

CHRIST AND THE PROBLEM OF PRIVATE OWNERSHIP OF PROPERTY IN THE PRESENT-DAY WORLD

by

Dr. James D. Bales

(From The 1951 Harding College Lectures, “Christ and Present Day Problems”)

Part of the

Jimmie Beller Memorial eLibrary

www.TheCobbSix.com

The scope of my topic is being enlarged somewhat so as to include the problem of whether or not the free enterprise system is in harmony with scriptural principles. For if it is not right to own property, and thus to dispose of it according to one’s own judgment, the free enterprise system is impossible. If there is the right of the private ownership of property the free enterprise system naturally follows.

It is maintained by some religious leaders that private property and the free enterprise system are utterly out of harmony with the Scriptures. They maintain that the land and the tools of production ought to be controlled and operated by the government for the good of all the people. Instead of the predominant emphasis or force in production and distribution having its origin with the individual, they believe that it ought to come from the State. Instead of the individual having the freedom to work where he can

and chooses, to own property, and to buy and sell as he sees fit, they believe that all ought to be under the centralized control and oversight of the government.

The individuals who maintain that we ought to have such a “planned society” do not deal with two very fundamental problems which, since their system will not solve the problems but aggravate them, will wreck their system and hurt the very people whom they want to help. First, they do not show how that the transfer of power from the hands of the many to the hands of the few will work such an intellectual revolution in the few that they will have sufficient intelligence and information to rightly administer all things for the good of all.

Second, the mere transfer of property and means of production from the control of the many to the control of the few will not work a moral revolution in the few so that they will not exploit the people. It is not shown why that a few men, who will have no competitors and against whose decision there is no appeal, will work more for the good of the community than the system wherein the means of production are owned by many men, and against whose decisions, when unjust, there is a court of appeal today.

The purpose of this speech is not to defend all that every individual in our system has done. I do not defend all that some have professed to do in the name of Christ, for there are some who have not understood and there are some who have not cared.

My purpose is not to maintain that Christianity cannot exist under any system other than the system of private enterprise. The Christian faith was born when a dictator was in power. It was persecuted at other times and places. It is my conviction, however, that our system of private enterprise has provided the best possible environment for its *free* proclamation, and the greatest measure of *freedom* for its adherents.

In speaking of this system, which involves what is commonly called capitalism, we do not have in mind just a few big business men. Also included are the millions of farmers who in many cases own their land which, along with their tools, is their means of production; millions of small businesses, home owners, those who own stock, those who draw interest on money in banks.

Dr. George S. Benson, president of Harding College, has well observed that industry should not be classified as representing the

rich, because: (1) Its ownership is broad. Many individuals, who are not wealthy, often hold stock in it. (2) There are industries which are in debt. (3) The net capital from the industry is not hidden somewhere, but is often put back into the business itself and thus helps in producing more goods for more people.

Christianity does not present a blueprint for an economic and political system. It is world-wide in its nature, and it calls on men to return to God through Christ regardless of the system under which they live. But this does not mean that a system which embodies one set of principles is not more in harmony with its nature and influence than a system which embodies an entirely different set of principles. My purpose is to show, in the words of Dr. Clarence Bouma, that “The economic system of free enterprise, far from being anti-Christian, is more in harmony with the high ethical demands of the Christian religion than any collectivistic alternative, whether it be Socialism or Communism.”¹

As Dr. Bouma pointed out:

We believe this claim can be substantiated along three distinct lines of thought, viz., first, with a view to the right of private property; secondly, with a view to the protection of human personality; and thirdly, with a view to the preservation of liberty.

