compared to eternity. On my last birthday I was eighty. Eighty years doesn't seem so long, it seems only yesterday that I was a high school and university student, it doesn't seem that long ago, and it isn't!

Eternity is forever. And what we do here and now governs our life forever and ever. We have a glorious destiny in Christ, we need to recognize that He has made us, and He has made us for His purposes. What are they? And how shall we obey Him?

ENDNOTES:

1. See, for example *The Life of Moses* by Gregory of Nyssa.
2. Starkey, David. "'Tis in Ourselves That We Are Hetero or Homo.'" *The Spectator*. November 18, 1995, 18.
3. Calvin, J., & King, J. (2010). *Commentary on the First Book of Moses Called Genesis* (Vol. 1, p. 96). Logos Bible Software.
4. Bertrand Russell. *Nightmares of Eminent Persons and Other Stories*. London: The Bodley Head, 1954, 32.
5. Luke 19:14
6. Acts 15:18

Implications of Biblical Faith, III

R.J. Rushdoony

In our first session yesterday, we talked about the fact that the God of the Bible is discontinuous with creation, that is, He is uncreated being, whereas most of the universe, well, everything other than God is created being. Biblical faith is unique in that fact, in all other religions there is one continuous being, so that at the bottom of the scale of being you have a thinness of being, and at the top you have the absolute density of being which is the center of God, but everything is a part of God. Well, as against that idea of the total continuity of all being, all being as God, the Bible says; There is one God, in three persons, totally separate, above and beyond all His creation. So that we cannot use the word 'God' to apply to anything but uncreated being.

This makes Biblical faith unique. In other religions every time you turn around you are bumping into 'God;' in the trees, in the thunder, and in the lightning, and when you look in the mirror because everything is a part of 'God.' In fact, in one country, you are always bowing to everything because that is part of 'God,' and you want to honor him. When you go to the toilet you bow to the 'benjo kami,' the spirit of the toilet, because that's a part of 'God.' But with us, we have something that is a radical discontinuity, God and creation. Creation made by God but not a part of Him, a total discontinuity.

Well, this has a revolutionary implication; we will come to that in a moment, but consider the fact of the burden upon anyone who is a part of 'God.' It sounds like a very remarkable thing that you are a part of the godhead, but it means that you live in a world of total responsibility, and total responsibility is total irresponsibility. If everything in all creation rests on your shoulders because you are a part of 'God,' you've got more of a burden that you can carry. How many of you are familiar with the name of Albert Schweitzer? Well, that's very good, quite a few of you. He was one of the most brilliant men of this century and also one of the most stupid. Albert Schweitzer was a pantheist, he believed that everything is God, now he never used those terms, he passed as a Christian and a missionary, although he was totally a humanist. I have read all his writings, and there is nothing Christian about them except the façade.

For Albert Schweitzer every man was always guilty. Why? Because you inescapably were damaging life somewhere. After all you ate, and even if you were a vegetarian, you were killing those poor plants, and you should have reverence for all of life. So this meant that you were perpetually guilty. You've seen how after a rain the worms come out of the ground which may be waterlogged and crawl onto the sidewalk. Well, Schweitzer felt that it was terrible to walk along thoughtlessly after a rain and step on some of these worms. He felt that it was his duty to stop and pick these up, and if the ground was beginning to dry, to put them over on the lawn or on the ground; reverence for life. This meant he lived and died perpetually with a sense of guilt, because he could not escape from somehow damaging life, not only when he ate, but when he walked, he might be stepping on little insects you don't see.

Of course the Jains in India carry this to the extreme. They not only are radical vegetarians, but even more than the Hindus, they are so fearful of damaging life, that they go around with a kind of veil in

front of their mouth and nose. They might breathe in a gnat, and what a terrible thing, they would kill the gnat that way!

So, the Jains have never accomplished very much. They are too busy trying to keep from killing something, and one of the ideas that you have in Hinduism that has this belief that everything is a part of God is 'karma.' 'Karma' means that because you are always guilty, you must always be working to unburden yourself of your guilt. And how do you unburden yourself of this vast mountain of guilt that is on everyone's shoulders? You try to do as little damage as possible, especially to non-human life. Which means that you have replaced animals over man. It means also that you must be reincarnated a few thousand times for some millions of years to work off the burden of guilt, your karma, until at last, bliss, you are forever dead, because life is a burden. You want to be forever dead. Mahatma Gandhi, who felt he was super-holy, said he hoped that this was his last incarnation and that he would be forever dead when he died this time. Outside of Christianity life is a burden of guilt. You carry this tremendous burden of all your sins and all the sins in some religions that you may have committed in the past. You can never get rid of it without thousands upon thousands of reincarnations.

