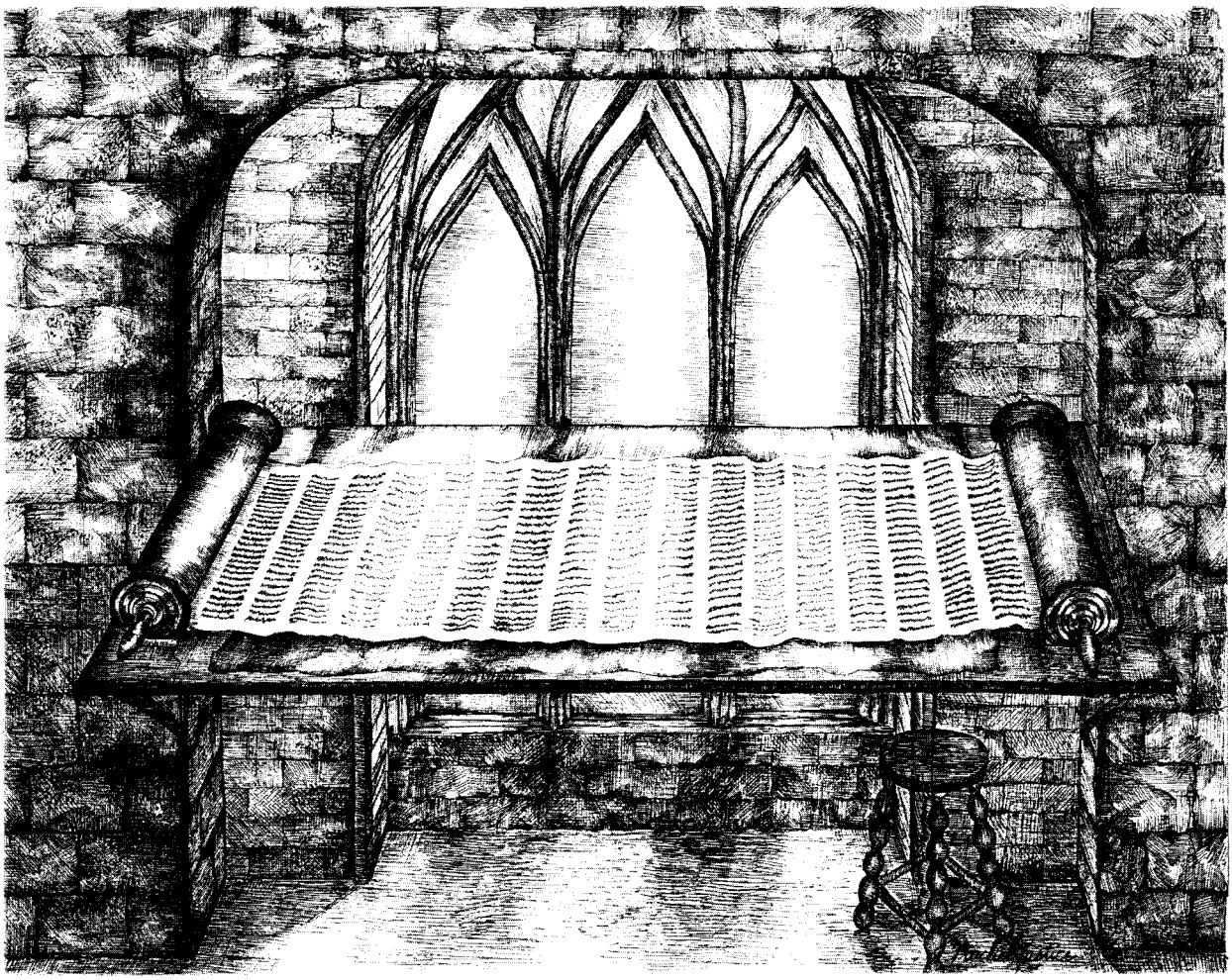
CHALCEDON Report

R. J. Rushdoony on the Received Text

Andrew Sandlin on an Establishment Bible

William O. Einwechter on the Excellence of the Authorized Version

No. 383, June 1997



The Biblical Text and the Reconstructive Task

The Creed of Christian Reconstruction

Rev. Andrew Sandlin

A Christian Reconstructionist is a **Calvinist**. He holds to historic, orthodox, catholic Christianity and the great Reformed confessions. He believes God, not man, is the center of the universe—and beyond; God, not man, controls whatever comes to pass; God, not man, must be pleased and obeyed. He believes God saves sinners—He does not help them save themselves. A Christian Reconstructionist believes the Faith should apply to all of life, not just the "spiritual" side. It applies to art, education, technology, and politics no less than to church, prayer, evangelism, and Bible study.

A Christian Reconstructionist is a **Theonomist**. Theonomy means "God's law." A Christian Reconstructionist believes God's law is found in the Bible. It has not been abolished as a standard of righteousness. It no longer accuses the Christian, since Christ bore its penalty on the cross for him. But the law is a statement of God's righteous character. It cannot change any more than God can change. God's law is used for three main purposes: First, to drive the sinner to trust in Christ alone, the only perfect law-keeper. Second, to provide a standard of obedience for the Christian, by which he may judge his progress in sanctification. And third, to maintain order in society, restraining and arresting civil evil.

A Christian Reconstructionist is a **Presuppositionalist**. He does not try to "prove" that God exists or that the Bible is true. He holds to the Faith because the Bible says so, not because he can "prove" it. He does not try to convince the unconverted that the gospel is true. They already know it is true when they hear it. They need repentance, not evidence. Of course, the Christian Reconstructionist believes there is evidence for the Faith—in fact there is nothing *but* evidence for the Faith. The problem for the unconverted, though, is not a lack of evidence, but a lack of submission. The Christian Reconstructionist begins and ends with the Bible. He does not defend "natural theology," and other inventions designed to find some agreement with covenant-breaking, apostate mankind.

A Christian Reconstructionist is a **Postmillennialist**. He believes Christ will return to earth only after the Holy Spirit has empowered the church to advance Christ's kingdom in time and history. He has faith that God's purposes to bring all nations—though not every individual—in subjection to Christ cannot fail. The Christian Reconstructionist is not utopian. He does not believe the kingdom will advance quickly or painlessly. He knows that we enter the kingdom through much tribulation. He knows Christians are in the fight for the "long haul." He believes the church may yet be in her infancy. But he believes the Faith will triumph. Under the power of the Spirit of God, it cannot *but* triumph.

A Christian Reconstructionist is a **Dominionist**. He takes seriously the Bible's commands to the godly to take dominion in the earth. This is the goal of the gospel and the Great Commission. The Christian Reconstructionist believes the earth and all its fulness is the Lord's—that every area dominated by sin must be "reconstructed" in terms of the Bible. This includes, first, the individual; second, the family; third, the church; and fourth, the wider society, including the state. The Christian Reconstructionist therefore believes fervently in Christian civilization. He firmly believes in the separation of church and state, but not the separation of the state—or anything else—from God. He is not a revolutionary; he does not believe in the militant, forced overthrow of human government. He has infinitely more powerful weapons than guns and bombs—he has the invincible Spirit of God, the infallible word of God, and the incomparable gospel of God, none of which can fail.

He presses the crown rights of the Lord Jesus Christ in every sphere, expecting eventual triumph.

CHALCEDON *Report*

A Monthly Report Dealing With the Relationship of Christian Faith to the World

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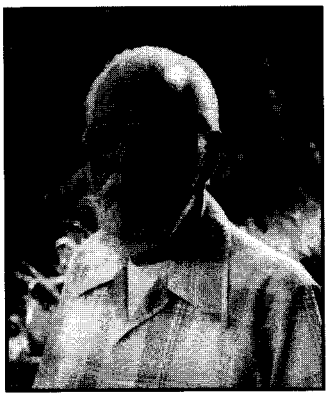
PUBLISHER'S FOREWORD

The Received Text

By R. J. Rushdoony



When I was a student, I heard a lecture on the Bible by an ostensibly orthodox Biblical scholar which was very disappointing. He insisted on arguing from within the ranks of the critics and with a ready acceptance of their premises. He assumed the validity of their manuscript evidence and their textual criticism as well as their "reconstruction" of the text. His view of infallibility was limited to the original manuscripts which were nowhere in evidence.

It was with great pleasure that I encountered, some years later, the work of Edward F. Hills, whose studies in the Received Text carried on the work of Dean Burgon. Hills' perspective tied in very closely to Cornelius Van Til's presuppositional philosophy: there are no neutral facts in all the universe, only God-created facts; and all facts are interpreted in terms of the interpreter's presuppositions. This was brought out clearly in 1996 by William O. Einwechter in *English Bible Translations, By What Standard?* Wrong presuppositions always lead to wrong conclusions.

The basic presuppositions of textual criticism are anti-theistic and assume a naturalistic and evolving world and history. This means that the writing of the Biblical texts, their transmission, and their histories are totally naturalistic and evolutionary. The Bible is thus in radical contradiction to its expressed nature and history. This view, however much contradicted by various findings, survives all its errors because its basic premise is accepted. Thus, in my student days, more that a few seminary literary books still reflected the opinion that the ancient Hebrews in Moses' day had neither alphabet nor written literature. When it was proven that Moses' era was one of literacy, the critical views continued because this error had not affected their basic premise, namely, the totally naturalistic history of the Bible.

This is at the heart of the problem. People refuse to accept the idea of a valid received text because they cannot accept the God to whom such a belief points. The *Textus Receptus* position requires certain things. *First,* it states that the living God of the Bible not only gave the Word but that He also preserved it over the centuries. Such a view eliminates the need for the critics who must do what God supposedly could not do, protect and preserve the text of His Word. The critics thus make themselves in effect the true givers of the Word.

Second, the doctrine of God necessitated by the Biblical revelation leads to some inescapable conclusions. The God of the Bible can speak only an infallible and inerrant word. Because man is a creature, and a fallen creature, his word can be only an errant and fallible word. He can speak only a proximate and fallible word because he is not God. To be a man is to know one's fallibility and proneness to error.

Third, it is no accident of history that the only works claiming infallibility are imitations of the Bible, having arisen in the Christian era. Examples of this are the Koran and the Book of Mormon. Ancient religions had at best vague and incoherent "revelations" from spirits and oracles because they had no omnipotent and omniscient God who could speak only infallibly. These ancient religions thus had a vein of incoherence as against the Biblical coherency. The Biblical critics have a view of God which is at best pagan and evolutionary. Their view of God, if they claim one, is of an evolving spirit in the cosmos who is somewhat unconscious and at best incoherent.

Fourth, the Biblical critics and modernist scholars are more consistent than their opponents because they are faithful to their views of God and of history. They have often changed their views on the development of Biblical religion. For example, it was at one time held that all religions moved from simplicity to complexity, as did also languages, supposedly. Later, it was the reverse: earlier stages saw complexity in religion and then in languages also, this complexity being then slowly reduced to simplicity. At all times, however, the modernist position has been clearly naturalistic; the God of the Bible has been rejected in favor of some kind of process whereby men and religions have developed.

The failure of the ostensibly orthodox Biblical scholars of various church and theological backgrounds has been their insistence on implicitly beginning with the same world and life view as their opponents, and then trying to reason their way to a radically different view. One scholar, an otherwise fine man, tried to prove the truth of the resurrection to modernists by arguing from their premises. He convinced no one.

We must begin with the premise or presupposition of the Triune God and His infallible enscriptured word, or we must begin with a total rejection of that God. The presupposition of fundamentalism, Lutheranism, many Reformed scholars, Anglicans, and others has been Enlightenment rationalism. This presupposition assumes the ultimacy of an impartial reason in all men whereby all things can be correctly assessed and adjudicated. But this is the premise of Scholasticism, not the Reformation.

The question of the Received Text confronts us again with the basic question of the Reformation, our starting point. The history of philosophy since Descartes has shown that, if we begin with the autonomous mind of man and its doubts, all we will end up with finally is doubt, and nothing more. If, however, we begin with the Triune God and His enscriptured Word, then we begin and end with all reality. By taking man rather than God as the starting point, the modern age has created its own crisis and is self-destructing. It is the course of folly for Biblical theology and scholarship to self-destruct with it.

Now is the time to subscribe to Rev. R. J. Rushdoony's "Sunday Lesson" series on 1 Corinthians, titled "Godly Social Order." St. Paul's first letter to the Corinthians is very important for its doctrinal content (often neglected), its account of early church history, its exposition of the meaning of the "ecclesia" or church, its development of the mandate to the church concerning the community, its important comments on the meaning of the covenant, and much, much more. R. J. Rushdoony's commentaries on 1 Corinthians will be an important analysis on what the church in Christ must be.

The "Sunday Lesson" series has two tapes per month at $4.50 per tape. Each tape has two lessons with questions and answers at the end. A bill is enclosed with the tapes every other month. For California residents, there is a 7 1/4% sales tax. The 1 Corinthians series starts in August.

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Assistant Editor Named

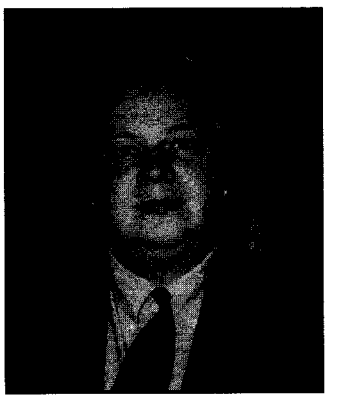
Walter Lindsay, member of Emmaus Christian Fellowship and active in Friends of Chalcedon, has been named assistant editor of the *Chalcedon Report* and *Journal of Christian Reconstruction.*

He is graduate of Harvard and a software developer in Cupertino, California and will furnish valuable assistance in the content, design and production of Chalcedon publications.