Stated differently, every collectivistic system is an attack upon (1) the right of private property, (2) the sacredness of personality, and (3) the enjoyment of true liberty.²

Private property is recognized in the Old Testament. Abraham bought ground in which to bury Sarah (Gen. 23:16-18). Jacob worked for Laban for wages. Although it is true that he had some difficulties with Laban (Gen. 31: 6-7), it was not due to the system itself. Could it have been due to the fact that Laban was twice Jacob’s father-in-law! The right of the ownership of property was so sacred that even a king did not have the right to force an individual to sell a vineyard to him. Ahab, the king, and his wife

¹ Bouma, “Is Free Enterprise Anti-Christian?” *The Calvin Forum*. Jan. 1951, p. 113

² *Ibid.*

Jezebel were punished for obtaining the property by foul means, when Naboth the owner refused to sell (I Kings 21).

When God gave Israel the Promised Land, he did not set up a socialistic or communistic state, but one in which private ownership of property—flocks and lands which were their principal means of production—were strictly guarded. One was not to covet his neighbor's house and flocks, or anything that was his neighbor's. This is included in the passage which stated that he was not to covet his neighbor's wife (Exodus 20:17). "Thou shalt not steal" (Exodus 20:15) implies that ownership of property is not wrong. As J.P. Flowers said: "If theft be wrong, then the institution of property must be right."³

The right of private property is likewise upheld in the New Testament. "Thou shalt not steal" is repeated in the New Testament (Matthew 19:18; Romans 13:9). The right to own property, and sell it, is clearly stated in Acts 5:4. In speaking of some land, the apostle Peter said, "While it remained, was it not *thine own*? and after it was *sold*, was it not in thine own power?" (Acts 5:4). Ananias, to whom Peter was speaking, was punished by the Lord, but it was for the sin of hypocrisy and not for owning or selling property.

Does the case of the rich young ruler show that it is wrong to have possessions, even great possessions? If not, why did Christ tell him to "sell all that thou hast, and distribute unto the poor," and "follow me?" (Lk. 18:22-23). These instructions were not given to any other individual. The rich (in I Tim. 6:17-19) were not told to sell all that they had, but to use money for the good of mankind. Jesus knew, however, that covetousness was keeping this rich young ruler from heaven. The account given in Mark indicates that this young man was trusting in his riches. "And Jesus looked round about, and said unto his disciples, 'How hardly shall they that have riches enter into the kingdom of God.' And the disciples were astonished at his words. But Jesus answered again, and saith unto them, 'Children, how hard it is for *them that trust in riches* to enter into the kingdom of God'" (Mk. 10: 23-25). There are, of course, those who are not rich but who trust in riches; but in either case one cannot enter the kingdom of God through trusting in

³ Quoted by Bouma, *op. cit.*, p. 114.

riches.

Jesus did not tell the young ruler to turn all of his property over to the state, or put it in some common fund. The property was *his*, as is clear from the fact that Jesus told him to *sell* it, and to distribute it to the poor. As Bouma said:

When he is told to sell all that he had and give to the poor, he is charged to do so not because that was the only economy which our Lord approved, but because this was in his particular case the only radical cure for the evil of having set his heart upon riches.⁴

It is to be doubted that the Socialist government in England in eliminating the wealth of the rich, is doing so that it may be easier for those men to enter the kingdom of God! *In fact, their leaders have shown too much trust in Uncle Sam's riches!*

To meet a special need at Jerusalem, disciples "sold their possessions and goods, and parted them to all men, as every man had need" (Acts 2:45). Why was there a special need at that time? Multitudes had come to Jerusalem for a certain Old Testament feast, had been converted to the Christian faith, and had remained in Jerusalem for at least a period of time. They were in need, and Christian love led those who *had* to share with those who *had not*.

It was not compulsory. Love, not *coercion*, was the motivating factor. *It was voluntary*. The right of private property is expressly declared in connection with this sharing. This right included the right to sell and to keep the proceeds. "While it remained, was it not thine own? and after it was sold, was it not in thine own power?" (Acts 5:4).

It was an affair of the church, and not an order of the government. No one was disfellowshipped, much less killed or his property confiscated, for not selling what he had. It was not an effort to place all on the same financial level. It was for a daily meeting of the needs of various individuals. It was "as every man had need" (Acts 2:45); and daily administered ("daily ministration," Acts 6:1).