Now Genesis 2:1-3 tells us that on the seventh day God rested from all the works that He had made. It didn't mean that He ceased being active, but He stopped the work of creation. And He ordained the seventh day that it should be a day of rest for all creatures. The Sabbath is the most radical thing in any religion anywhere in the world. No other religion has it in origin. Some have borrowed the idea, partly because the modern world requires some rest because you work hard five to six days a week. And with the pace of an industrial civilization, it becomes too much to work seven days a week. Now, in some cultures today, as in India, as of about fifteen to sixteen years ago, an evaluation of their productivity revealed that the average Hindu working ten to twelve hours a day had, in terms of American working men, a forty-five minute productivity. Well, we have an eight-hour day, five days a week, and the highest productivity in the world; we have behind us the Puritan work ethic.

But, the Soviet Union, when it was first constituted, tried to abolish the Christian Sabbath, they didn't want it, it smacked too much of the Bible. But what they found immediately was their industrial output began to collapse. Men could not work seven, eight, nine and ten days or thirty days a month running as they then required because they were going to allow no rest. Their ability declined, industrial accidents increased, and they found they were in deep trouble. So they said: "Alright but we are going to stay away from the Biblical idea of a seven-day week and the seventh day of rest. We will make it the tenth day." It still didn't work, it somehow went against the natural rhythm of the people. They finally had to return to a seven-day week, but in order to avoid anything that would look too Christian, they staggered everybody's seventh day of rest, so some people were off on Sunday, others on Monday, Tuesday, and so on through the week, so that it would be impossible for people to celebrate the Sabbath together.

They could not escape the idea of the Sabbath. Well, the Sabbath is a revolutionary thing. Very revolutionary, because what it tells men is this; the future does not depend upon you in any full or final sense. You can knock off one day a week fifty-two days a year, even more when you count the other holy days that were a part of the Hebrew, and once of the Christian, calendar. You had Thanksgiving, you had good Friday, you had other days that were once common when I was young, many days when you did not work. Now that is a tremendous loss of time from the humanistic perspective, and when you look at the Christian calendar of a couple of centuries ago it was not merely fifty-two days or fifty-five, but it was eighty to a hundred days! Holy days that required a cessation from work.

This is a revolutionary fact because what does it mean? That it does not depend upon you or me, that God will accomplish His work even if we rest one hundred days in the year, that God requires us to be faithful workmen when we work, but we are going to rest one day in seven, and that rest means liter-

ally this; you take hands off your life, you say: "it does not depend upon me." And in terms of the truly religious observance of the Sabbath, you did not do any planning on that day. You didn't say: "Well of course I am not going to work, but I am going to sit down and do some planning about the future." No, that is work! The essence of the Sabbath is rest. Worship is a secondary but very important fact. It is rest; you take hands off your life because you know that your future depends upon God more than it does upon you. And God says: "Rest, rejoice in me. Rejoice in my purpose, rejoice in the fact that you are my creature, and it is I who redeems you, who cares for you."

And what about those who cannot rest? "The wicked are like the restless sea which cannot rest, which continually dredges up mire and dirt as it stirs itself." And God says that: "It is not to be so with you. Rest in me! Take hands off your life, because it is not your planning but my plan, my predestined purpose that shall prevail."

Now for many of the ungodly, in generations past when Christianity came face-to-face first of all with cultures in other continents all over the world, these non-Christians were bewildered, because these Christians were the most wasteful people they had ever run into! Imagine all that time every week doing nothing! How did they accomplish so much then? Why were they so much ahead? Well, the Christians said: "the Sabbath is a witness." A witness to what? "Our trust in the Lord, that it is not our doing but His doing, not our planning but His plan that enables us to prevail."