EDITORIALS

An Establishment Bible

By Rev. Andrew Sandlin



Harry Stout has directed attention to the colonial Puritans' preference for the Authorized (King James) Version rather than the Geneva Bible.[1] This is certainly not due to any theological disagreement with the copious notes of the Geneva Bible, which were a treasure house of Biblical (if frequently partisan) Puritan wisdom. The English Puritans, by and large, firmly embraced the Geneva Bible. Rather, the switch on the North American continent was motivated by the nature of the King James translation itself:

> As the Puritan movement continued to grow, and as the prospect of New World settlement began to dawn, questions of national policy and social order increasingly received attention from the learned divines. Taking seriously their own insistence that the Scripture speaks to all of life completely and infallibly, the minister found it increasingly necessary to apply biblical doctrines to questions of a temporal and political nature. The changed social situation together with numerous advances in biblical scholarship since 1560 convinced many of the need for a new vernacular edition of the Bible better suited to the needs of the new century. The resultant Authorized Version of 1611 was soon adopted by most Puritan clergymen and inaugurated a new era of Puritan history. Unlike the earlier Genevan translation, the Authorized Version lacked marginal comment and was, in every sense, an establishment Bible of impeccable social and intellectual credentials.... The new version of the Bible coincided with a period of new beginnings for the Puritan clergy. Now that the people had been indoctrinated in the truths of Holy Writ, it was possible to begin moving to the second, and more ambitious, phase of building an entire social order according to Scriptural blueprint.[2]

The Genevan was a commoners' Bible, suitable for the disenfranchised Puritan middle class requiring basic instruction in the Protestant Faith in their native tongue.[3] By contrast, the KJV was an establishment Bible of high social standing capable of shaping a Christian commonwealth. Indeed, the KJV as the vernacular translation of the colonial Puritans became identified as the Holy Writ on which the Protestant commonwealth was to rest; it was the implement by which the entire social order was to be structured. The vernacular translation of the 17th century was not merely a source of "personal enrichment" for "private Bible studies" as its abundant successors (less reliable

and often positively pernicious) are today; rather, *the entire colonial commonweal was structured on the wording of the Authorized (King James) Version.*

> *An apostate age does that which is right in its own eyes, inventing designer theologies, designer churches,* designer Bibles.

Today the idea of a single authoritative translation is as outdated as that of a single authoritative state church. The plethora of modern translations reflects the Arminian, democratic mentality of the modern age. The issue is clearly not as simple as "getting the Bible into modern idiom": the KJV did not reflect the idiom of 1611, but it nonetheless served the English-speaking church capably for almost three centuries. The church does not need a translation in the modern idiom; it needs an accurate translation in the native tongue. Languages, of course, do change. For that reason the language of the KJV was conservatively updated several times; the KJV we use today is not that of 1611. But the impetus behind most modern translations is quite different from the impetus behind updating the KJV. The modern impetus is not to update language, but to hold the language hostage to modern idiom. Thus the prime promoter of the world's leading modern translation has claimed that translation will be revised in light of modern language every 25-50 years. That this requires a wholesale concession to the degeneration of modern language does not seem to bother him. The translators of the KJV were anxious less for "understandability" than for fidelity to the original-language texts. After all, the job of explaining the Bible fell to Anglican bishops and priests and Puritan ministers. The priesthood of all believers did not mean the priesthood of every individual Christian apart from the collective church and authoritative guidance of the godly clergy. The Reformed have never claimed that understanding the Bible is an easy job, but modern translations' paraphrastic bent undermines the product of verbal inspiration in the mad quest for "simplicity," a Bible "in the language of the people."

An apostate age does that which is right in its own eyes, inventing designer theologies, designer churches, *designer Bibles.* It wishes to dictate the terms of its Faith. By contrast, the New Testament of the KJV is the Received Text, the text "handed down" for about 1500 years now. For the Reformers the text of the Bible was the *text* of their forefathers expressing the *Faith* of their forefathers. When the modern rationale for the adoption of other translations and the departure from the orthodox textual tradition runs along the line of "But there have been many new textual discoveries," it implies that the only issue separating the moderns from the conservatives is one of the pugnacious obscurantism of the latter. All to the contrary: the actual difference concerns an entirely different orientation to the Faith.

We do not choose our Faith any more than we choose our parents. We are baptized into a religion, affirm a creed, and preach a gospel with specific orthodox boundaries, and to alter those boundaries is to alter the very Faith itself. The Faith is a "given." Similarly, the text is a given. The text that the Greek and Protestant church has affirmed until the most recent times is the ecclesiastical text, the Received Text. The text handed down to us is the text providentially preserved in the church. To contend for the providential preservation of Christian truth in orthodoxy while denying the providential preservation of The Truth in the text of Scripture defies reason — and faith.

The Puritan commonwealth rested on an authoritative Bible resulting in an authoritative theology expressed in authoritative dogma. An abundance of translations it would have found abhorrent — not merely for theological reasons, but also for social reasons. It is hard to found a cohesive Christian social order on the sort of individualistic sentiment that demands a multiplicity of translations; the same sentiment demands a multiplicity of creeds, which means, eventually, every man devises his own creed, his own orthodoxy, *his own perverted religion.* This is called heterodoxy. But creedal heterodoxy is no more dangerous than translational or textual heterodoxy — a Bible to fit our culture, our needs, our desires, our lusts. The "gender-neutral" (pro-feminist) and "Black" Bibles are only the most flagrant examples of this textual heterodoxy. A society in which such blasphemy is blithely accommodated is not a society poised for re-Christianization. *To work for the application of an authoritative law-word without the affirmation an authoritative Biblical text is futile.*

To the Reformers and their heirs, the locus of Biblical authority was the *apographs,* the original-language texts providentially preserved in the church.[5] They would have resisted the distinctly modern retreat to the original *autographs*;

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such a retreat they would have identified as a concession to Rome. For instance, Francis Turretin, leading Genevan dogmatician, noted:

> By the original texts, we do not mean the autographs written by the hand of Moses, of the prophets and the apostles, which certainly do not now exist. We mean their apographs which are so called because they set forth to us the word of God in the very words of those who wrote under the immediate inspiration of the Holy Spirit.[6]

The entire "original autographs" canard emerged as a frantic response to what Ramm calls "the baying hounds of Enlightenment," the perceived need to maintain a "scientific" definition of the inerrancy of the Bible under attack in an assuredly scientific age. For the Reformed, the Bible is infallible because it is the very living word of the living God, not because it bows humbly before the "enlightened reason" of the modern age. In this vein, Reformed church historian Richard Muller summarizes the post-Reformation Reformed view of the providential preservation of the Holy Scriptures:

> By "original" and "authentic" text, the Protestant orthodox do not mean the *autographa* which no one can possess but the *apographa* in the original tongue which are the source of all versions. The Jews throughout history and the church in the time of Christ regarded the Hebrew of the Old Testament as authentic and for nearly six centuries after Christ, the Greek of the New Testament was viewed as authentic without dispute. It is important to note that the Reformed orthodox insistence on the identification of the Hebrew and Greek texts as alone authentic does not demand direct reference to *autographa* in those languages: the "original and authentic text" of Scripture means, beyond the autograph copies, the legitimate tradition of Hebrew and Greek *apographa*. The case for Scripture as an infallible rule of faith and practice and the separate arguments for a received text free from major (non-scribal) error rests on an examination of the *apographa* and does not seek the infinite regress of the lost autographa as a prop for textual infallibility.... [In related footnote 165 Muller observes: "A rather sharp contrast must be drawn, therefore, between the Protestant orthodox arguments concerning the *autographa* and the views of Archibald Alexander Hodge and Benjamin Breckinridge Warfield."][7]

For the Reformation heritage, it is the preserved text in the church, not the long-lost autographs, that constitutes the infallible word of God. A single authoritative text undergirds a single authoritative theology and single authoritative dogma — *and therefore a single Christian authoritative Christian commonwealth.*

For this reason, Rousas John Rushdoony boldly announced the importance of this issue. He observed flatly that "[t]he issue of the Received Text is . . . no small matter, nor one of academic concern only. The faith is at stake."[8]

An establishment Faith requires an establishment Bible.

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[1] Harry Stout, "Word and Order in Colonial New England," in eds., Nathan O. Hatch and Mark A. Noll, *The Bible in America* (New York, 1982), 19-38.
[2] *ibid.*, 25.
[3] *ibid.*, 21.
[4] *ibid.*, 20.
[5] Theodore Letis, "The Protestant Dogmaticians and the Late Princeton School on the Status of the Sacred Apographa," *The Scottish Bulletin of Evangelical Theology,* Spring, 1990, 16-42.
[6] Francis Turretin, *Institutes of Elenctic Theology,* trans. George Musgrave Giger (Phillipsburg, NJ, 1992), 1:106.
[7] Richard Muller, *Post-Reformatin Reformed Dogmatics* (Grand Rapids, 1993), 433.
[8] Rousas John Rushdoony, "The Problem of the Recieved Text," *Journal of Christian Reconstruction,* Vol. 12, No. 2 [1989], 9.

The Translation That Refuses to Die

By Rev. Andrew Sandlin

A Review of *A New Hearing For the Authorized Version*, by Theodore P. Letis, Ph.D., The Institute for Renaissance and Reformation Biblical Studies, 6417 N. Fairhill, Philadelphia, PA 19126, 34 pp., $6.95.

The latest book from the preeminent scholarly defender of the Received Greek text of Holy Scripture ("The Ecclesiastical Text," in Letis' language) is actually a primer about and introduction to the question of why English-speaking Protestants should retain the old King James Version. As such the booklet is readily accessible to the intelligent layman and quite suitable as a church staple to offer to inquirers about a church's official position regarding use of translations. Quantity purchase and wide distribution should be encouraged.

Letis deftly refutes the most common criticisms of retention of the KJV: it is based on relatively recent and therefore inferior manuscripts, its language is archaic or too hard, it's not in what the Reformers would consider "the language of the people," it can't keep up with the changes in modern language and is thus a barrier to understanding, and so forth. The author draws attention, moreover, to the embarrassing matter of the commercial motives of many of the modern translation enterprises.

Letis introduces his readers to the sentiments of Anglican John William Burgon, brilliant Victorian supporter of the Received text and KJV against the introduction not merely of a new manuscript base, but a new (and procedurally agnostic) approach to the handling of the Bible.

This book will especially benefit those saints who experience a vague uneasiness with the proliferation and use of modern English translations but who lack the equipment to counter with a principled rationale for retaining the old KJV.

The position Letis takes in this booklet is that for which Chalcedon has stood since its inception.

Supporters of the TR/KJV will be delighted to learn of two impending titles from Letis: *The Ecclesiastical Text: Text Criticism, Biblical Authority and the Popular Mind,* and *From Sacred Text to Religious Text: An Intellectual History of Lower Criticism on Dogma.* The author can be contacted at the Institute or at LetisT@aol.com.

Catch the Southern Florida Educational Tsunami . . . Before It Catches You

By Rev. Andrew Sandlin

Ellsworth McIntyre just couldn't leave well enough alone. First, he founded six wildly successful (both religiously and financially) Christian day care schools (*Chalcedon Report,* December, 1996). Next, he started a Christian Reconstructionist denomination (*Chalcedon Report,* May, 1997).

Now, he's *really* making waves. No, that metaphor—altogether trite—won't suffice. He's making tsunamis. And if the pietists don't scat for higher ground, they'll soon be drenched. His new book, *How to Become a Millionaire in Christian Education,* published by Nicene Press, is poised to wash away the sand castles of pietistic education and wash ashore an invading army of godly dominionist educators who create extensive wealth while they spoil Satan's kingdom and advance Christ's kingdom. When this book hits the bookstores and school conventions, a third of the pietistic educational establishment will go into cardiac arrest, another third will salivate over it beneath their covers at night, and the final third will promptly tender their resignations and start the sort of schools McIntyre successfully pilots.

By then the tsunami will be unstoppable.

To indicate the significance of McIntyre's book, a brief historical sketch is in order. The predecessors of the modern Christian school movement are the parochial Roman Catholic, Lutheran and Reformed (usually Dutch) Christian schools of early this century. By and large, they did a creditable, if somewhat modest, job. The fundamentalists gradually instituted Christian schools beginning in the 50s. By the 70s, their schools—to their credit—were flourishing—at least there were a lot of them, even if many were financially broke. They monopolized the production of Christian school curricula. They hosted seminars around the country. Until recently they dominated the Christian school movement. In fact, the Christian school movement was usually, though not quite accurately, identified with the fundamentalists.

But that movement, somewhat like its Protestant and Roman Catholic predecessors, was built on an internal contradiction. The ideal of Christian schools is to engender godly youth whose Faith applies to all of life. The prime reason for abandoning the public schools was not their larcenous character (union of education and state), wicked though it is, but their *secularizing* character—Christian children were being subjected to non- and anti-Christian instruction, introducing a poisonously secular instruction and therefore world view. Christian parents who enroll their children in state schools tithe their children to Molech—and thus invite divine judgment. It almost goes without saying that the prime goal of Christian education is to evangelize non-Christian youth and to train Christian youth to be Christian in their lives.

But we cannot expect Christian youth when they grow to maturity to maintain a truncated Christianity—to limit their Faith only to family and church. Their schools teach them that all subjects are Christian, governed by Christ and the Bible. When they graduate, should we expect them to exempt economics, politics, art, media, and music from that comprehensive Christian schema in which they had been trained? Hardly. They will naturally tend to believe that if education must be Christian, *all areas of life must be Christian.* This is the Christian Reconstruction viewpoint, which virtually all Christian schools, fundamentalist or otherwise, teach, though usually oblivious to its profound consequences.