There is no evidence that this was a fixed custom in Jerusalem

⁴ Bouma, *op. cit.*, p. 115.

or that it long continued. Churches outside of Jerusalem did not practice it, Dorcas did relief work as an individual, and this would have been impossible if all was put in a common fund (Acts 9:36-39). The instructions to the churches of Galatia and Corinth show that the individuals had the control over their own property and profits. They were told to give on the first day of the week as they had been prospered: as they had purposed in their hearts; cheerfully, and not of necessity (I Cor. 16:1ff; II Cor. 9:1-7). Acts 11:29 shows that the disciples in Antioch had their own goods; that all were not on the same economic level. "Then the disciples, every man according to his ability, determined to send relief unto the brethren which dwelt in Judea" (Acts 11:29).

If everyone sold all that he had when he became a Christian, we would all be on relief soon; but the church would not have means to continue to meet our needs. Welfare, as Mr. High has pointed out, is not a system but the results of a system. Individuals have to have and use means of production to make a profit in order to be able to give to the work of the church.

Certainly we are not against Christians sharing when there is need, but there is no justification (from Acts 2) for an economic system such as Socialism or Communism. These systems are not like Christianity in purpose or in the means which they use to accomplish their purpose.

The duty of working, and the right to profit from one's labors, is clearly taught in the New Testament. Wages, of course, are a form of private property. And labor, one should not forget, may be done with the brain as well as with the brawn. The Scriptures teach that one should work, not only to help himself and his kindred, but also to help those who are in need. The private enterprise system encourages men to work more than a collectivistic system does, and thus is more in harmony with the demands of Christian faith concerning working.

The apostle Paul wrote: "Let him that stole steal no more, but rather let him labor, working with his hands the thing which is good, that he may *have* to give to him that needeth" (Eph. 4:28). The principle of helping the needy surely can and should be extended to include working so as to provide the needy with means of helping themselves, through providing jobs for them.

Again Paul wrote: "But if any provide not for his own, and

specially for those of his house (kindred, margin), he hath denied the faith, and is worse than an infidel” (I Tim. 5:8). This included, as the context shows, provision for the aged of one’s family (I Tim. 5:4).

Paul was a tentmaker by trade (Acts 18:1-3), and he sometimes labored not only to support himself, but to support others also. “I have coveted no man’s silver, or gold, or apparel. Yea, ye yourselves know, that these hands have ministered unto my necessities, and to them that were with me” (Acts 20:33-34).

The fact that the needy were to be helped did not mean that parasites were to be supported by the church. To the Thessalonians Paul wrote: “For even when we were with yon, this we commanded you, that if any would not work, neither should he eat. For we hear that there are some which walk among you disorderly, working not at all, but are busybodies. Now them that are such we command and exhort by our Lord Jesus Christ, that with quietness they work, and eat their own bread” (II Thes. 3:10-12). This was such an important matter that Paul said that “if any man obey not our word by this epistle, note that man, and have no company with him, that he may be ashamed. Yet count him not as an enemy, but admonish him as a brother” (II Thess. 3:14-15).

It is my conviction, and I find it borne out by history, that the system of private enterprise does encourage men to be willing to work, *more so than does any other system*. It gives less encouragement to those who would be parasites. And thus it is more in harmony with the spirit of the above passage, than any system which does not encourage work, and which may even encourage waste as some have done even in our own country.

John Smith, in writing of the experiment at Jamestown wherein individuals had a common storehouse, recognized that it encouraged idleness.

When our people were fed out of the common store, and labored jointly together, glad was he [who] could slip from his labour, or slumber over his task, he cared not how, nay the most honest among them would hardly take so much true pains in a week, as now for themselves they will do in a day; neither cared them for the increase, presuming

that however the harvest prospered the general store must maintain them so that they will reap not so much corn from the labors of thirty as now three or four do provide for themselves.

Responsibility to use rightly what one has, as well as the right to own property, is set forth in the Scriptures. The abuse of wealth is condemned, and the proper use of it is commanded.