The day means discontinuity, discontinuity. We break with our working week. We say: "there is no necessity for us to take everything upon our shoulders." Remember that verse in Isaiah concerning the messiah who is to come? "The Government shall be upon His shoulders." And if we try to take the government upon our shoulders, we cannot rest, and those who are not Christian find it difficult to rest, even though they have a Sabbath by law. They are restless, they cannot find peace.

However, although there is to be no continuity of work, but rather a discontinuity, there is to be a continuity of community. so that we gather together, we do not worship in isolation. We gather together to rejoice in the Lord. And one of the developments that the Reformation brought about was that the Church became more of a community, a fellowship.

Now that had its problems, as it became sometimes too narrow a fellowship, but it was a fellowship one way or another. You didn't walk in and out of the church paying no attention to other people, but you went there as one of them. Moreover, one of the remarkable things that the Reformation brought about, which people no longer appreciate, was the difference in the church building in that the church used to be open, twenty-four hours a day, seven days a week in the Medieval era. The reason was the feeling that you never knew when you might need to go and pray or confess your sins, or seek the Lord's face and presence. But what the Reformation did was to glory in the locked church, unlocked for the services, shut the other days of the week. Why? Because every man had access now directly to God! He could pray to God directly, find Him wherever he was. So the glory of the closed church was one of the glories of the Reformation.

The Sabbath, moreover, was a covenant-day, this was said from the early days of the church and especially by the Reformation. What does that mean, a 'covenant day?' Well, our faith is covenantal faith, a covenantal religion. We have two parts in the Bible, it is really one, it is all one Covenant, but one of the sad facts is that it was separated into Old and New. There are not two covenants, but a number of ratifications and continuations of one covenant. Originally with a single man, then with a people, and then with Christ with all peoples, but the same covenant of God. Now a covenant is literally a treaty, but it is a special kind of treaty. There are two kinds of covenants; one is a covenant between peoples, you could enter into a covenant, an agreement with someone sitting next to you. You would bind yourselves to be faithful until death in obeying the covenant, and you would create a number of rules

and regulations, laws that would bind your relationship one to another. A 'covenant' is a treaty of Law. However, when it is between unequals; God and man, it is between one party who makes the law, the other who receives it. And the party who makes the law, God, out of grace gives His law to the other party; that's us. So, God's covenant with us is both of law and of grace. And you cannot separate the two. He gives us His law as an act of grace, as a way to live, as a way to be free. James, in the New Testament calls it: "the perfect law of liberty," the way of freedom under God. Well, the Sabbath is a celebration of the covenant of God with man; it is a covenant-day, a covenant holy day, so that we rest because we know again it does not depend upon us, and that God out of grace has given us a law whereby we can live, be free, and serve Him.

So the Sabbath is a remarkable and eventful thing in all of history. It is first of all according to Ezekiel 20:12, 21, and in other passages a sign between God and us, that we are His people and He is our God. Then, second, it is to be kept holy, it is a time dedicated to God. A day for joy. Have you ever looked at the hymns, old hymns they are, that celebrate the Sabbath? "O Day of Joy and Gladness!" They all celebrate the Sabbath as the day of joy, because it is a mark that God is in covenant with us.

And then, third, we are told that we are to keep that Sabbath: "So shall ye know that I am the Lord." It is a way of recognizing afresh who God is, why we are to rejoice in Him, and why it is to be a day of rest and gladness. So, the hymns are right, it is a day of joy, but only if we rest in the Lord, only if we have the ability by faith to come to the Sabbath as we come to all our tasks, in the Lord. To lay our burdens down and say: "Lord, I have a lot of heartaches, I have a lot of burdens, here they are, I am letting you know what they are because you only are able to resolve them."

And then we can rest in Him, because we've laid it down. My wife, Dorothy, was once a nurse, and years ago when she was in training in Pittsburgh, one day she was at the desk working and she could hear a couple of the nurses aides talking, and the one woman had nothing but woes to report, everything that could go wrong had gone wrong, her husband was sick, her children had this or that problem, and her parents and her relatives all had problems, and all seemed to be insuperable. And the other nurse's aide commiserated and said: "With all of that what can you do? What are you doing?" And the woman said: "I just said: 'You take it Lord, it is too much for me.'" Now that's the Sabbath. You recognize your limitations, you know that these problems are too much for you, and you say: "You take it Lord, it is too much for me."

