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The Things that are Seen and Unseen    April 22, 1980

Since this is election day I think I should say a word about the importance of elections. We in America have the great privilege of living in a country where we are free to preach the gospel. In fact where we are not only free but protected by law from interference with our attempt to preach the gospel.

I don't think most of us realize what a privilege we have. I heard recently about one of the great Christian leaders of China in the '50's he was very active in promoting Christianity through out China. A very earnest, devoted Christian. In 1955 he was arrested. After a time he was released. In 1958 he was arrested again, and for 20 years remained in prison.

Just recently he was told he could leave prison and go home, but he must write a letter of repentance. He refused to write such a letter. Two weeks later he was told he could go home. So he left without going back on what he believed. He is an old man now. He is weak. For 20 years he was in misery as he testified to his faith in Christ. How different is our situation. But it will not continue to be different if Christians do not do their best to make their voices heard for what is right and true.

So I'll be very disappointed if I hear of anyone here who does not vote today and does not try to vote intelligently. There are people writing books recently, good Christian people, writing books attacking what they call "civil religion", and they have a point, but I don't believe they are going at the thing the right way.

The values and blessings we have in this country are due almost entirely to the fact that among the founders of this nation there was a tremendous influence from a widespread preaching of the Gospel. Some of its founders were earnest Christians. Some were even opposed to Christianity, but all of them were greatly influenced in their attitudes by the widespread preaching of the gospel and the great numbers of real Christians that were in this country.

Nowadays some like to say that's just "civil religion." Making a god of America. Well, we don't make a god of America. But we praise God for the blessings we have and we want to continue to maintain them. I believe each one of you should be ready to answer those who say America never was really a Christian nation--that it's just a pagan nation, and it does not matter if our nation recognizes God.

Dr. D. James Kennedy preached a sermon I heard some months ago on the radio called Church and State. In this sermon he quotes from early statements by American leaders, by statements in the constitutions of many of our states, from other sources showing to how great an extent America in its development has claimed to be a Christian nation. I believe every one of us will have to face this issue at sometime in the future, and Dr. Kennedy has gathered together a great many very valuable evidences