The problem is that the fundamentalist-dominated Christian school movement espoused, for the most part, a retreatist social theory and a pessimistic eschatology. In Rushdoony's language, they suffered from intellectual schizophrenia. Much of the modern Christian school movement espouses a self-frustrating philosophy: Christ should be Lord and the Bible should govern all of life, but we can never expect that Christ will be Lord and the Bible will govern all of life. The world will increasingly apostatize; so the harder we evangelize the unconverted and Christianize the culture, the more unsuccessful we'll be. In any case, poverty is a mark of deep piety, and helplessness a certification of authentic humility. So, in good masochistic fashion, let's roll up our sleeves and pray and work our way to predestined defeat (it always amazes me that many of the same people who hate the doctrine of the predestination of the salvation of sinners, love the doctrine of the predestination of the defeat of Christ's kingdom and gospel in history).

If all this sounds perverse, that's because it is.

Pietist Christians supporting Christian education—and, make no mistake, we're grateful they do—act as Christian Reconstructionists and think as pietist defeatists.

This is why they maintain a love-hate relationship with Rushdoony and Christian Reconstruction. We offer the most incisive, robust critique of secular education and justification for Christian education in history. This they like to borrow (usually without giving us credit). But we also articulate an optimistic, world-conquering vision that collides with their retreatist policy. This combination led one of them in the early 80s to brand Rushdoony "the most dangerous man in America as far as Biblical Christianity is concerned." On the one hand, his critique of secular education is as devastating as his justification for Christian education is unsurpassed. On the other hand, his comprehensive world view, law-based ethics and postmillennial eschatology dislodge the tent pegs of the pietists' pilgrim lodgings.

What's a pietist to do? Only one strategy: Plagiarize the

critiques of state schools and justifications for Christian day schools, and hope nobody finds out about the world-conquering, Calvinist, dominionist message.

They are finding out. And as MacIntyre's book circulates, many more will discover a basic fact: *Christian education is not compatible with the defeatist, pietist vision.*

Thomas S. Kuhn's classic *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions* (Chicago, 1970 ed.) points out that old paradigms (models or ways of looking at data) in the scientific community die hard. The old-liners hold out until the end, vainly hoping that the defective paradigm in which they've been schooled can compete with the upstart paradigm embraced by younger scientists which accounts for a greater amount of the data and threatens to overturn and replace the older, outmoded paradigm. The defective paradigm, as it faces the irresistible challenges of the more accurate paradigm, is forced to yield. This is no less true in theology or Christian education.

The pietistic paradigm of modern Christian education is poised to collapse. MacIntyre's *How to Become a Millionaire in Christian Education* signals the last straw. MacIntyre's paradigm, I think, will eventually replace the sincere but unwieldy paradigm to which most of Christian education until just recently has clung.

How to Become a Millionaire in Christian Education captivatingly weaves MacIntyre's extensive personal experience in Christian education with his stinging indictment of the schizophrenia and pietism of modern Christian education. It bristles with iconoclasms that will gag the pietists: "Free men own property; slaves do not"; "Why should success produce guilt?"; "Let the heretics try to teach these children as they grow older that Christians have no need for supernatural obedience to validate their profession of faith"; "Christian institutions, as a whole, have poor credit records"; "The customer is the sovereign of the marketplace"; "Sad to say, the pastors I have known have fully earned their miserable poverty, failing churches, failing health, and failing homes"; and "Handwringing about governmental abuse, although very real, does a real disservice to the Christian school movement."

I predict the book will be publicly and viciously attacked by the enraged pietistic educational leaders whose ministry requires a poor and dependent teaching corps. These attacks will increase the book's sales among the poor and dependent teaching corps, many of whom will become energetic (and wealthy) Christian Reconstructionists. The book provides the general outline and the motivational fire: it points readers to the actual training manual they can purchase to start a school of their own. In addition, it offers the possibility of working directly for Dr. MacIntyre's Grace Community Schools.

Catch the wave.

I mean, the tsunami.

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BIBLICAL STUDY

"The Law is Good"

By Rev. Mark R. Rushdoony

But we know that the law is good, if a man use it lawfully; Knowing this, that the law is not made for a righteous man, but for the lawless and disobedient, for the ungodly and for sinners, for unholy and profane, for murderers of fathers and murderers of mothers, for manslayers,

For whoremongers, for them that defile themselves with mankind, for men-stealers, for liars, for perjured persons, and if there be any other thing that is contrary to sound doctrine;

According to the glorious gospel of the blessed God, which was committed to my trust. (1 Tim. 1: 8-11)

Timothy had been assigned to the church in Ephesus to combat the influence of Judaizers, who, among other things, taught that men were justified (declared righteous) by obeying the law. In opposing this false, Pharisaical view of the law, Paul knew he was open to the charge of actually being antinomian, against the law itself. Those who distorted the gospel would not hesitate to pervert Paul's teaching.

Paul here is clear in stating that the law is good if it is used lawfully. Paul had also told the Romans that the law is "holy, just, and good" (7:12). The law is good because God is good and His every word is pure and good. The law is a reflection of God's righteousness, wisdom, and truth. The law is His will and therefore necessarily authoritative.

The law is good to sinners. It brings justice to society. It brings sinners face to face with knowledge of sin (*Jn. 15:22*). This pronouncement of guilt is the necessary first step in the Spirit's working repentance and faith in their lives (*Rom. 5: 20*). The law also restrains men from sin. What grace does not do inwardly the fear of God can do outwardly.

The law is good to believers. It reveals to us the eternal will of our Heavenly Father. This restrains us from creating a false dichotomy between the will of the Father and the leading of the Spirit. The law makes us aware of God's holiness and our own sinfulness. This is the sinfulness that can lead us to the vanity of claiming the false ability to make ourselves righteous (like the Judaizers) or the equally vain attempts to devise a better standard (antinominan pietism). To believers, the law reveals the extent of Christ's righteousness and obedience.

The Judaizers saw the law as one of the externals of the Faith. In this regard they were in the tradition of the self-righteous Pharisees. They felt they could earn their own justification by works. The fact that they used a righteous standard, the law, as their object does not negate either their

own concept in thinking they could merit justification or their misuse of the law. The Judaizers saw the law as a goal for men, not grace from God. It was a series of external mandates to them so they felt their purpose in the church was to force it on others as a prerequisite to the Faith. The Judaizers thus stood opposed to Paul's gospel of justification by grace through faith. Those who professed the law opposed Paul and Timothy, who exhibited the rule of the law in their lives. The Judaizers did not use the law lawfully; they used it to negate God's grace and Christ's righteousness in redemption.

Paul tells us that the law is not made for a righteous man. The antinomian might jump on this as saying the law need not be part of a righteous man's life. But Paul has in view the unlawful and burdensome use of the law, which obliged a man to achieve righteousness on his own. John Gill felt this could be translated "the law does not lie upon a righteous man."[1] That is, it does not put a burden or weight on him or accuse him as it does the "lawless and disobedient" man (v. 9). The law, Paul says, is no weight or burden for the righteous, but for the unrighteous.

Paul is speaking of those declared righteous by God's grace. They have Christ's righteousness imputed to them and the law written to them to desire and delight in doing God's will. The regenerate lays hold on Christ's righteousness and seeks to live in subjection to his heavenly Father's will. Paul is excluding the use of the law as a burden of weight on a justified man because he is freed from its curse and guilt. The righteous man can delight in the law he no longer opposes. This constitutes the believer's lawful sense of duty with an eye to the glory of its Author and our gratitude and need of loving subjection to Him.

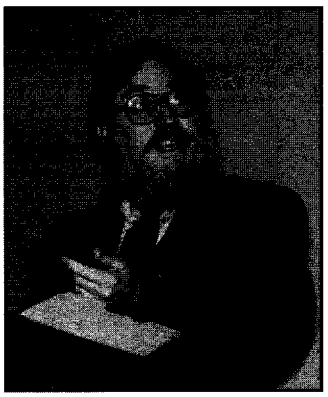
But if the law is not a weight or burden lying on the righteous, it is such to the wicked. This is an indirect accusation against Paul's critics, for he includes in his list of wickedness anything contrary to sound doctrine, one of their traits of which he warned Timothy (v. 3). The list was also a challenge to their claimed zeal for the law — if they really cared for the law they would use it to oppose wickedness, not to argue in the church.

The law does act as a weight of burden on the "lawless" (those who know the law and reject it) and the "disobedient" (rebellious). The law was meant to be a terror and a condemnation to the "ungodly" (the irreligious) and "sinners" (those who cherish their rebellion). The law lies heavily on these, as it does on the "unholy" and "profane." The law lies as a curse, says Paul, on murderers, fornicators, sodomites, and liars.

Moreover, the law is for "any other thing which is contrary to sound doctrine" (v. 10). Therefore the law stands opposed to all false doctrine and stands to reveal God's will to man. Sound doctrine, also, must conform to the gospel *of God.* This the Judaizers failed to do. It is the glorious gospel because it reveals Christ as "the blessed and only Potentate, the King of Kings, and Lord of Lords" (6:15). It is the gospel of God to remind us that the key to our understanding of Scripture is to view it as the unified and consistent revelation of the Creator and His Christ. God's plan of salvation and His promises are glorious, but so are all His precepts. This includes the law — when it is used lawfully and not to stroke the egos of the self-righteous.

[1] John Gill, *Gill's Commentary* (Grand Rapids, MI 1980), Vol. VI, 591.

An Important Message from John Lofton



As many of you know, or perhaps have heard, for almost two years now I have been battling a case through my church courts. And though I am appealing the verdict, I have been excommunicated by my session and barred from the church property.

Understandably, this places Chalcedon in a difficult position. On the one hand, because they are my friends — as are many of you — they hope and trust that the judicial system will ultimately sustain my appeal. Still, due to a high regard for the authority of my session, they want to acknowledge that decision. So, in order to show discretion — which God tells us should guide our affairs (*Ps. 112:5*) and which will preserve us from evil (*Prov. 2:11*) — I am suspending my column while my appeal is pending. I hope you will keep me in your prayers during this difficult time, that you will pray that I would repent for any sin that I have committed but have not yet seen. I would also ask that you pray that the higher courts of my church will be given wisdom and discernment so that God's justice shall prevail.

Lord willing, my column will resume soon when this situation has been satifactorily resolved for the glory of God and the peace, purity and unity of His church. I would also ask, please, that you neither call nor write me regarding this matter since it is in the church courts. And I would ask that you ecourage others not to discuss it since it is now in the proper channels. Thanks. And God bless you all.

P.S. For those of you who simply cannot go "cold turkey," and miss even one month of what I write, there is my own "Lofton Letter" which I will offer any Chalcedon reader for half price.

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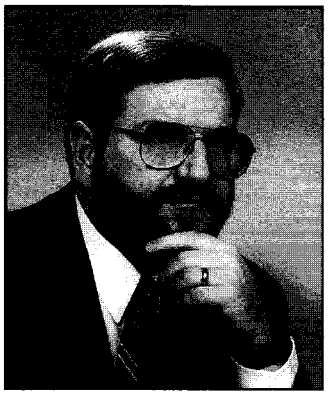
COUNTER-CULTURAL CHRISTIANITY

Changing Times and Changing Minds

By Rev. Brian M. Abshire



Some people accuse me of being a cynic, but that's not fair. I am really the worst sort of sentimental idealist, the product of endless fifties films, shown on Saturday morning, where right and wrong were clearly defined, when heroes had a code of ethics, and no matter how nasty the bad guys got, the good guys win at the end.

When, by God's grace, I was brought to saving faith in Christ in the early seventies, the very first book I read was Hal Lindsey's *The Late Great Planet Earth.* I was immediately struck by the great contradiction inherent in this new-found faith; I was promised a victorious life in Christ, but taught that the church was destined for defeat in time, and the world belonged to the Devil. Now, a man is, to a certain extent, a product of his life experiences (and in Christian terms, the issue is learning how to interpret those experiences from the light of Scripture). And when faced with the dichotomy between the "victorious" Christian life I was promised, and the defeatist theology so prevalent in the early seventies, it was only "natural" for me to look back to those core values to make the final decision. It took ten years, and a lot of thinking, but eventually, I was won to Christian Reconstruction on an emotional level long before I was convinced of it on an intellectual one.

Now, is there a point to all this introspection, other than to fill space in this month's column and so meet Andrew Sandlin's minimum word count? Yes, there is a point. Self-confessed, epistemologically self-conscious Christian Reconstructionists are at present a tiny minority. Eventually, we all believe that we will be in some sense a majority. The question is how do we get from where we are to where we need to be? And therefore we need to think about how people undergo change and what we need to do to help facilitate that change.

Change, obviously, is something in the province of God's sovereign decree. Genuine reformation and reconstruction can occur, only when God brings them about. However, are there not means that God uses, to bring about change in different people? Think for a moment, are there not four different gospels, written in four different styles because they were intended for four different audiences? The gospel of Mark was written to a Roman audience, and emphasizes the actions of Christ. The gospel of Luke (a Greek physician) was written to Greeks, and is stylistically different. John's gospel is more theological, and Matthew is clearly written to Jewish readers. When Paul spoke to Greeks, he spoke differently than when he spoke to Jews ("I become all things to all men that I might win some. . ." [*1 Cor. 9:20-23*]). Therefore, we have a Biblical warrant for learning a person's "hot buttons" and then appealing to him in terms of those hot buttons. This is not being manipulative, but simply being as "wise as serpents and as gentle as doves."