The Sabbath was made for man, our Lord tells us. It was made for man, to bless him. To provide him with peace, in a world that doesn't have much peace. It marks, as we saw earlier, a discontinuity from the everyday working world. As it were, we say time stops for us. We stop our work, we stop our fretting, we stop our worrying, our concerns about the future, and we rest in the Lord, that He has the answers, that it is His day when His Word is proclaimed and we hear and obey Him.

Now this discontinuity means that we are freed from playing God. It does not rest upon our shoulders, but upon God's. And there is a great freedom in that, we are free to be human beings. As a result, theologically, the Sabbath is a critically important fact, an essential part of our life and of our faith.

I'd like to stop now because I'd like to give you a chance for any questions you have in mind; let me say one of the worst things that can be done to the Sabbath is for people to lay down all kinds of rules, and to give children and young people the idea that: "Well, you're not really a good Christian, you are not keeping the Sabbath, unless you do this that or the other thing, and unless you don't do this that or the other thing." And that is hostile to the Sabbath faith, because it replaces it with a belief that if you do certain things you have kept the Sabbath.

I know one man who was very pharisaical about this, and he was continually condemning everyone

else in his church because they were not strict in their observance of the Sabbath. But, in some respects, his was the most profane, because he was very much given to doing nothing but listing the things that his friends and neighbors were doing they shouldn't have been doing on the Sabbath. For his part, he would spend a good deal of the Sabbath evening watching films that I don't think he should have watched on any day of the week.

ENDNOTES:

1. Isaiah 9:6
2. James 1:25

Reflections on God's Faithfulness in My Life

R.J. Rushdoony

I was asked to talk about my work, about my calling, my view of things from a perspective of eighty years. Well, the first thing I think I must say is what Tevye said in *Fiddler on the Roof*, how many of you have seen that? Yes. Do you remember when he and his wife looked at each other, at their daughter's wedding, and he said: "I don't remember growing older." Well, that's how I feel, I don't remember growing older, but I'm over eighty now. Inside I don't feel much different than at eighteen, but I know I am different. For one thing I move a lot more slowly, for another if I sit still very long, no matter what I do to prevent it, I fall asleep! Well, life for me has been, not easy, but very good. I've had my share of problems, but I've truly had my share of blessings.

One of the things that marked me very, very definitely was my family and my background. My parents escaped from the massacre of Armenians by the Turks. They were in the great death march, from Armenia into the Russian-held territories. The Russian general who was a friend of my father's gave my father two horses that were slightly lame, and which he could legitimately write off, this was in the days when there still was a cavalry, and my grandmother, my mother, my aunt, and my young aunt and uncle who were about four and six at the time, were alternately placed on the horse. The Turkish cavalry was striking constantly, a great many dying, the rivers and streams clogged with human bodies. By the time they crossed the last river into Russian territory, the soles were gone from their shoes. They were walking on their bare feet which were bloody and sore. My parents had left within hours after they buried their first born son, whose name was Rousas George. I was conceived in that long trek which began in Armenia, and ended not long after they ended in New York City where I was born.

Before I was born, they had dedicated me to the Lord's service, so from my earliest days I knew that this was why I was alive. They had prayed that I live and serve God. This has an effect on a child, to know that he is alive for a particular purpose. As soon as I learned how to read, I began reading. In fact, I became an omnivorous reader. If I got a reader in school I went home and didn't put it down until I had read it from one end to the other. Before long, my parents would keep a watch on me, because, well, in the early days on the farm it was horse and buggy days and kerosene lamp days. But after we moved into the city I would open my door; well first I would shut the door and turn on the lights and read, and when they would catch me reading late at night they'd finally resorted to taking out the light bulb, and then I would open the hall door a crack and hold the book like that, to go on reading.

The thing that I found the most exciting to read was the Bible, I never wearied of it. It is the most exciting book in the world. I don't think there is a story for example, as moving and as powerful as the story of Joseph. I still shed tears when I re-read it, as I did just the other day for the umpteenth time. I don't see how people can forget to read their Bible, there isn't a more interesting book that you can read, and I read a lot of books. I read, mark and index approximately two hundred and fifty, two hundred and seventy books a year, then I read in another four to five hundred. That's what I am doing, that's my calling. I am serving God by studying and writing and applying the word of God to every area of life

and thought. So reading the Bible has been very important to me, and a very great privilege.