There is condemnation of the wanton, oppressive rich (James 5:1-6). That James speaks of the unjust, oppressive rich is shown from verses 4 and 6. "Behold, the hire of the laborers who have reaped down your fields, which is of you kept back by fraud, crieth: and the cries of them which have reaped are entered into the ears of the Lord of Sabaoth (host)." "Ye have condemned and killed the just; and he doth not resist you."

This passage does not say that it is wrong for one man to employ another man, It does not say that it is wrong to work for wages. But it does teach that the employer should not deal with the employee on the basis of injustice and fraud.

That it was the *abuse* of wealth which is condemned, is shown from the fact that the wealthy were not told that it was wrong for them to possess the wealth. They were told to properly use it. The stewardship attitude is inculcated. "Charge them that are rich in this world, that they be not high-minded, nor trust in uncertain riches, but in the living God, who giveth us richly all things to enjoy; that they do good, that they be rich in good works, ready to distribute, willing to communicate; laying up in store for themselves a good foundation against the time to come, that they may lay hold on eternal life" (I Tim. 6:17-19).

The apostle James also presented a situation in which some boasted of their plans to buy and sell, and get gain. In dealing with a business situation, which very distinctly embodied the profit motive, he did not criticize it. The only thing which he criticized was their boastful attitude which left God out, and which presumed that their own future was so completely in their own hands that they could guarantee at least a year of life to themselves. "Go to now, ye that say, Today or tomorrow we will go into such a city, and continue there a year, and buy and sell, and get gain: whereas ye know not what shall be on the morrow. For what is your life? It

is even a vapor, that appeareth for a little time, and then vanisheth away. For that ye ought to say, If the Lord will, we shall live, and do this, or that. But now ye rejoyce in your boastings: all such rejoicing is evil” (James 4:13-16).

These men were presumptuous. “The word for ‘boastings’ is the same as that translated ‘the pride of life’ in John 2:16—i.e., it’s braggart boastfulness, not the innocent gladness of living.”⁵ It is important to notice that in a passage in which business, and the making of profit, were under consideration there was no word of rebuke for the making of profit, but only for the presumptuous attitude which left God out.

The system of private enterprise, as Bouma pointed out, is more in harmony with Christian teaching than any collectivistic system, since collectivism leads to the disregard of the sacredness of human personality. Collectivism does “not consider society as made up of persons, with individual rights, abilities, and possibilities . . . (they are a) mere part of a larger whole, (they are) as a cog in a wheel.” “In a collectivist system, the system is the thing—not the men who constitute the system.” This is an inherent part of collectivism, and history confirms the fact that collectivism regards individuals as tools of the State, rather than as persons who have rights with which the State should not interfere. The more a State moves toward collectivism the less it regards the individual. And yet if the man as an individual is of no value, mankind is of no value for there is no “collective man.” Individuals alone exist.

God has made sacred the individual. Thus we would expect Him to show His greatest approval to the system which gives the most emphasis to the *dignity* and *value* of the *individual*.

In “the preservation and enjoyment of true liberty” the system of private enterprise is more in harmony with Christian teaching than is any collectivistic system.⁶ In every effort toward collectivism, the more collectivism is actually accomplished the less freedom the individual possesses. Regarding the individual as a cog within the machine, the important thing is not that the individual has liberty but that he perform his assigned task. *His*

⁵ Charles J. Ellicott, *A New Testament Commentary for English Readers*, Vol. III, p. 374.

⁶ Bouma, *op. cit.*, p. 118.

welfare is not really taken into consideration. He must work for the community, which in a collectivistic system really means *for the benefit of those who are in control*.

If it is a danger to concentrate all economic power in the hands of a few corporation “monopolists,” how much more so is it dangerous to put all economic and political power in the hands of a few political figures!

Christianity emphasizes freedom of choice. Its invitation is that whosoever will may come (Rev. 22:17). Its invitation is not: We shall *force* you to come whether you will or not. Its spirit, therefore, is not in harmony with a *coercive* system, but with the system which allows the individual the fullest measure of freedom.