"The times, they are a changing," and a wise man will understand those times, and without sacrificing truth, will learn how to present that truth in effective ways. That is perhaps the real challenge, to learn how to say things to people in ways that will help them accept the message.

Christian Reconstruction has done its homework. We have excellent historical, theological and exegetical support for our position, written in massive, hard-bound tomes that provide the intellectual foundation for the next reformation. The only problem is, the audience for whom they are intended seldom admits to reading them. Chalcedon has been at the forefront of providing the ammunition for the intellectual reformation, but intellectuals and academics are only a small part of the pie, and not necessarily the most important pieces. Intellectuals have their own presuppositions that determine whether they accept or reject the message. Reconstruction is largely dismissed by Christian academics for the same reason Creation Science is rejected by the scientific community: they are rival religions. Mainstream, academic Christian intellectuals will never acknowledge that in the name of academic credibility they have been giving aid and comfort to the enemy, which is exactly what Christian Reconstruction charges.

But taking a page from the Creation Science folks, while they continue to do the hard, rigorous work of scientific investigation from a Biblical perspective, they also produce easy-to-read, colorfully illustrated books for children. For years, I've been undermining theistic evolutionary presuppositions held by various Christians by giving their kids Creation Science books as Christmas and birthday presents. As the parents read the books to their children, their own presuppositions are challenged. More than a few people have called me to ask for more "grown-up" books on the same subject. If I had just given them *The Genesis Flood,* the book would have remained unread and they would have remained unconvinced. But by looking for another approach, a "hot button" (in this case, their kids), I nudged these people very gently and very subtly into looking at things from a whole new perspective.

OK, granted, selling dinosaur books to kids is a little bit easier then "selling" Van Tillian presuppositional apologetics. But the task is really the same, since for Christian Reconstruction to become a broad-based movement, we have got to understand where the "average" Christian lives and communicate to him in terms he can understand. And most people today are not changed simply by intellectual arguments. To assume so is the fallacy of rationalism. Quoting that now-deceased reprobate, R. A. Heinlein, "man is not a rational animal, he is a rationalizing animal." And though of course we might rightly object to his classifying man as an animal, there is still truth in his observation. Men reason, not so much as to

arrive at a legitimate conclusion, but rather to justify the prejudices they already have.

Hence, well-reasoned, clearly-written, academic works as important and crucial as they are, are insufficient, for there are "reasons" other than intellect which influence whether men accept or reject our thesis. Francis Schaeffer said almost twenty-five years ago that the dominant values in American culture were personal peace and prosperity. The Rapture craze of the seventies was so successful largely due to its appeal to personal peace. "Afraid of society crashing down around your ears? Hesitant about the future? Distressed by the decline of Christian morality and influence around you? Well, don't worry, the Rapture's coming and all your problems will soon be over." Sociologically speaking, the appeal of the Rapture was not in the academic acceptability of its theology, but in its ability to bolster core values. And let us be honest, are there not more than a few people who are attracted to Christian Reconstruction simply because its teaching on small Federal government and free market capitalism offers a theological alternative to tax-and-spend Democrats and Republicans? In the same way, many, many pro-lifers were already committed to activism before they encountered Reconstruction. They were already motivated to do something, even before we came along and told them why they ought to do it.

That little boy, staring goggle-eyed at the flickering black and white images of Gene Autry and Roy Rogers riding the plains, or John Wayne storming the beaches at Iwo Jima, developed his core values from an entertainment medium, already bereft of explicit Christian imagery. But he is also, in one respect, a microcosm of the task facing Christian Reconstruction. Biblical Christianity today is a counter-cultural movement. Though there are lingering effects of our Christian heritage, most Americans and Europeans, even Christians, now have more in common with Imperial pagan Rome than with 18th-century Christian America. And to reach those people, and influence them, and by God's grace change them, will require understanding their values and demonstrating how our message meets fundamental human needs, desires and expectations. Some will object that this was not the strategy of the Apostle Paul: "Paul just preached the truth and those appointed to eternal life believed, and that's all there is to it. So why should we engage in this kind of 'socio-babble' about 'core values.'" Can't we just speak the truth and leave the results up to God?

However, does the above really fit the Biblical evidence? Did Paul just speak the truth and move on? Or was there a little more to it? In 1 Thessalonians 2:1ff, Paul recounts his initial ministry among them. Verses 8-9 are especially enlightening. He says, "Having thus a fond affection for you, we were well pleased to impart to you, not only the gospel of God, but also our own lives, because you had become very dear to us" (NASB). Paul, Silvanus and Timothy did not just drop their spiritual bombshells and leave. To the contrary, they got right down there in the mud and the blood, working with their own hands, getting involved in the nitty gritty of people's lives. They were as "gentle as a nursing mother" (v. 8) even as they exhorted, encouraged and implored them as a loving father (v. 11). And just because they met the Thessalonians where they were, and ministered to them as people, they demonstrated the power of the gospel that changed their lives, and the ancient pagan world.

Nobody is ever going to believe it, or accept it, unless Reconstructionists actually live it by getting involved with real human beings.

Usually, my friends and colleagues who are the most adamant about the purity of their doctrine, and the necessity of preaching it in rationalistic, theoretical terms, are also the same ones pastoring the smallest churches. It is not their doctrine that is at fault, but rather, the ability of the pastor, and that congregation, to relate that doctrine to real-life, human situations. Understanding "core values" does not require a degree in what is known as the Social Sciences. It simply requires spending time with real people and learning how to demonstrate that we actually have meaningful, real-life solutions to their problems, trials, expectations and aspirations. Even the God-haters, by nature, know the Living God exists and there can be no joy, no hope, no future apart from Him (*cf. Rom. 1:18ff*). The more consistent they become in suppressing the knowledge of God, the more miserable and depraved they and their cultures become (*Rom. 1:21ff*). Hence, what is needed is more than just intellectual answers to questions nobody is asking. Instead we must be willing to actually get involved in someone's life. The truth of the Bible is unalterable and unassailable, because it is the word of God. But that truth can be hidden, or distorted, or miscommunicated if those entrusted with its message do not take the time to invest their lives in other people and find what makes them tick.

Life in post-Christian America is characterized by increasing autonomy, dependence upon a complex technological infrastructure, and a dearth of meaningful relationships. Our culture has fractured the family and destroyed the ability of people to be committed to anything except their own personal peace and prosperity. Christian Reconstruction offers, not just another item on the intellectual and theological smorgasbord, but a life and world view that meets the deepest human needs. But nobody is ever going to believe it, or accept it, unless Reconstructionists actually live it by getting involved with real human beings, caring for them, admonishing them, exhorting them, loving them. Autonomy inevitably leads to isolation. Man was not created to live alone, but needs meaningful

relationships. With the destruction of the family in the past 50 years, most people, including Christians, do not have in place the social infrastructure God requires to live meaningful, productive and rewarding lives. People are lonely, people are hurting, and we are the only ones with something more than a sugar pill. There are two practical solutions, both interlocking and supporting each other. The first is the creation of a distinctly Reconstructionist literature that is aimed, not at the intellectual elite, but the average man, in the average church. Andrew Sandlin is already working on this with the publication of the Chalcedon Monograph Series. Each of these small booklets introduces the intellectual content of Reconstruction in simple, easy-to-read formats that can be given to pastors, elders and the average laymen. We need more of this at every level. More booklets, more tracts, more information dissemination on a popular level demonstrating how this wonderful theology relates to the way people live.

If a counter culture does not want to become a corner culture, it will have to do more than just proclaim the truth.

But secondly, we also need those who call themselves Reconstructionists to open their homes and lives, getting involved with real people, and helping them solve real problems, with the theological tools we have been so gifted with. Sound too simplistic? Well, a lot of people do not seem to understand the most basic Christian principles of life. For example, you would be amazed at how many people complain to me about how cold and unfriendly their churches are, how nobody wants to know them, nobody ever invites them over, etc. Yet, my question to them (almost now a cliché) is "Well, how many people have you invited over?" And almost to a person, the answer is "none." You see, everyone wants to be served, but no one wants to serve. Yet Jesus said, this is key to power and dominion (*Mk. 10:45*). If you want to have a life-changing ministry and fuel the second Reformation, don't stop reading good books, but do start reaching out and inviting people into your life.

In conclusion, if a counter culture does not want to become a corner culture, it will have to do more than just proclaim the truth; it must also demonstrate the truth, in acts of personal love and charity as self-governed men take personal responsibility for meeting real human needs. One early morning advertisement for the Peace Corps in the early 1960s had a glimmer of the truth: "How do you change the world? One life at a time."

Urban Nations Update: Here They Hear

By Steve M. Schlissel

Immigrants with UN Staff

A prime element of that unique set of circumstances which Urban Nations seeks to exploit is the capacious freedom we enjoy to disseminate the Word of God. In no other nation is this liberty as large as it is in America. In no other city are as many nations represented as are present in New York.

As a gift from God, we find ourselves ministering to people from scores of nations, some of whom have not hearkened to the Word they've had, some who've not had the Word at all, and some who've not even heard that there is the Word. In every case we find it our obligation and privilege to make that Word known.

Urban Nations Ambassador David Schildkraut told me that in a recent class he recounted to his students the story of Purim (found in the Book of Esther). "After the class," David reports, "a number of students asked me where they could find the account they had just heard. I told them that it was from the Book of Esther in the Bible.

"Six students told me that they had never read or owned a Bible. I told them that I would gladly give them a Bible, upon one condition: that they promise to read it. I 'sowed' four Russian Bibles, one Spanish Bible and one in Arabic. Two of the students asked me when they had to return them. I repeated: They could keep the Bibles on the condition that they read them."

David asks for you to "pray that Irina, Elena, Zhanna, Inna, Roberto and Achmed would not only read the inspired Word of God, but that the Spirit would grant them understanding. Only the power of the living God can cause atheists, Muslims and other non-believers to be so open and eager to receive His Word."

Another Urban Nations Ambassador, Bob Ciago, is teaching English and Bible to (among others) a 30-year-old medical college graduate from Communist China: Ming Bo Lee (who

calls himself Paul). As a result of UN's ministry, Ming has been attending worship services each Lord's Day. He has also been coming to fellowship dinners hosted by members of Messiah's. (The accompanying photo shows several immigrants with UN staff and volunteers at one such fellowship: Ming Bo Lee is on the left, David Schildkraut is in the back row with a Russian man between him and Ming, and Bob Ciago is in the rear row at the right.) Additionally, on Mondays and Wednesdays he comes to English classes which have evolved into simple Bible studies with a wee bit of instruction in the use of idioms.

Bob reports: "In a recent discussion about civil government, Ming Bo Lee told us of the persecution of Christians in China. He said it was not uncommon for anyone found merely to be in possession of a Bible to be sentenced to prison for as long as seven years."

Thus, Ming had never had access to the Word. But God had not left Himself without a witness altogether. Bob was curious as to why Ming was so very interested, from day one, in studying the Bible and attending church functions. Ming Bo Lee explained that though he was an "atheist" from an atheistic home and atheistic culture, something had been gnawing at him since medical school: As a student of anatomy (Bob had to ask him to repeat the word "anatomy" seven or eight times before he understood the word; one of those amusing reminders of Babel!), Ming Bo Lee began to think. "How could a body so complex just come about? How could this come to be without a Great Designer?" He concluded that it was impossible. Thus, God's magnificent design (Psalm 139) led Ming to want to know more about the "Designer," Whom we know very well through our Lord Jesus Christ.

Ming Bo Lee has been here for just six months. This "atheist" has now asked our church to pray for him as he prepares to take a medical school exam this September. Something remarkable may lie on the other side of this prayer: Ming has told us of his desire to increase his medical competency here and return to China to help his people. It is our earnest desire that Ming Bo Lee's choice of an American name proves to be of Divine origin. We pray that "Paul" returns to China a physician equipped to heal more than the body. We pray that he will be a bearer of that Word which is given for the healing of the nations.

It is here in New York City where all nations have by God been gathered. It is here where His Word is, for many, first heard: from those who had simply never heard, to those who had been forbidden to hear. This is the field we work until harvest. Please join us in this labor of love for the glory of the world's only Savior.

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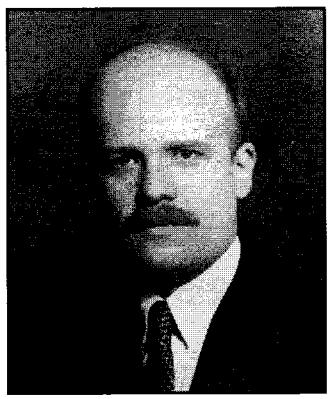
Christ's Holy War with Satan

By Edward F. Hills



As Dean Burgon (1883) pointed out, the history of the New Testament text is the history of a conflict between God and Satan. Soon after the New Testament books were written Satan corrupted their texts by means of heretics and misguided critics whom he had raised up. These assaults, however, on the integrity of the Word were repulsed by the providence of God, who guided true believers to reject these false readings and to preserve the True Text in the majority of the Greek New Testament manuscripts. And at the end of the Middle Ages this True Text was placed in print and became the Textus Receptus, the foundation of the glorious Protestant Reformation.

But Satan was not defeated. Instead he staged a clever come-back by means of naturalistic New Testament textual criticism. Old corrupt manuscripts, which had been discarded by the God-guided usage of the believing Church, were brought out of their hiding places and re-instated. Through naturalistic textual criticism also the fatal logic of unbelief was set in motion. Not only the text but every aspect of the Bible and of Christianity came to be regarded as a purely natural phenomenon. And today thousands of Bible-believing Christians are falling into this devil's trap through their use of modern-speech versions which are based on naturalistic textual criticism and so introduce the reader to the naturalistic point of view. By means of these modern-speech versions Satan deprives his victims of both the shield of faith and the sword of the Spirit and leaves them unarmed and helpless before the terrors and temptations of this modern, apostate world. What a clever come-back! How Satan must be hugging himself with glee over the seeming success of his devilish strategy.