I am not up to my father there, he had an old country education, which meant that it was highly disciplined. It used to amaze me how his classmates from the old country, men who were farmers, who had not gone beyond grade school, had so much knowledge and such remarkable memories. And when my father in his seventies realized that he was going blind, he memorized all the Gospels and most of the Pauline Epistles. He also memorized the Psalms and a great many passages from the Prophets. It was no problem for him to do that, in fact, his memory was so good that when my two oldest girls, Rebecca and Joanna, spent one winter with their grandfather and grandmother back on the farm and one of the girls was Rachel's mother, their grandfather could help them with their algebra. I'd forgotten my algebra and geometry two years out of high school, but his type of old-fashioned, strict education had given him a phenomenal memory. He could tell you the name of every text book and author all the way through grade school and high school and college into graduate school, no problem! I might if I worked at it remember 2-3 from my college and graduate school years, but that is about the limit.

I think, step by step Christian schools will put us back into that type of schooling, as a matter of fact when I was young a high school, well not a high school, a grade school education, 'grammar school' as they used to call it, grades k through eight, was almost equivalent to a bachelor's degree at a good old fashioned college today. Your learning was that solid. That is why someone like Abraham Lincoln who went to school only three years, and the school terms were about six weeks each, was so literate. I have in my library a reader from the fourth grade in the 1840's, and the reading is more advanced than in college texts today. Our education has just gone downhill. Well, the Christian schools are going to bring it back uphill. This is why, by the way, in the old days, the first half of the last century, you went from grade school to Harvard or Yale or whatever school you chose, because you were ready for it. At best, you would take a summer session before going in which you mastered Greek, Latin, and Hebrew. Then you were ready for the University. You had mastered those before you went.

Well, I knew what my calling was. I also came to realize as a result of my studies that the world was moving away from a Christian faith. I never dreamt that it was going to be as bad as things are now, but back in the twenties and thirties, murders were rare. You hear about the Capone days in Chicago, the lawless era, supposedly. Do you know that there are far, far more murders in Chicago in a month, sometimes in a week, than in a year under the Capone era, that's how bad it is! In those days you didn't bother to lock your door, theft was uncommon, if there was a rape in one end of the country you read about it at the other end of the country, it was sensational and horrible news. It was still a somewhat Christian culture and law-abiding. Well, that was because people still saw themselves; whether they were believers or not as somehow God's creation. That made a difference. Can you look at a film or something on television today, and tell yourself: "These people are made in the image of God?" No! The author doesn't even remotely have that in mind as he writes the story. They're Darwin's 'higher apes!'

So there is a different view of people. There was a great deal more respect. I know that we were better behaved because if we didn't, we got smacked, and no ifs and buts about it. I recall once that we had some guests, I think they were with us for the summer, it was this widow and her son, Willy. I detested Willy! And Willy once got into my stamp collection and took some that he wanted, I found out about it just as I was about to go to the dinner table, so I confronted him with it when I went to the table and I said: "Willy you stole my stamps." And my father immediately had me out of the dining room, and into the barn, where he said: "You stay here with the cows until you are ready to behave like a civilized person." And I said: "but he stole my stamps." And he said: "that was not the way to go about correcting the situation." So he said: "stay out here until you are ready to behave like a man instead of an animal." Well, after a while I thought better and went in and told Willy I was sorry I had spoken to him

like that in front of everyone.

That was not unusual, you were required to treat everybody with respect. And if they did something wrong you did not do anything to upset anyone else, in this case his widowed mother. And of course any time we were in a room and an elderly person came in, we kids all had to stand up and we were not to be seated until he or she sat down. How many of you have had that kind of training? Yes! Yes, good, good, wonderful! It was a different kind of world and it is one we are going to have to get back to, and I believe the Christian and homeschool movements are moving us back to that kind of a Christian and civilized culture.

