





Preface

The volume in your hands is the fruit of a joint project undertaken by the John Templeton Foundation and the Intercollegiate Studies Institute (ISI) to investigate whether and to what extent the market economy helps the poor. To be sure, this is a broad question and an old one, exhaustively debated for well over a century now. But the Templeton Foundation and ISI were particularly interested in what the answers and approaches to that question look like now, at a time when the collapse of old political barriers and the advent of new economic, technological, and information-sharing structures have ushered in an age of globalization. And both Templeton and ISI believed that the matter was worthy of receiving more examination within a theological context—for upon reflection, it is clear that the meanings of such fundamental concepts as “wealth,” “poverty,” and “freedom” shift when looked at through the lens of the Western religious tradition.

Furthermore, in the post–Cold War world, the political preoccupations that necessarily overshadowed questions of the relationship between capitalism, freedom, and wealth for a half-century or more no longer threaten to overwhelm their open consideration. Real communists are now almost impossible to find; committed socialists—especially of the orthodox Marxist variety—are almost as rare. But on both the political Left and the political Right, one now finds both pro-





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globalists and anti-globalists, partisans of the international hegemony of the dynamic and mobile capitalist society and critics of the same. Such political confusion is a good thing, insofar as it leads to a more searching consideration of the matter at hand by all sides.

For religious believers, the moral import of these economic questions would seem to make their careful consideration something of an obligation. But it is not always realized that even among those who subscribe to traditional doctrinal Christianity, there are different schools of thought as to how men and women of faith should regard the global capitalist order, especially as it affects the poorest among us.

The essays presented here by editors Doug Bandow and David L. Schindler present, in essence, two very different points of view: the first, represented by Bandow's contributors (Hill, Novak, Gregg, Morse, Griswold, and Neuhaus), tends to construe free-market economics as the real-world option that most benefits the poor, even while it emphasizes the moral and social context in which this sort of economic system must be embedded. These contributors also argue for the essential compatibility of the liberal (that is to say, free-market) economic order with Christian teaching and belief. Schindler's essayists (Walker, Long, Cavanaugh, Crawford, Lewis, and Davis) are not as sanguine about the new capitalist order; they regard it as depending on a philosophical liberalism that is not neutral but fundamentally opposed to Christian theology and social thought. Furthermore, they view this liberalism as subtly undermining the possibilities of achieving individual virtue and genuine community.

These chapters have not been written in a point-counterpoint fashion, but the differences of opinion and interpretation that emerge are as obvious as they are instructive. Editors Bandow and Schindler consider all twelve chapters in their responses and attempt to highlight for readers the most important points of convergence and divergence within the arguments of the book's contributors. Two pieces, one by Wendell Berry and another by Max Stackhouse and Lawrence



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Stratton, are included here as appendices. They serve as additional background to this important debate over the moral status and religious implications of twenty-first-century capitalism. It is our hope that readers will find this book a useful aid to reflection as they consider their own posture towards the economic order in which, increasingly, we all find ourselves entangled.

— JEREMY BEER
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