1. The Gospel and the Logic of Faith

How can we dispel these dark clouds of error which the devil has generated and bring a new Reformation to our modern age? In only one way, namely, through the preaching of the Gospel. But the Gospel which we preach must be the pure Gospel, and we must preach it not according to the dictates of our own human logic but according to the logic of faith. We must preach the Gospel, *first,* as a message that must be believed, *second,* as a command that must be obeyed, and, *third,* as an assurance that comforts and sustains. Let us therefore discuss these three concepts briefly.

(a) The Gospel Is a Message That Must Be Believed

The Gospel is a message that must be believed. Our Lord Jesus Himself teaches us this in the Gospel of Mark. *Now after that John was put in prison, Jesus came into Galilee, preaching the gospel of the kingdom of God, and saying, The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand, repent ye and believe the gospel* (*Mk. 1:14-15*). And what was this Gospel which Jesus commanded all who heard Him to believe? That He should die upon the cross for sinners. Jesus explained this also to His disciples on the road to Caesarea Philippi. *And He began to teach them, that the Son of Man must suffer many things, and be rejected of the elders, and of the chief priests, and scribes, and be killed, and after three days rise again. . . . And when He had called the people unto Him with His disciples also, He said unto them, Whosoever will come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross and follow Me. For whosoever will save his life shall lose it; but whosoever shall lose his life for My sake and the gospel's, the same shall save it* (*Mk. 8:31, 34-35*).

There are four things especially which we must believe concerning Christ's atoning death for sinners:

First, Christ died for many sinners. *For even the Son of Man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give His life a ransom for many* (*Mk. 10:45*).

Second, Christ died for all kinds of sinners, for all sorts and conditions of men. *And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto Me. This He said, signifying what death He should die* (*Jn. 12:32-33*).

Third, Christ died for sinners the world over. *For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life. For God sent not His Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through Him might be saved* (*Jn. 3:16-17*).

Fourth, Christ died for all those sinners who down through the ages would be converted through the preaching of the Gospel. *Neither pray I for these* [*the Apostles*] *alone, but for them also which shall believe on Me through their word; that they all may be one; as Thou, Father, art in Me, and I in Thee, that they all may be one in Us; that the world may believe that Thou has sent Me* (*Jn. 17:20-21*).

(b) The Gospel Is a Command That Must Be Obeyed

We must believe the message of the Gospel that Christ died for sinners, but we cannot really do so until we apply this message to ourselves and believe in Jesus personally. And this is what Jesus commands us to do in the Gospel. *What must we do, the Jews asked Him hypocritically, that we might work the works of God?* *This is the work of God,* He answered sternly, that ye believe on Him whom He hath sent (*Jn. 6:29*). And Jesus repeated this command again and again throughout the course of His earthly ministry. *I am the bread of life: he that cometh to Me shall never hunger, and he that believeth on Me shall never thirst (Jn. 6:35). I am the resurrection, and the life: he that believeth in Me, though he were dead, yet shall he live; and whosoever liveth and believeth in Me shall never die (Jn. 11:25-26). Ye believe in God, believe also in Me* (*Jn. 14:1*).

But how do we obey the command of the Gospel? How do we believe in Jesus? How do we receive Him? By repenting and applying the message of the Gospel to ourselves (*Mk. 1:15*). By believing that Jesus died for us personally on the cross. This is what Jesus told Nicodemus when he came to Him by night seeking salvation. *And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of Man be lifted up: that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have eternal life* (*Jn. 3:14-15*). We must receive Jesus as our perfect sacrifice. *Whoso eateth My flesh, and drinketh My blood, hath eternal life: and I will raise him up at the last day* (*Jn. 6:54*). We must trust wholly in His body given and His blood shed for us at Calvary. *And He took bread, and gave thanks, and brake it, and gave unto them, saying, This is My body which is given for you: this do in remembrance of Me. Likewise also the cup after supper, saying, This cup is the new testament in My blood, which is shed for you* (*Lk. 22:20*).

(c) The Gospel Is an Assurance That Comforts and Sustains

We are saved, first, by believing the message of the Gospel that Jesus died for sinners and, second, by applying this message to ourselves so that we repent and believe that Jesus died for us personally upon the cross. But there is also a third requirement. We must persevere, we must abide in Christ. Jesus reminds His Apostles of this obligation in His famous metaphor. *I am the vine, ye are the branches: He that abideth in Me, and I in him the same bringeth forth much fruit: for without Me ye can do nothing. If a man abide not in Me, he is cast forth as a branch, and is withered; and men gather them, and cast them into the fire, and they are burned* (*Jn. 15:5-6*). How about this third requirement? Will we persevere? In the future will we still believe and be saved, or will we cease to believe and become unsaved? Will we abide in Christ, or will we be cast forth as a broken branch and perish?

The Gospel gives us the assurance which we need to comfort us and calm our fears. In the Gospel Jesus teaches us that the sinners for whom He died were given unto Him by God the Father in the eternal Covenant of Grace before the foundation of the world. *All that the Father giveth Me shall come to Me; and him that cometh to Me I will in no wise cast out. For I came down from heaven not to do Mine own will, but the will of Him that sent Me. And this is the Father's will which hath sent Me, that of all which He hath given Me I should lose nothing, but should raise it up, again at the last day* (*Jn. 6:37-39*). Because true believers have been given to Christ by God the Father, they shall never perish. *My sheep hear My voice, and I know them, and they follow Me: And I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of My hand. My Father, which gave them Me is greater than all; and no man is able to pluck them out of My Father's hand* (*Jn. 10:27-29*).

I am the good shepherd, Jesus says, *the good shepherd giveth His life for the sheep* (*Jn. 10:11*). Christ died for the elect, for those that had been given to Him by God the Father before the foundation of the world. *I am the good shepherd, and know My sheep, and am known of Mine. As the Father knoweth Me, even so know I the Father: and I lay down My life for the sheep* (*Jn. 10:14-15*). There are three ways especially in which this doctrine comforts believers. In the *first* place, this doctrine teaches us that Jesus loved us not only on the cross but from all eternity. *He loved me and gave Himself for me* (*Gal. 2:20*).

In the *second* place, this doctrine reveals to us that on the cross Jesus not only fully satisfied for all our sins but also purchased for us the gift of the Holy Spirit and of faith. *Therefore being by the right hand of God exalted, and having received of the Father the promise of the Holy Ghost, He hath shed forth this, which ye now see and hear* (*Ac. 2:33*). And in the *third* place, this doctrine assures us that we will never lose our eternal redemption, which was obtained for us by Jesus through His sufferings and death. *Neither by the blood of goats and calves, but by His own blood He entered in once into the holy place, having obtained eternal redemption for us* (*Heb. 9:12*).

2. The Logic of Faith and the Christian Thought-System

"Lord Jesus, I repent. O blessed Redeemer, I believe that Thou didst die for me personally upon the cross. Forgive me and take me, O Thou my Saviour." When a sinner receives Jesus in this manner by the power of the Holy Spirit, he has taken the first step in the logic of faith. And this first step leads to three momentous changes in his life and thinking:

First, the converted sinner exchanges a sinful life for a godly life. This was the emphasis of the Ancient Church. Justin Martyr (165 A.D.) thus describes the striking change which Christianity made in the lives of these early believers: "We who once served lust now find our delight only in pure morals; we who once followed sorcery, now have consecrated ourselves to the good and unbegotten God; we who once loved gain above all, now give what we have for the common use and share with every needy one. We who once hated and destroyed one another, and on account of their different manners would not live with men of a different tribe, now, since the coming of Christ, live with them, pray for our enemies, and seek to convince those who hate us unjustly that they may live according to the good precepts of Christ, to the end that they may become partakers with us of the same joyful hope of a reward from God, the Ruler of all" (*First Apology,* Chap. 14).

Second, the converted sinner exchanges a guilty evil conscience for a good and peaceful conscience. This was the emphasis of the Reformation Church under the leadership of Martin Luther. During the Middle Ages professing Christians tried to rid themselves of guilt and secure peace of conscience through penances, pilgrimages, crusades, the building of great cathedrals, and finally through the purchase of indulgences from the pope. It was at this point that Luther arose and nailed his Ninety-five Theses on the church door in Wittenberg. In them he insisted that an indulgence can never remove guilt, for God has kept this authority in His own hand. Only by true faith in Christ can guilt be taken away, justification granted, and peace of conscience obtained (*Rom. 3:28*). This was the message that ushered in the Protestant Reformation.

Third, the converted sinner exchanges a carnal mind for a spiritual mind. This must be our emphasis today in the modern Church if we truly desire to bring in a New Reformation. *For to be carnally minded is death; but to be spiritually minded is life and peace* (*Rom. 8:6*). This is a favorite Bible verse with many pious, modern Christians. The only trouble is that they take far too narrow and restricted a view of the spiritual-mindedness which God requires. It is not sufficient for us to be spiritually minded only in our private devotions or when doing mission work or talking with Christian friends or speaking in a Church. Many modern Christians are spiritually minded in these respects but are carnally minded in their New Testament textual criticism, in their philosophy and science, and in their economic and political views. In these areas their thinking is the same as the thinking of unbelievers.

To be truly spiritually minded, therefore, is something much bigger and more comprehensive than these pietists suppose. To be spiritually minded in the largest and best sense is to follow the logic of faith out into every realm of thought and life and thus to work out Biblical views concerning the nature of faith, concerning the holy Scriptures, concerning philosophy and science, and concerning politics and economics.

(a) The Biblical View of Faith —The Difference Between Faith and Mere Belief

What is the difference between faith and doubting? Many Christians are unable to answer this question because they confuse divine, God-given faith with mere animal or human belief. Animal belief arises spontaneously out of habit. If you put your dog's food in a certain bowl, he will soon believe that this is the place to go when hungry. But if you stop putting food in the bowl, his belief will begin to give place to doubt and will eventually cease. Our human beliefs likewise arise involuntarily out of our experience. For example, unless we are very ill or in great danger, we cannot help believing that we will be alive tomorrow, because this has always been our experience. Yet we cannot be sure. So when we believe anything, we partly doubt it, and when we doubt anything we partly believe it.

But our faith in God is different from all our other beliefs. For otherwise this faith would be in part a doubting, and our thinking would be no better than a dog's. God is the Truth, the Supreme Reality on which all other realities depend. *A God of truth and without iniquity, just and right is He* (*Deut. 32:4*). And because God is most real, we must believe in Him as such. We must let nothing else be more real to us than God. For this is faith! Anything less than this would be doubting. We must make God and Jesus Christ His Son the starting point of all our thinking.

We see, then, the difference between the carnally minded man and the spiritually minded man. The carnally minded man begins his thinking with something other than God and then believes in God merely as a probability or a possibility. Hence he cannot distinguish between believing and doubting. All his beliefs are doubtful. The spiritual man takes God and Jesus Christ His Son as the starting point of all his thinking. When anything else becomes more real to him than God and Christ, then he knows that he is doubting and must repent and return to the feet of his Saviour.

(b) The Biblical View of the Holy Scriptures — Their Content and History

The spiritual man is drawn to the Holy Bible by the logic

of faith as by a magnet. For how else can he take God as the starting point of all his thinking save through the diligent study of the sacred Scriptures. They are God's revelation of HIMSELF, the eyeglasses through which we may view aright God's revelation of Himself in nature, the key to God's revelation of Himself in history, the pure well of salvation to which the preachers of the Gospel must continually repair for fresh supplies of living water. In the Scriptures God reveals Himself as the God of Creation, the God of History, and the God of Salvation. In the first chapter of Genesis God reveals Himself as the almighty Creator God. In the Prophets He reveals Himself as the faithful Covenant God. In the Four Gospels and the other New Testament books He reveals Himself as the Triune Savior God.

To be spiritually minded in the largest and best sense is to follow the logic of faith out into every realm of thought and life and thus to work out Biblical views concerning the nature of faith, concerning the holy Scriptures, concerning philosophy and science, and concerning politics and economics.

Right views of the content of the Bible lead to right views of the history of its text. Because the Gospel is true and necessary for the salvation of souls, the Bible which contains this Gospel must have been infallibly inspired. And since the Bible was infallibly inspired, it must have been preserved down through the ages by God's special providence. And this providential preservation took place not in holes and caves but in the usage of the church. And it did not cease with the invention of printing. Hence the true text of holy Scripture is found today in the printed Masoretic Text, in the Textus Receptus, and in the King James Version and other faithful translations.

The logic of faith also shows us the inconsistencies and absurdities of unbelieving Bible study. The Old Testament critics, for example, admit that the art of writing had been known for centuries before the time of Moses, but they still insist that the Old Testament material was transmitted orally for hundreds of years after the death of Moses, not being written down until the 8th century B.C. And in the New Testament field unbelieving scholars tell us that the books of the New Testament were written not by the Apostles but by anonymous persons in the Early Church and that Christianity, including even Jesus Himself, was also the invention of such anonymous persons. But if these anonymous persons had so much ability as this, how could they possibly have remained anonymous?