It was easy to see that the world was moving in the wrong direction, especially when I went to the university, and there the faculty, since the students were a long way from home, was much more open about its anti-Christian character. But the Christian ethos still governed. Now we were much more relaxed in California in many ways including our dress code, and most of the people in the United States are now Californians in that respect. But I recall when a new student, a graduate student, came from Harvard and we were taking a walk and discussing some things, and there was a man washing his car with a hose and he had on shorts but no T-shirt. And this graduate student from Harvard, who was not a Christian, was a thoroughly modern pagan person, still stopped in shock. And I said: "Let's go." And he said: "No, I want to wait and see the police arrive and arrest the man." and I said: "For what?" and he said: "why back at Cambridge, Harvard, anyone there or anyone in Massachusetts who was so casual would be arrested." And I said: "Well, this is California." But that tells you what things were like. Those were the days of all the demonstrations, the huge Marxist campus movement, and yet even the Marxists on campus were behaving like good Sunday school kids, because that was the background.

After the war, things began to change very rapidly, and by the 1960's they began to gallop. Most people living in the world today have been born since 1950. If you go back to 1940, the overwhelming majority of the world was not born. So most people who are alive today don't know what it was like in those days. They don't know how much freedom there was, or the fact that only millionaires paid an income tax before World War II, only millionaires. And the property tax was so low, that it was practically nothing. In California farmers paid \$5 and \$10 in property tax for a family-sized farm. After the war, it started to skyrocket, now it is in the thousands, so that if they have a bad year they have to turn to their savings to pay their property tax. I can remember, too, when a great deal of charity was still Christian, not as much so as it was say, in the early years of the last century, but there were a lot of institutions, services, run by Christians.

One of the most remarkable in California was Captain Dollar's Home for Boys, which was an orphanage. They quietly passed laws which ended all such institutions during World War II. But Captain Dollar's Homes for Boys had dormitories, sixty to a dormitory, with one Christian couple as mom and pop to all the boys in their dormitory. There was never a one of Captain Dollar's boys who went wrong. Captain Dollar himself was an old steamship captain who built up a major line, which has since been sold out, but it used to be the major steamship line in the pacific. He was an old, white haired, white bearded man, when the boy's finished the eighth grade they were put on a bus with their bags, taken over to San Francisco from San Anselmo, they would line up to shake hands with old Captain Dollar, who handed each of them a silver dollar, then he prayed over all the boys and sent them out into the world, telling them to be good God-fearing men and women who would serve the Lord in one way or another. There was never a boy out of Captain Dollars homes who ever went astray, not a one, and they were all proud to be called one of Captain Dollar;s boys.

On one occasion there was a little accident or something, I don't remember the details, and a police officer arrived and I was a witness, I put down my name and address for him, and he said: "Oh you're a minister aren't you?" and I said: "yes." And he said: "Well, I am one of Captain Dollar's boys." be-

cause it was a Presbyterian ministry, that is, Captain Dollar was a Presbyterian, and he conducted it on good, Reformed lines. He was proud to declare that he was, and he told me how it was the lasting influence in his life.

So it's a different world today. You see, every generation you have to convert people, all over again. Because none of us are born and are naturally good. We are born sinners, we need salvation, and if the church falls down on its task of bringing Christ to the younger generation, then you have a world of barbarians. And when you strip education of Christ, what are the schools but schools for barbarians? And we live in a barbarian society.

Well, this concerned me very much because I could see the direction we were taking as a people as a society. I felt it was only going back to what we once affirmed; namely the whole word of God, the law as the way of sanctification, Christ as our salvation. But, the church was turning its back on that sort of thing. I was really rebuked more than once by prominent pastors for talking about God's law. That was somehow a forbidden subject, which baffled me, it was a part of the Bible, I didn't see anything in the Bible that told me that the law is dead, it did say that we are dead to the law in Christ as the handwriting of ordinances against us, in other words as a bill of indictment sentencing us to death. We are dead to it because we have died in Christ, we are alive to it now as our Lord's way of life for us.

Well I waited until I was fifty before I began to write about the law, and the hostility to it had not lessened. So, the hostility has been there right along. But: "friendship with the world is enmity with God." I learned this very early, that if my intentions were to please the world, I had better stop calling myself a Christian, that there were too many who were doing that, and they would receive the greater judgment. After all we are told very plainly: "Judgment begins at the house of God." That's a scary statement! Think of it, God says: "You are doing what you do in my name and you are doing wrong. Therefore my judgment will strike you first and then the world. So it is important that we be unequivocal, faithful, hardworking, in what we do. We are not here to please ourselves. That was one of the first things my father taught me, and coming as he did from a long, long line of pastors, and with a tremendous love of the church, he still told me: "You will find nothing in this world more deserving of your love than the church of Jesus Christ, and more horrible because of what it does in the name of Christ, than the church." And he has been right on both counts. The most beautiful experiences in my life are connected with the church, and the most horrible ones as well, because when the church goes astray it is a very, very tragic and ugly fact.