Let us illustrate how that under our private enterprise system Christianity itself enjoys more freedom. The Scriptures teach love for truth, and that *truth makes men free* (John 8:31-32). Primary reference is here made to Christ’s word of truth, but the good and honest heart, which a Christian is to have, is open to truth from any realm. The Christian is also interested in the spread of truth. By its nature Christianity is missionary minded. Private enterprise gives Christians the greatest opportunity for the spread of truth. Where there are many individuals engaged in private enterprise—say printing, for example—there is more opportunity for the spread of truth than when all printing is controlled by one group. Radio, as a means of spreading religious teaching, is freer under private enterprise than under governmental ownership. In England, for example, it is my understanding that time for religious programs cannot be purchased by various religious groups. Religious programs are presented, but what is presented is controlled by whatever group the government has appointed to look after such matters. Of course, where there is opportunity to buy radio time some undesirable things may get on. A religious program may ask you to send them a dollar, but you can tune them out, and you do not have to send the dollar. But if the government controls the radio, and decides what religious programs are to be carried, your tax money supports it whether you like it or not.

If the State owns all, it means that even church property is subject to the will, and even whims, of those who are in office. It is easy to see how the right to assemble could be interfered with through depriving a church of a place of assembly.

The sacredness of human personality, and the right of the individual to hear and spread truth, is more and more taken away as Socialism, with its high degree of controls, grows. Sometimes this interference with freedom may be gradual, but it is deadly none the less.

In answering questions which may be raised concerning Christianity and free enterprise, it is necessary to bear in mind at least three important considerations. *First*, will a change in the system eliminate evils which are in our country, or only accentuate these evils, and bring in other evils? Is the evil in the system itself or can the system be more and more perfected?

Second, the shortcomings and sins of the individual must not be overlooked. Our system will never work perfectly because human beings are not perfect. Yet the free enterprise system does not allow to imperfect man the absolute control over the lives of others that is found in a system which is completely collectivized.

Third, it is the *systems* which we are talking about. And the free enterprise system both in theory and in practice is superior to all others in the freedom, opportunity, and goods which it offers to the individuals, and to the largest number of individuals. What individual among us, for example, would want to trade place with the business men, college professors, or working men in even the best socialistic country in the world?

Whatever may be the point under consideration, it ought to be clear that the free enterprise system is the best, since it gives the fullest measure of freedom to the largest number of people, and has the most effective system of checks and balances.

Questions such as the following are sometimes asked:

(1) Why are some ministers critical of the free enterprise system, and why do they think that socialism is preferable?

In some cases at least it is due to uninformed idealism. Some of them have dealt with the poor, and have not had any contact with industry. Some have generalized on a few cases, and have acted from their emotions rather than from emotions guided by knowledge. They assume that the evils cannot be dealt with within the framework of the system itself, and they turn to a system which

in reality would harm the very people whom they want to help. These ministers lack the knowledge as to how people would fare under socialism. They fail to realize that it would not correct defects in our society. Instead it would accentuate these defects as well as introduce other evils.

These ministers seem to overlook how much private property is owned by churches. They also fail to realize that the Bible teaching on giving is based on the idea of the individual's right to dispose of his property and money as he sees fit. This includes giving to the work of the church. Socialism more and more cripples the power of the individual to give.

(2) *Is interest wrong?*

Some passages in the Old Testament told Israelites not to lend upon usury to their brother. The majority of these passages are clearly talking about assistance given to the poor (Exodus 22:25; Lev. 25:35-37). In such a passage as Lev. 23:19-20 where the poor are not mentioned, it is not indicated that usury was immoral within itself. For although they were not to lend upon usury to their brother—who was of the same race *and religion*—they could lend upon usury to a stranger, i.e. to one who was not of their race and religion. This indicates that usury within itself was not immoral, or otherwise it would not have been allowed on things which were loaned to strangers.