(c) The Biblical View of Philosophy and Science — Truth and Fact

Through the study of the Scriptures also we are led to a Biblical view of philosophy and science and especially of truth and fact. It is in this last respect that modern unbelievers fail notably. For the most part they are positivists. They insist that we must begin our thinking with facts, facts which (they claim) are independent of God, facts (they say) that are so no matter whether God exists or not. But when you ask them what facts are, they cannot tell you. Hence they are beginning their thinking blindly. The Bible, on the other hand, tells us what facts are. Facts are temporal truths which God, the eternal Truth (*Jn. 14:6*), has established by His works of creation and providence. God reveals these facts in nature and in the holy Scriptures, and in and through the facts He reveals Himself. The facts which God clearly reveals are certain, the facts which He less clearly reveals are probable and the facts which He does not reveal at all are His secrets (*Deut. 29:29*), forever hidden from the mind of man. Error and falsehood, however, are not from God but from Satan, the evil one.

By virtue of God's common grace unbelieving scientists know many facts, but because they ignore God's revelation of Himself in and through these facts, they too fall into many inconsistencies. For example, they say that the universe has been expanding into infinite space from all eternity. Why then hasn't it disappeared long ago? Some try to answer this question by supposing that the universe is constantly being replenished by hydrogen atoms which come from nothing. Others say that the universe is alternately expanding and contracting like an accordion. They admit, however, that this oscillation could not have gone on from all eternity but would have eventually "damped out" and come to a halt.[1]

In other scientific fields also unbelievers contradict themselves in fundamental ways. In geology, for example, the uniformitarians admit that the fossils were buried quickly, but at the same time they insist that the strata in which the fossils are buried were laid down very slowly. And similarly, evolutionists appeal to reason in the effort to justify their theory, but at the same time they overthrow the authority of human reason by assigning it an animal origin. And nuclear physicists also contradict themselves, professing to believe in scientific law but at the same time maintaining that the atom is governed by the laws of chance.

Newton, the father of modern science, believed in God, but he was led by his rationalism to give first place in his thinking to four independent, disconnected absolutes which he had set up, namely, time, space, inertia, and gravity. To God, creation, providence, and the Bible, Newton gave only second place in

his thinking. And later scientists dropped these religious concepts, retaining only Newton's rationalistic absolutes. Hence the contradictions which we have noticed.

Einstein revised Newtonian science (on his own confession) in a pantheistic direction. He made simultaneity relative to the human observer. This led to two different kinds of simultaneity, namely, the simultaneity of events near at hand in which the observer is present (mathematically plus), and the simultaneity of events far away in which the observer is absent (mathematically minus). But Einstein ignored this discrepancy. And Einstein also ignored the observable fact that simultaneous events do not occur in exactly the same space but do occur at exactly the same time. Hence simultaneity is coincidence in time only and does not at all depend on the human observer and his position in space.

On what then does simultaneity depend? On the eternal plan of God. In the Bible God reveals Himself as the only Absolute. *I am God, and there is none else; I am God, and there is none like Me* (*Is. 46:9*). God's eternal plan for all things is the only ultimate continuum. *Declaring the end from the beginning, and from ancient times the things that are not yet done, saying, My counsel shall stand, and I will do all My pleasure* (*Is. 46:10*). Hence God created time when He began to fulfill His eternal plan, and God created space when He created the world. Simultaneity, therefore, depends on the eternal decree of God, *who worketh all things after the counsel of His own will* (*Eph. 1:11*). Such is the comprehensive framework which the Bible affords for all the details of science.

(d) Why Believing Bible Students Must Use the King James Version — A Recapitulation

In regard to Bible versions many contemporary Christians are behaving like spoiled and rebellious children. They want a Bible version that pleases them no matter whether it pleases God or not. "We want a Bible version in our own idiom," they clamor. "We want a Bible that talks to us in the same way in which we talk to our friends over the telephone. We want an informal God, no better educated than ourselves, with a limited vocabulary and a taste for modern slang." And having thus registered their preference, they go their several ways. Some of them go with the modernists in using the R.S.V. or the N.E.B. Others deem the N.A.S.V. or the N.I.V. more "evangelical." Still others opt for the T.E.V. or the *Living Bible.*

But God is bigger than you are, dear friend, and the Bible version which you must use is not a matter for you to decide according to your whims and prejudices. It has already been decided for you by the workings of God's special providence. If you ignore this providence and choose to adopt one of the modern versions, you will be taking the first step in the logic of unbelief. For the arguments which you must use to justify your choice are the same arguments which unbelievers use to justify theirs, the same method. If you adopt one of these modern versions, you must adopt the naturalistic New Testament textual criticism upon which it rests. This naturalistic textual criticism requires us to study the New Testament text in the same way in which we study the texts of secular books which have *not* been preserved by God's special providence. In other words, naturalistic textual criticism regards the special, providential preservation of the Scriptures as of no importance for the study of the New Testament text. But if we concede this, then it follows that the infallible inspiration of the Scriptures is likewise unimportant. For why is it important that God should infallibly inspire the Scriptures, if it is not important that He should preserve them by His special providence?

Where, oh where, dear brother or sister, did you ever get the idea that it is up to you to decide which Bible version you will receive as God's holy Word? As long as you harbor this false notion, you are little better than an unbeliever. As long as you cherish this erroneous opinion, you are entirely on your own. For you the Bible has no real authority, only that which your rebellious reason deigns to give it. For you there is no comfort, no assurance of faith. Cast off, therefore, this carnal mind that leads to death! Put on the spiritual mind that leads to life and peace! Receive by faith the True Text of God's holy Word, which has been preserved down through the ages by His special providence and now is found in the Masoretic Hebrew text, the Greek Textus Receptus, and the King James Version and other faithful translations!

3. Why Satan Cannot Win — God's Eternal Purpose

Today Satan seems successful as never before not only in raising up adversaries to persecute and destroy God's people but also in depriving them of their faith in the Word of God through naturalistic New Testament textual criticism and the resultant modernism. Will Satan's clever come-back be finally successful? No, for this is but a phase of his losing battle. The Bible indicates that Satan was once the fairest of God's creatures. He was *the anointed cherub* (*Ez. 28:14*). He was *Lucifer, son of the morning* (*Is. 14:12*), bright as the morning star. But he fell through pride (*1 Tim. 3:6*) and dragged down a multitude of rebellious spirits with him (*2 Peter 2:4; Jude 6*). Then, after his fall, Satan began his long and stubborn guerrilla-warfare against God. In the Garden of Eden he persuaded our first parents to violate the Covenant of Works and thus involved the whole human race in his ruinous conspiracy.

But God was ready for this stratagem of Satan. Even before He created the world God had provided the remedy for Adam's sin. In the eternal Covenant of Grace He had appointed Jesus Christ His Son to be he Second Adam and to do what the first Adam failed to do, namely, to fulfill the broken Covenant of Works and save His people from its condemnation. *As in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive* (*1 Cor. 15:22*). By His life of perfect obedience and by His sufferings and death Jesus completely fulfilled the requirements of the Covenant of Works and paid the penalty of its violation. Through His obedience Christ earned for His people the gift of righteousness and delivered them from the guilt of Adam's sin. *For as by one man's disobedience many were made sinners, so by the obedience of One shall many be made righteous* (*Rom. 5:19*). By the regenerating power of the Holy Spirit Christ unites His people to Himself and constitutes them one new human race. *If any man be in Christ, he is a new creature* (*2 Cor. 5:17*). And finally, His saving work shall culminate in the restoration of the whole

universe. *Behold, I make all things new* (*Rev. 21:5*).

God in His eternal plan and purpose decreed the fall of Satan and the sin of Adam in order that He might reveal His wrath, His power, His longsuffering, and His redeeming love and mercy. *What if God, willing to shew His wrath, and to make His power known, endured with much long suffering the vessels of wrath fitted to destruction: And that He might make known the riches of His glory on the vessels of mercy, which He had afore prepared unto glory, even us whom He hath called, not of the Jews only, but also of the Gentiles?* (*Rom. 9:22-24*).

Satan's attack upon the holy Bible is bound to fail, because the Bible is the *Book of the Covenant* (*Ex. 24:7*). The Bible is eternal, infallible, pure and sure, and in it God reveals Himself, not mere information concerning Himself, but HIMSELF. In the Bible God reveals *Himself* as the almighty Creator God, the faithful Covenant God, and the Triune Saviour God. The God of Creation, the God of History, and the God of Salvation! In the Bible Christ reveals Himself to sinners as Prophet, Priest, and King.

"I believe that Jesus died for me!" This confession is the foundation of the Christian thought-system, the beginning of the logic of faith. Because the Gospel is true and necessary for the salvation of souls, the Bible, which contains the Gospel, was infallibly inspired and has been providentially preserved down through the ages. Therefore, dear Christian readers, continue in this life-giving logic. Be spiritually minded in all your thinking, especially in your New Testament textual criticism. Take your stand with Christ and receive from His hands the True Text of Holy Scripture which He has preserved for you by His special providence. Then, armed with the sword of the Spirit and sheltered by the shield of faith, press on to victory.

HEAVEN AND EARTH SHALL PASS AWAY, BUT MY WORDS SHALL NOT PASS AWAY (*Mt. 24:34*).

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[1] "Recent Developments In Cosmology," by Fred Hoyle, *Nature,* vol. 208, Oct. 9, 1965.

[2] *N. Y. Times,* Sept. 26, 1961.

Edward F. Hills (died 1981), a graduate of Yale University, Westminister Theological Seminary, Columbia Theological Seminary, and Harvard University, was a leading Greek scholar and Reformed theologian.

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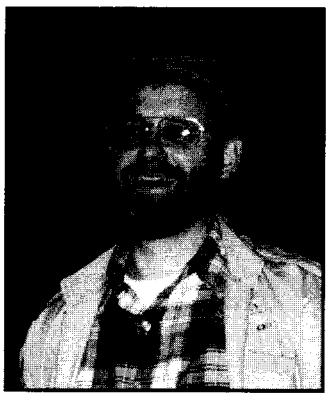
The Excellence of The Authorized Version[1]

By William O. Einwechter



Without question, the Authorized (King James) Version of the Bible reigns supreme as the most extensively used and influential English translation of the Word of God that there has ever been. It was essentially the only English version in use for over two centuries, and, in the providence of God, the Authorized Version (hereafter, AV) has served as the standard English version for over 350 years. The AV has been the Bible for English-speaking people the world over, used and loved by generation after generation of Christians. These prodigious accomplishments of the AV are due to the goodness of God in giving to His church such an excellent version of Holy Scripture. The purpose of this article is to take a look at the excellence of the AV and some of the factors that caused it to become the most authoritative and widely used English version ever.

The Connection of the AV with Previous English Translations

The title page of the 1611 AV states that this Bible is "Newly translated out of the original tongues: and with the former translations diligently compared and revised by his Majestie's special commandment." This statement indicates that the AV, while being ultimately based on the original Hebrew and Greek Scriptures, draws on the wisdom and work of the preceding English translations of Scripture. The AV is the final product of the work of the Reformers of translating the Bible into English, and incorporates into one excellent version the best of Tyndale's translation, "Matthew's Bible," the Great Bible, the Bishops' Bible, and the Geneva Bible. The translators of the AV stated in their preface: "Truly (good Christian Reader) we never thought from the beginning, that we should need make a new Translation, nor yet to make of a bad one a good one . . . but to make a good one[2] better, or out of many good ones, one principal good one, not justly to be excepted against; that hath been our mark." In time, the aspirations of the AV translators were realized and the AV came to be recognized as the best English version of the Bible (*i.e.*, the "one principal good one"). In regard to this triumph of the AV over the earlier English versions of the Bible, Sir Frederic Kenyon, former director of the British Museum, explains that:

> The causes of its superiority are not hard to understand. In the first place, Greek and Hebrew scholarship had greatly increased in England during the forty years which

had passed since the last revision.... Secondly, the revision was the work of no single man and of no single school. It was the deliberate work of a large body of trained scholars and divines of all classes and opinions, who had before them, for their guidance, the labors of nearly a century of revision.... Thirdly, the past forty years had been years of extraordinary growth in English literature. Prose writers and poets—Spenser, Sidney, Hooker, Marlowe, Shakespeare, to name only the greatest—had combined to spread abroad a sense of literary style and to raise the standard of literary taste. Under the influence, conscious or unconscious, of masters such as these, the revisers wrought out the fine material left them by Tyndale and his successors into the splendid monument of Elizabethan prose which the Authorized Version is universally admitted to be.... The English of the Authorized Version is the finest specimen of our prose literature at a time when English prose wore its stateliest and most majestic form.[3]

In their discussion of the AV and why it became "the most influential single translation of the English Bible that the Protestants were to produce," Geisler and Nix give to us further insight on why the AV was able to displace all previous versions:

> The reasons for the gradual but overwhelming success of the Authorized Version have been well stated by several writers and may be briefly summarized as follows:
>
> 1. The personal qualifications of the revisers, who were the choice scholars and linguists of their day as well as men of profound and unaffected piety.
> 2. The almost universal sense of the work as a national effort, supported wholeheartedly by the king, and with the full concurrence and approval of both church and state.
> 3. The availability and accessibility of the results of nearly a century of diligent and unintermittent labor in the field of biblical study, beginning with Tyndale and Purvey rather than Wycliffe, and their efforts to "make a good translation better."
> 4. The congeniality of the religious climate of the day with the sympathies and enthusiasm of the translators, as the predominant interest of the age was theology and religion.
> 5. The organized system of cooperative work which followed the precedent of the Geneva translators, while it may have been improved, resulted in a unity of tone in the Authorized Version which surpassed all its predecessors.
> 6. The literary atmosphere of the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries paralleled the lofty sense of style and artistic touch of the translators . . . the quality of the work needs no commendation at this late date. It reigns supreme as the "intrinsically" authorized version of English-speaking Protestantism.[4]