Well, I've been working at this all my adult life, to serve the Lord. I felt that if what I had to say was going to be worthwhile it had to be understood by the scholars and by the ordinary person, or the person with limitations on his abilities to understand what you are saying. I began my work in the thirties in San Francisco's Chinatown as a youth worker. That in itself was quite an experience, and I don't have time to go into it, but it was good training. Let me make this one observation, because the Chinese have the most ancient, pragmatic culture in all the world. The idea of an absolute and universally true thing is unknown to them. For them it is the yang and yin, propriety, what fits at this time, what is practical and expedient. And so for them it was easy to become, in China, rice Christians, and the equivalent here in this country.

To give you a moment's illustration, I was once able to interest a very brilliant young man, he was my age, he was a UC graduate in one of the sciences, I forget which, he had a responsible job as well as an advanced degree, and he started coming to the services. Morning and evening worship, helping out at the midweek worship, helping out with the youth work, he was as eager and helpful as anyone could be, it was like having a second youth pastor there. Then one Sunday, Raymond, which was his American name, was not there. I was able in about a week and a half to locate him, and I said: "Raymond we've missed you, why aren't you there?" and he was happy to see me, and he said:

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‘Well, I no longer have a need, Christ met a need in my life for a while, and now I’ve grown beyond that need.’ But he said: “you will see,” and he rattled off a number of names, so and so, and so and so, college-age or post college-age persons: “at your meetings very soon, because I told them how much Christianity meant to me, at a bad phase in my life and that it could be a great help for them.” In other words, it was like a medicine or a drug that you need for a while, and then you don’t need it any longer. That was the problem with Chinese civilization, and that is perhaps why God has put it through the horrors of Marxism, to shatter that pragmatic and relativistic view. From there I went to an isolated Indian reservation in North Eastern Nevada, a hundred miles from any bus or train line or any town, well there was a little mining camp up on the edge of the reservation, and I spent eight and a half years there, because I felt it was important to learn how to make the faith relevant to people who were at the very very bottom of the scale in American society.

It was again a valuable education, a hard one, but a valuable one. I was involved in all kinds of activities apart from the work of the mission, the nearby mining camp was full of people exploiting the Indians. I did my best to uncover some of that, it did lead to a grand jury investigation and an indictment against the constable there in the mining camp, but nothing came of it. No people can be helped if they don’t have the capacity to grow spiritually. And you get that only through Christ. Outside of that, you go downhill. And I have seen peoples go downhill. When I was growing up there was a great deal of prejudice and bigotry against blacks, but they were also a very different people. In fact, in those days, if I walked into a post office and there were five clerks, I would get in line for the one black clerk, and others would too, because we knew he would be the best man there, and the most efficient. Why? because it was harder for him to get that job than anyone else, and you knew that he was going to perform a lot better and with pride.

There were handicaps for many peoples then. In fact, I was among one of the people’s handicapped, we were immigrants, we’d come into an area and we were resented. So I can remember stones coming through a window, things like that. The world’s always had that sort of thing. The real problem is how do you take it, what do you do about it. If you feel sorry for yourself, you are finished. But if you say that you are a child of God, a child of the king, and you bear that in mind, it makes all the difference in the world. On more than one occasion, including in the past two to three years, when I’ve had to deal with someone who has been going through hell on earth to the point of where they are near collapse; mentally and physically, I sit them down and say: “Now, whose opinion do you value most? That of these people who are working to destroy you for their own purposes? Are you going to see yourself as they see you or as the Lord does? Are you a son or are you a daughter of the king? Now you make up your mind, because it is going to determine how you are going to come through this. If you start feeling sorry for yourself because of what is happening, don’t waste my time. You are finished! But if you see yourself as a son or daughter of the king, then you are going to come out ahead.”