“...the New Testament is silent on the subject; the passage in Luke (6:34-35), which some persons interpret as condemnation of interest, is only an exhortation to general and disinterested benevolence.”⁷ This passage did not have reference to business transactions, but to benevolence. The New Testament does not teach against charging interest.

There is absolutely nothing in the New Testament to indicate that capital loans are wrong. “This type of loan is made for the purpose of creating greater wealth, and *justice would require* that the person furnishing the money should share in the increase which his money makes possible.”⁸

(3) *Is the appeal to profits, to reward, un-Christian?*

No. A man who will not work is not to be fed. His idleness was

⁷ The Catholic Encyclopedia, Vol. XVI: 235.

⁸ F. W. Mattox, *Christian Solutions to Modern Problems*, p. 12.

not to be rewarded with anything profitable—food in this case (II Thess. 3:7-14). A man must make something in order to provide for his kindred (I Tim. 5:4-8).

Jesus used the appeal to rewards even in reference to spiritual things. Although He did not teach that man could merit eternal life, He certainly showed that man must do something in order to inherit eternal life. Those who follow Him will be rewarded. “Then Peter began to say unto him, Lo, we have left all, and have followed thee. And Jesus answered and said, Verily, I say unto you. There is no man that hath left house, or brethren, or sisters, or father, or mother, or wife, or children, or lands, for my sake, and the gospel’s, but he shall receive a hundredfold now in this time, houses, and brethren, and sisters, and mothers, and children (notice it did not say wives! JDB), and lands, with persecutions; and in the world to come, eternal life” (Mk. 10:28- 30). A man who has left all for the sake of the gospel will find hundreds of hearts and homes open to him. The man who endureth persecution for Christ’s sake, will receive great reward in heaven (Matt. 6:11-12).

To take away the principle of rewards and punishment is to kill incentive. John Smith in his account of conditions in Jamestown well illustrated this truth. It kills incentive for it means that your labors do not make a change in the outcome. It encourages the parasite for he feels that he will be supported whether he works diligently or not. To abolish rewards (and profits are one form of reward) and punishments one would have to abolish all outcomes of conduct, both desirable and undesirable. But this is impossible, for conduct has consequences, and these consequences may be good or bad depending on the conduct. If conduct does not produce consequences there would be no need or reason for action. And if different courses of conduct did not produce different consequences, there would be no reason why one course of conduct should be chosen over the other. This would rob man of responsibility. For if my effort does not change the situation, if my greater work and productivity does not produce greater rewards, why should I put forth extra effort?

This is not to say that all rewards are material, this is not to say that there is no work that a man may do for the love of the work but it is to say that the principle of rewards, and thus profits, is neither unscriptural nor unreasonable.

The principle of rewards and of profits is also illustrated with reference to spiritual things, in the parable of the talents and of the pounds (Matt. 25:14-31; Lk. 19:12-26). In the spiritual realm one must produce or have taken away from him that which he already has. “And he said unto them that stood by, Take from him the pound, and give it to him that hath ten pounds, and they said unto him, Lord, he hath ten pounds. For I say unto you, that unto everyone which hath shall be given; and from him that hath not, even that which he hath shall be taken away from him” (Lk. 16:24-26). By *hath not* Christ did not mean that that person had nothing to start with, for he had started with something, but he had not used it. He had not even obtained interest on it (verse 23).

I realize that the parable is used to teach those in the kingdom of God that they must be faithful in what has been committed unto them. One must produce. He must not just hold what he started with, he must make progress. However, it is just as true in business, from which realm the illustration or parable is drawn. If a business does not produce, if it does not make a profit, it sooner or later (likely sooner) goes out of business and may lose that with which it started.

Dr. Mattox has emphasized that the responsibility of the employer to the employees requires that the employer make a profit. It is not merely permissive, *it is his duty to make a profit*. He is not faithfully discharging his stewardship responsibility if he does not make a profit.