The Translation of the AV

The AV was translated by a team of scholars who were noted in their day for their piety and scholarship. The translation of the AV was carried out by all the "principal learned men" of the kingdom of England.[5] But they were not only learned, they were also godly men who presupposed the truth of Scripture; hence, they were Christian scholars, and their faith had a deep impact on their work. As Brown states: "They were indeed 'learned men' — and their scholarship was accompanied by a deep conviction of the Divine origin of the records which they were translating. Learning and faith went hand in hand to open the storehouse of God's Word of Truth for the spiritual enrichment of millions. . . ."[6] Concerning the qualifications of the translators and the effect the time in which they lived had on their work, G. W. and D. E. Anderson give the following analysis:

> The Authorised Version was translated by the best scholars of the day, but men whose lives also reflected a firm conviction that every word they were translating was true, inspired by God Himself. These men lived at a time when theology was not so flexible and so influenced by philosophies which demand that nothing is true and everything must be judged by standards established by the world. God in His providence moved the events of the early seventeenth century to ensure that the accepted English translation of His Word would be free of the unsound philosophies that would plague theology in the next three hundred years.[7]

The translators of the AV based their translation of the New Testament on the *Textus Receptus* (the Received Text of Protestantism) for to them this text was in fact the authentic, providentially preserved text. Furthermore, due to their belief in verbal inspiration, they were careful to translate according to the formal equivalent (*i.e.*, literal) method. These facts are admirably summarized by the Andersons:

> ... the Greek Received Text, upon which the New Testament of the Authorised Version is based, was produced at a time when men accepted the Bible as the inspired, errorless Word of the living God; whether working on the Greek text itself, or translating that text into English or any other language, they treated it as the very Word of God.... With this basis, the Authorised Version translators entered into the work to which God, through King James, had called them. Because they were translating the very Word of God, they translated as much as possible word-for-word, producing a literal rendition of the Greek. They based the English Old Testament upon the Hebrew Masoretic Text, using ancient translations of the Hebrew as aids when the Hebrew was obscure, but remembering that these were translations only, and not the language into which God had given His Word to the people of Israel. The Authorised Version translators continued in the textual tradition which the Church had used and accepted for hundreds of years. In doing so, they continued the solidarity of both language texts and also of earlier English translations, upon which they based their work.[8]

The translators of the AV were very zealous to give the English church an authoritative translation of God's Word. To achieve this they knew that they must render the original Hebrew and Greek as carefully and exactly as possible because the authority of a translation is based on its adherence to the words that the Holy Spirit used to reveal God's truth to men. One of the means they employed to achieve this exactness and authority was to place in italics any words used in their

translation that were not actually in the original. Jakob van Bruggen, commenting on this aspect of the AV, asserted that:

> To a large extent, the KJV owes its authority to the rule that most inserted words were printed in italics. The Bible reader was thus able to see how carefully the translators treated God's Word. They were afraid to add even one word, but if they were not able to translate without adding a word for the sake of clarity, they indicated that it had been added.[9]

This fidelity of the AV to the original texts of Scripture and the excellence of English rendering of these texts are strongly affirmed by Joseph Philpot:

> We cannot but admire the great faithfulness of our translators in so scrupulously adhering to the exact words of the Holy Spirit, and when they were necessarily compelled to supply the ellipses in the original, to point out that they had done so by marking the word in italic characters. By so doing, they engaged themselves, as by bond, to give the Word of God in its strict original purity; and yet, as thorough scholars in the original tongues, and complete masters of their own, they were enabled to give us a version admirable not only for its strict fidelity, but also for its eloquence, grandeur, and beauty.[10]

The excellence of the AV is not the result of chance, but rather it is due to God's providence which brought together an unsurpassed team of Christian scholars who were committed to Biblical orthodoxy; who were seeking to build on the previous labors of William Tyndale and the Geneva Bible; who considered the *Textus Receptus* and the Masoretic text to be the true, providentially preserved texts of Scripture; and who believed that verbal inspiration required a careful word-for-word translation.

The Language of the AV

One of the leading criticisms against the AV is its "archaic" language, but those who make such criticisms do not understand the nature of the AV nor the issues involved. The language of the AV is not simply beautiful Elizabethan prose, it is also a kind of "Biblical English," and therefore timeless and unique. The abandonment of the AV for a modern English version leaves us with an English Bible that is here today, gone tomorrow.[11] The excellence of the AV is seen in the enduring quality of its Biblical English. In regard to this R. J. Rushdoony maintains:

> One of the charges consistently leveled against the King James Version is that its language is archaic and obsolete. The answer is a simple one: it is intended to be. In 1611 the King James Version was as "out of date" as it is today. Compare the writings of Shakespeare, Ben Johnson, King James I, and John Lyly with the King James Version and this becomes quickly apparent. The translators *avoided* the speech of their day for a basic English which would be simple, timeless and beautiful, and they succeeded. Their version spoke outside their age and tradition with elemental simplicity. Their wisdom here exceeds that of their successors. Nothing seems more ridiculous than an outdated "modern" translation.[12]

Rushdoony continues:

> The issue is not that the Bible should speak our everyday language, for this involves debasement, but that it should be understandable, and here, all arguments to the contrary notwithstanding, the King James speaks a language which, while sometimes difficult because the matter itself is so, is more often simple, clear-cut and beautiful.[13]

Edward Hills gives this perspective on the language of the AV:

> ... the English of the King James Version is not the English of the early seventeenth century. To be exact, it is not a type of English that was ever spoken anywhere. It is biblical English which was not used on ordinary occasions even by the translators who produced the King James Version.... Even in their use of *thee* and *thou* the translators were not following seventeenth century English usage but biblical usage, for at the time these translators were doing their work these singular forms had already been replaced by the plural *you* in polite conversation.[14]

Being grounded in false presuppositions concerning the Biblical text and its translation, the modern versions do not lift up an unchanging standard.

Therefore the fact that the language of the AV seems at times unfamiliar to us is due not so much to the use of certain "archaic" words, but to the fact that its language is actually a kind of Biblical English that results from the AV being a formal equivalent translation that seeks to retain as much of the Hebrew and Greek form as possible. In their desire to have the Bible in "the language of today" the modern dynamic equivalent (*i.e.*, "scientific paraphrase") translations set aside the form and wording of the Biblical languages and leave us with a translation that will be "out of date" in a relatively short period of time. But the language of the AV is in a sense timeless, and it has an "enduring diction which will remain as long as the English language remains, in other words, throughout the foreseeable future."[15]

The Heritage of English Christianity and the AV

There are many ways in which the use of the AV has benefited and blessed the English-speaking church. One of

these ways is that it has provided a consistent and unchanging literary standard that links modern English-speaking Christians to their forbearers and forefathers in the Faith. Those who use a modern translation often have trouble reading the Puritans, the splendid English creeds, the metrical Psalms, and the great hymns of past generations because the language is not familiar to them. Furthermore, the works (sermons, commentaries, etc.) of the past were largely based on the AV. Therefore, those who abandon the AV for a modern language version begin effectively to cut themselves off from the great heritage of English Christianity. In regard to this the Andersons state:

> Falling into disuse also are the great creeds which reflect the true Christianity of the Reformation. To those familiar with the Authorised Version, the phrasing of the creeds of the Apostles and Nicea, the great Westminister and London and other confessions—indeed, all the works of our forefathers in the faith—are splendid aids in understanding the Scriptures. But to those who have abandoned the Authorised Version, these as well as the thousands of Bible dictionaries, concordances, encyclopedias, commentaries, word studies and lexicons are often closed books, as are the works of the Puritans, of Luther and Calvin, of the Hodges and Spurgeon and all of the other great men of God, whose lives displayed a holiness and piety which the lives of modern writers—and modern Christians—so often lack.[16]

The Importance, Virtue, and Influence of the AV

In 1881 the Revised Version of the Bible appeared. It was claimed that the Revised Version was a revision of the AV, when in fact it was really a new translation based not on the TR but on a new Greek text constructed by Westcott and Hort. John William Burgon vigorously defended the TR and the AV against this Revised Version. In the course of his defense he noted the excellence of the AV and its importance to English-speaking Christians. Burgon said:

> Whatever may be urged in favor of Biblical Revision, it is at least undeniable that the undertaking involves a tremendous risk. Our Authorized Version is the one religious link which at present binds together ninety millions of English-speaking men scattered over the earth's surface. Is it reasonable that so unutterably precious, so sacred a bond should be endangered, for the sake of representing certain words more accurately,—here and there translating a tense with greater precision,—getting rid of a few archaisms? It may be confidently assumed that no 'Revision' of our Authorized Version, however judiciously executed, will ever occupy the place in public esteem which is actually enjoyed by the work of the Translators of 1611,—the noblest literary work in the Anglo-Saxon language. We shall in fact never have another 'Authorized Version.'[17]

Burgon's complaint concerning the total failure of the revisionists to improve on the AV could also be applied in some ways to the failure of modern revisions of the AV and modern Bible versions to improve on the AV. Burgon states:

> They had a noble Version [*i.e.*, the AV] before them, which they have contrived to spoil in every part. Its dignified simplicity and essential faithfulness, its manly grace and its delightful rhythm, they have shown themselves alike unable to imitate and unwilling to retain. Their queer uncouth phraseology and their jerky sentences ... are sorry substitutes for the living freshness and elastic freedom, and habitual fidelity of the grand old Version which we inherited from our Fathers, and which has sustained the spiritual life of the Church of England, and all English-speaking Christians, for 350 years.[18]

Joseph Philpot also believed that the AV was an excellent and faithful translation of the Scriptures. But in addition to this, he saw that the AV was a bulwark of the Protestant Faith and that it is the duty of English-speaking Christians to defend it and pass it on to their children. In a day in which the Word of God is being increasingly set aside and the Faith is being undermined on every side, we ought carefully to consider the wisdom and the warning contained in his words:

> The present English Bible (Authorized Version) has been blessed to thousands of the saints of GOD; and not only so, it has become part of our national inheritance which we have received unimpaired from our fathers, and are bound to hand down unimpaired to our children. It is, we believe, the grand bulwark of Protestantism; the safeguard of the Gospel, and the treasure of the Church; and we should be traitors in every sense of the word if we consented to give it up to be rifled by the sacrilegious hands of the Puseyites, concealed papists, German Neologians, infidel divines, Arminians, Socinians, and the whole tribe of enemies of God and godliness.[19]

Therefore the fact that the language of the AV seems at times unfamiliar to us is due not so much to the use of certain "archaic" words, but to the fact that its language is actually a kind of Biblical English.

The AV is a bulwark of the Protestant Faith because it upholds the essential Biblical doctrines of verbal inspiration and providential preservation by providing the church with an accurate formal equivalent translation of the providentially preserved Hebrew and Greek texts. The AV is not a shifting standard; its faithful translation of the Masoretic text and the *Textus Receptus* stands firm against all the changing theories of men concerning the nature of language, communication, and textual criticism. The AV is a bulwark of the Protestant Faith

because it gives English-speaking Christians a faithful and trustworthy translation of God's unchanging Word. The same cannot be said of the modern versions which are based on an eclectic New Testament Greek text that differs significantly from the *Textus Receptus,* and which are translated according to the faulty translation theory of dynamic equivalence. Being grounded in false presuppositions concerning the Biblical text and its translation, the modern versions do not lift up an unchanging standard, but instead they give to us translations that are tossed to and fro by every wind of opinion concerning what represents the "best available" original text of Scripture and what is the appropriate "dynamic equivalence" of the meaning of Scripture.[20]

The importance of the AV and its influence on the English-speaking church can hardly be overstated; only eternity will be able to measure the impact that this excellent version has had on the millions of people for whom the AV was the Word of God in English. Kenyon provides us with an admirable summary of the greatness and influence of the AV:

> The influence of the Authorised Version, alike on our religion and literature, can never be exaggerated. Not only in the great works of our theologians, the resonant prose of the seventeenth-century Fathers of the English Church, but in the writings of nearly every author, whether of prose or verse, the stamp of its language is to be seen.... But great as has been the literary value of the Authorised Version, its religious significance has been greater still. For nearly three centuries it has been the Bible, not merely of public use, not merely of one sect or party, not even of a single country, but of the whole nation and of every English-speaking country on the face of the globe. It has been the literature of millions who have read little else, it has been the guide of conduct to men and women of every class in life and of every rank in learning and education.... It was the work, not of one man, nor of one age, but of many laborers, of diverse and even opposing views, over a period of ninety years. It was watered with the blood of martyrs, and its slow growth gave time for the casting off of imperfections and for the full accomplishment of its destiny of the Bible of the English nation.[21]

The AV is truly an excellent English version of Holy Scripture. In the good providence of God it has served as the standard English Bible for over 350 years. It is an enduring version because it is based on the providentially preserved original texts of Holy Scripture (the Masoretic text and the *Textus Receptus*), and it is translated according to the theologically sound method of formal equivalence. And although there are scores of new English translations that are being aggressively marketed by publishing firms with slick slogans and advertising campaigns, and although modern scholarship heaps its scorn on the AV, the AV is still used and loved by millions of Christians world-wide; and no doubt it will be so used for many more years to come. In fact, I believe that there will be an increasing return to the AV among English-speaking people as Christians begin to tire of the endless stream of "new and more accurate" translations and the continuous updating and revisions of versions that only a few years ago were being touted as being "in the language of today";[22] as Christians realize that the current Bible publishing industry is not theologically motivated (*i.e.,* to uphold the verbal inspiration and providential preservation of Scripture) or Holy Spirit-driven, but rather is profit-motivated and market-driven; as Christians wake up to the fact that in their zeal to make the Scriptures "more understandable," the modern versions have often distorted the Word of God and have led to the "dumbing down" of the church;[23] as Christians see the appalling effect of having a church where no two members use the same translation; as Christians grasp the fact that the modern versions have rejected the Greek text received by the church and the Reformers as being the infallible Word of God and are based instead on a Greek text that was constructed by the majority vote of scholars using naturalistic Enlightenment methods of textual criticism; as Christians begin to understand that it is more important to know exactly what God said in Scripture than what a translator thinks God meant by what He said (even if it does require more effort on the reader's part); and as Christians, by the grace of God, have a desire to return to the purity of God's Word in English as given to them in the AV. Truly, in regard to English versions of the Bible, "the old is better" (*Lk. 5:39*).