I’d like perhaps to dwell on that point a little longer in case there are any of you who have a terrible problem or maybe in the next few years you will encounter such a situation. Back in the 1950’s I knew two sisters, very attractive teenagers. Their father was a very important man, at least at that time very important, his wife was about fifteen years younger than he and a very attractive woman, and his chauffeur and his wife were having an affair. And he didn’t have the nerve to fire the chauffeur, because his wife said: “I’ll leave you if you do.” And he was a proud man and proud to have that very beautiful younger woman on his arm. Well the chauffeur was emboldened by that, and sexually molested both the girls. Nothing happened until the girls in desperation themselves went to the police, and then both their parents were furious, because it had exposed the situation. The last I heard, about twenty years after that, the one girl was in a mental institution, because she absolutely would not give up feeling sorry for herself. But the other girl, when I met her about twenty years later, was one of the most happy, the most radiant young mothers I had ever encountered. She showed me her two children, one in arms, and one by her side, beautiful children, and she was radiantly happy. Why?

Because she never forgot that God governs, not people, and if you are a daughter of the king, you will come out ahead. God will take care of you. So, that's a little bit of pastoral counseling. We have to recognize that we live and move and have our being in the Lord, and our God knows us, the very hairs of our head. That we are not here for what we can do and enjoy in this world, but for all eternity, and this life is a school for eternity, and therefore we live in terms of that world. It is a very real world, a very wonderful world, a perfect world. It's God's place for us. "In my Father's house are many mansions, if it were not so I would have told you, I go to prepare a place for you..." our Lord says. So, we have a glorious destiny in Christ. It's a marvelous one, and it should make us joyful.

This tempts me, and I'm giving in to the temptation, to tell you another story out of my pastoral experience. On the reservation this one cold night, these two Indian girls walked in. The one in particular whose name was Elizabeth was the most unlikely person ever to see in church, so I figured it must be awfully cold out there, and that was why they walked into the church. Well, Elizabeth was as wild and heedless as they come, she was one wild girl. It was hard to be angry with Elizabeth, because there was so much joy and bounce in her. She came in, with her friend, sat in the second row, the service was already underway, I had just started to preach, and she listened quite intently. When the service was over and I went to the door she hung back, and asked me a question. I don't remember what the question was, and I answered it, and she thought for a moment and said: "Yes, you are right. That has to be true." And then she said: "I'll be back next Sunday."

Well, Elizabeth was a very flighty and thoughtless kind of person, and I thought: "She means it now, but will she in a week from now?" But, to my amazement, she was there. And she was there faithfully week after week, very eager to hear, asking questions afterwards, and then one Sunday, no Elizabeth. And I thought: 'Uh oh, she's slipped back to her old ways.' So I tried looking her up and I learned that she was in the Indian Hospital, and I went there to see her. She greeted me very matter of factly, and she said: "Rush, the Doctor tells me that I've had syphilis for some time, and it has turned into paresis. It's settled in my brain. I'm going to die, and I'm going to be out of my mind before this is over." But she said: "I want you to know that I know that Jesus Christ is my Lord and savior and I'll never forget it. But the time is coming before very, very long the doctor says, before I won't even be able to talk, and then I will be unconscious. Could you find and give me a little cross, so that I can always look at it and think and remember what Jesus did for me?" So we had some little crosses that glowed in the dark that we were using at Daily Vacation Bible School that last summer, and I gave her one.

Visited her every day, and then I was gone on a trip, came back, she was no longer at the hospital, she was dying, and would be dead within a day or two, the doctor said. So I went out, saw her at her home, and she had been in a coma for some time. So I know that people even in comas can hear and recognize your voice, so I repeated one verse for her, and prayed, and when I was through praying because she had recognized my voice her eyes were open and she was smiling at me, and with her head she motioned to the corner of the bed to her mother, and that was where the cross was hanging. And the mother held it in front of her, and she reached up with her head and kissed the cross, and then because she could not speak, she turned and smiled at me to let me know that she was still strong in the faith. And she slipped back into her coma, and was dead a little later. She knew she was a daughter of the king, and she knew that she had a better life, and everything in this world, even her own sins had helped prepare her for the Lord, for we know that: "all things work together for good, to them that are of Christ." And they do, thank you.

ENDNOTES:

1. James 4:4
2. 1 Peter 4:17

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