First, one must make a profit in a business in order to maintain the confidence of the stockholders and to assure the future of the business. If its present stockholders lose confidence in it, and if it cannot attract new stockholders, it will lack some of the capital which is necessary for replacements and expansion.

Second, it is necessary to make a profit in order to improve and expand the business, and the services which it renders, so as to maintain its position in a competitive society. All of us can see the advantages of money spent for improvements. Who, for example, would want to standardize production on the Model T level, or the Coal Oil Lamp level?

Third, a business must make a profit in order to create a reserve for emergencies. Otherwise an emergency may put it out of business, and the employees and the entire community will suffer.

Fourth, a business must make a profit in order to expand and to make jobs for the employees' children. Every year, with the increase of our population, there are many new job seekers. Unless the expansion of present industries and the creation of new industries take place, these new jobs will not be available. And without capital the necessary research and improvements cannot be undertaken.

Fifth, industry must make a profit in order to pay its part for the support of educational work, local and national government, and the common welfare.

This should make it clear that a company which does not make a profit is not only unsafe for its employees, it is also failing to do its duty by them and its stockholders, and to the community, state and nation.

When Christianity first came into the world, a great deal of the work, in the pagan world, was done by slaves. It was out of harmony with the spirit of Christianity to advocate a violent, bloody revolution of the slaves against the masters. If this had been done, Christianity would have been a political and social movement instead of primarily the way of salvation. If it had advocated such a rebellion it is likely that one or the other of the following would have taken place:

First, the slaves would have been slaughtered in the rebellion; or, *second*, the slaves likely would have enslaved those of the masters whom they did not slaughter. But the spirit of neither would have been changed.

Instead Christianity spread a spirit of brotherhood which sought to change, and did change, the attitude of slave and master. A slave and a master who were both Christians were brothers in Christ. This spirit gradually undermined the institution of slavery, as J. W. Bready has shown in *This Freedom—Whence?*

What principles were to operate, with reference to work, between the master and the slave? Since these principles operated in a relationship which the slave had not entered into voluntarily, how much more so should they characterize the employer-employee relationship which is entered into voluntarily.

“Servants (slaves), obey in all things your masters according to the flesh; *not with eyeservice, as menpleasers*; but in singleness of heart, fearing God; and whatsoever ye do, do it heartily, as to the

Lord, and not unto men; knowing that of the Lord ye shall receive the reward of the inheritance: for ye serve the Lord Christ. But he that doeth wrong shall receive for the wrong which he hath done: and there is no respect of persons. Masters, give unto your servants that which is *just and equal*: knowing that *ye also have a Master in heaven*” (Col. 3:22-4:1). “And, ye masters, do the same things unto them, forbearing threatening; knowing that your Master also is in heaven; neither is there respect of persons with him” (Eph. 6:9).

Both had a responsibility to God. And both were to give an account for their attitude toward and their treatment of the other.

It is my conviction that there is need for greater integrity in America, both in our business and political life. A Christian should speak truth (Eph. 4:25). He should not lie. He should endeavor to carry out faithfully his promises and agreements. This means that he should keep his word. For example, he should keep his contract. Any change made in it should be mutually agreed on.

The roots of our convictions concerning the dignity of the individual are religious, whether we recognize it or not. There are non-religious individuals who have been so influenced by religion that they continue to cling to certain of its values long after they have denied the validity of all religion. The man of no faith is the child of centuries of faith. But it is still true that in our society *the roots of our conviction of the sacredness of human personality are religious*.

Since there can be no real and lasting freedom without the recognition of the rights, as well as the responsibilities, of the individual, it is my conviction that the very roots of our freedom are religious. For it is religion which gives to human personality sacredness. “Where nothing is sacred nothing is safe.”

Some today have dug up or neglected the religious roots, and are amazed and dismayed when the tree begins to wither away and the fruits begin to disappear. Can we long continue to have the fruits without the roots?

In coming to this country, our forefathers put *morality, religion, and freedom* first. They did not even put economic security first. And yet, these material things have been added unto us.

We should recognize our need for God, and not for just his

material gifts.