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[1] This article is a slightly revised abstract from the author's book, *English Bible Translations: By What Standard?* Copyright 1996 by William O. Einwechter. The purpose of the book is to evaluate English Bible translations according to the doctrinal standards of Reformed theology. The book may be obtained from Preston/Speed Publications, RR 4 Box 705, Mill Hall, PA 17751; (717) 726-7844.

[2] The "good one" that is being referred to here is the Geneva Bible. Daniell states: "That this refers to the Geneva Bible—though for political reasons it could not be stated—is clear from the fact that whenever in that long preface of the 1611 AV the Bible is quoted (fourteen times) the authors do not do so from their own translation, nor from the Bishops', but from Geneva. Moreover, though nowhere do they acknowledge it, they took over a great deal of Geneva's text verbatim; in doing so they were taking over much of Tyndale, though they clearly went directly to him as well," *Tyndale's New Testament,* Translated from the Greek by William Tyndale (1534) in a modern-spelling edition and with an Introduction by David Daniell (New Haven, 1989), xiii.

[3] Frederic Kenyon, *Our Bible and the Ancient Manuscripts,* 4th ed. (New York, 1941), 232-233.

[4] Norman L. Geisler and William E. Nix, *A General Introduction to the Bible* (Chicago, 1968), 420-421.

[5] Gustavus Paine, *The Learned Men* (New York, 1959), 13.

[6] Terence H. Brown, "The Learned Men," in *Which Bible?,* ed. David Otis Fuller, 5th ed. (Grand Rapids, 1975), 23-24.

[7] G. W. Anderson and D. E. Anderson, *The Authorised Version: What Today's Christian Needs to Know about the KJV* (London, n.d.), 7.

[8] *ibid.,* 2-3.

[9] Jakob van Bruggen, *The Future of the Bible* (Nashville, 1978), 136-137.

[10] Joseph C. Philpot, "The Authorized Version — 1611," in *True or False?,* ed. David Otis Fuller (Grand Rapids, 1973), 21.

[11] This is because the language of a modern version can no longer be considered sufficiently "modern" with the passing of a few years! According to the presuppositions of the dynamic equivalent method of translation, all of the modern translations will either have to be revised endlessly, or else be consigned to the shelf as an historical curiosity and new translations made to take their place.

[12] Rousas J. Rushdoony, "Translation and Subversion," *The Journal of Christian Reconstruction* 12 (1989), 12-13.
[13] *ibid.*, 13.
[14] Edward F. Hills, *The King James Version Defended,* 4th ed. (Des Moines, 1984), 218.
[15] *ibid.*, 219.
[16] Anderson and Anderson, *The Authorised Version,* 9.
[17] John W. Burgon, *The Revision Revised* (Paradise, PA, n.d.), 113.
[18] *ibid.*, 225.
[19] Philpot, "The Authorized Version — 1611," 23.
[20] For example, the New International Version translation committee now believes that changes in American language and culture require a new gender-inclusive language edition of the NIV. The fact that this new edition so blatantly distorts the actual wording of the original Hebrew and Greek matters little to them because they have bought into the false humanistic presuppositions of the dynamic equivalence theory of translation. For a discussion and review of this new NIV edition, see G. W. Anderson and D. E. Anderson, "The New International Version: Inclusive Language Edition," *Quarterly Review* 534 (January to March, 1996), 6-13.
[21] Kenyon, *Our Bible and the Ancient Manuscripts,* 233-234.
[22] This continuous flood of new translations also has the insidious effect of weakening the authority of Scripture. As van Bruggen explains, "... nothing is more damaging to the authority of Scripture than for readers to think, 'it is only a translation, tomorrow there will be a new one'." *The Future of the Bible,* 136.
[23] Isn't it ironic that with the proliferation of all the modern-language versions that are supposed to make the Bible "more understandable" and are supposed to increase readership, that there is such a neglect of serious Bible reading and study and that there is such a profound theological ignorance in the average evangelical Christian as we see today? There is a heavy price to pay when the Bible is made more understandable than it is in the original Hebrew and Greek, and when people are deceived into thinking that the difficulty of Bible study is simply due to the "archaic" language of the AV, and that all they need is a modern language Bible that reads like today's newspaper. Proverbs 2:1-5 makes it clear that if one expects to understand the Word of God and find the knowledge of God, he must be willing to put forth the necessary effort and labor. The advertising claims of the publishers of the modern versions virtually deny Proverbs 2:1-5 and tell Christians that all they need to make God's Word understandable is *their* particular new translation. Note, for example, the presumptuous claims of World Bible publishers concerning their new translation *God's Word* (1995), "Now no interpretation needed. The Bible: the all-time bestseller—but hardly the best understood. *God's Word* the revolutionary new translation that allows you to immediately understand exactly what the original writers meant." Such statements as this are shameful (but the logical result of the dynamic equivalent theory of translation) and ought to be vigorously condemned by the church.

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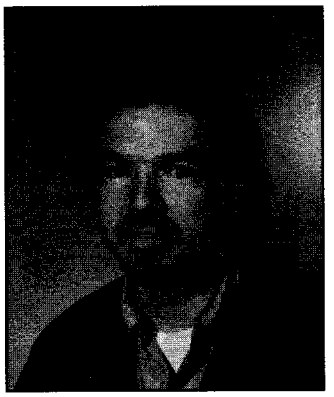
"The Message" by Eugene Peterson: A Critique

By Alexander J. Mac Donald, Jr.



What first alarmed me about "The Message" was the author's use of what sounded like New Age terminology: Life-Light, God-Colors, God-Expression, true selves, child-of-God selves, and other similar terms. I recognized these types of composite terms as being analogous to those used in New Age and Occult literature. My question was: why was this type of terminology now being used in what was being advertised as a "fresh, contemporary version of the New Testament"?

NavPress is usually thought to be an evangelical publisher, and the author of "The Message" is also considered by many to be an evangelical, Eugene Peterson. He is Professor of Spiritual Theology at Regent College in Vancouver, British Columbia, which is an evangelical school in the opinion of most. So why the strange, composite, New Age-like terminology?

I think that Peterson, being a teacher of spiritual theology, is strongly influenced by mystical thought. Spiritual theology is concerned with the inner-life and the devotional or prayer life or spiritual development of the individual. Often it delves into methods of prayer and techniques for meditative contemplation which have been used throughout the ages, especially those of the Christian mystics. This is why "The Message" more closely resembles a commentary on the New Testament by a professor of spiritual theology, than it does an accurate transference of the Greek New Testament into everyday English.

The reason the terminology in "The Message" appears to be New Age or Occult-like is because the Christian mystics use terms similar to those used by the New Age and Occult mystics. I believe Peterson is writing as a Christian mystic. The problem with this is that the similar terms represent similar concepts of God and how the mystics believe we can relate to, or be united with, God. These concepts and meditative or contemplative prayer methods are not found in the Bible, but come instead from non-Christian sources such as the Hindu Upanishads and the Buddhist Scriptures as well as the Neo-Platonic writers who profoundly influenced the early Christian mystics.

Because of this, many well-meaning Christian mystics fall into an erroneous concept of God, such as monism or pantheism due to this influence from non-Christian beliefs and practices. It is not the purpose of this article to debate the validity of Christian mysticism, but only to point out that "The Message" seems to have a rather strong mystical flavor. Considering the dangers that have always been inherent in

Christian mysticism, and the fact that most Christians desire to observe only those practices and beliefs which are in the Bible, why didn't the author and his publisher acknowledge that this is not just another version of the New Testament, but is in fact an overtly mystical and liberal version. (Eternal punishment and the naming of specific sins such as homosexuality, have been omitted.)

In a promotional brochure for "The Message," the publisher claims: "'The Message' is a fresh, contemporary version of the New Testament that transfers the informal and earthy flavor of the Greek into the rhythms and idiom of everyday English." In the same brochure, Gordon D. Fee endorses "The Message," saying that it is "exegetically sensitive yet speaks in the language of today."

Although it is advertised as a version of the New Testament which is faithful to the Greek, and is endorsed by many reputable scholars, no one should be mislead into thinking that this is true. It is not.

The back cover of "The Message" has an endorsement from J. I. Packer who says that it "catches the logical flow, personal energy and imaginative overtones of the original very well indeed." NavPress says again that, "'The Message' brings out the expressive, earthy flavor of New Testament Greek."

Here is the problem I have with these statements: the average Christian does not know Greek, but is certain that these renowned scholars are expert authorities in the Greek text and therefore trust their judgement. Regardless of the claims by the publisher and those of these highly respected scholars, it does not take a scholar to discover that "The Message" is not by any stretch of the imagination a contemporary version of the New Testament. I believe that the publisher has made use of two logical fallacies in this advertising campaign: blinding with science (since most people don't know Greek) and the appeal to authority (since most people trust and respect Packer and Fee as well as the others who lend their endorsement to "The Message").

Upon my examination of "The Message" and my comparison of it with the Greek New Testament, I soon realized that it was extremely unfaithful to the Greek. Peterson's transference of the Greek into English is very imaginative, but produces a perversion of the Word of God and not a new version of it. The claims of the publisher are misleading at best. They never mention that it is a paraphrase and not a translation, and a very free paraphrase without a doubt.

Observe the following comparison of Scripture passages taken from "The Message" with those taken from the New International Version:

NIV	"The Message"
Mt. 3:12	
"unquenchable fire"	"out with the trash"
Mt. 10:28	
"destroy both body and soul in hell"	"has in his hands"
Mt. 12:32	
"sins not forgiven"	"sawing off the branch"
Mt. 18:9	
"thrown into hell"	"exercising 20/20 vision from inside hell"
Mt. 23:33	
"condemned to hell"	"worm your way out"
John 1:12	
"children of God"	"true selves, child-of-God selves"
Rom. 3:28	
"justified by faith"	"welcome his action and enter into it"
Rom. 6:4	
"raised from the dead"	"raised into a light-filled world"
1 Cor. 6:9-10	
[lists various sins by name]	[omits all sins by name]
1 Tim. 1:10	
"pervert"	omits

These last two passages have the Greek word which is translated "homosexual" contained in them. It is the only two times the word occurs in the New Testament. The NIV translates the word as "homosexual" in 1 Cor. 6:9, but changes it to read "pervert" in 1 Tim. 1:10. "The Message" omits the word both times it occurs.

Two other passages are particularly disturbing. The first one is Mt. 28:19 which in the NIV reads: "baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit." "The Message" changes this to read: "baptism in the threefold name: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit." This makes it sound as though there is one God who has three names rather than three persons in the Godhead.

The second passage is Rom. 8:11 which the NIV translates as: "he who raised Christ from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies." "The Message" puts it this way: "he'll do the same thing in you that he did in Jesus, bringing you alive to himself." This sounds as if Jesus had to be spiritually regenerated or born again! Both of these passages are clearly poor renderings of the Greek text indeed.

In conclusion, let me say that "The Message" is a bad paraphrase of the New Testament which is very unfaithful to the original Greek. The use of mystical terms, the apparent aversion to offending the reader by naming specific sins and the alteration of passages referring to eternal punishment, establish reason enough to warn the would-be readers of "The Message." Although it is advertised as a version of the New Testament which is faithful to the Greek, and is endorsed by many reputable scholars, no one should be mislead into thinking that this is true. It is not.

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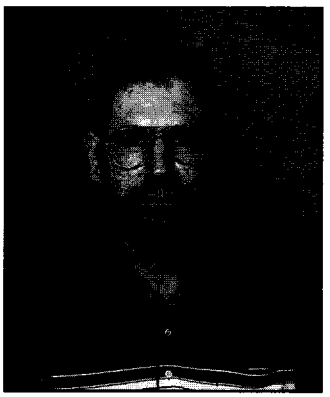
Theology and the Scripture Principle (Part 2)

By Joseph P. Braswell



To assume that God *cannot* speak in the manner that the Bible claims that he spoke is to assume that the God of the Bible does not exist (specific atheism). It is to substitute another god for the Biblical God. This is in fact what theological liberalism has done, and it is precisely at this point that theological liberalism (modernism) proves itself utterly unchristian. It does not proceed according to a theistic epistemology (the method of Schliermacher rests upon Kantianism, and Kant's metaphysic simply *assumes* that man is autonomous and the world is not created by God). If the God of the Bible exists, we will be driven to the Biblical view of revelation, for a genuinely theological epistemology, as part of a Christian-Theistic *creationist* world view, must be grounded in revelation.

The Modernist Impossibility

Yet modernism persists in pretending to do Christian theology and making theological pronouncements. Accordingly, we are warranted in demanding of the theological liberal how it is that he *knows* what he asserts. He judges on the basis of his "enlightened" cultural values or subjective tastes in his rejection of historic Christian doctrine, in his revision of the tradition. He rationalistically imposes his own rationality or moral sensitivity upon Biblical teaching, either syncretically conforming theology to the *a prioris* of current philosophical fashions or else eclectically picking and choosing what he judges to be worthy of belief. Generally, the standard employed in making his theological pronouncements is the liberal's own experience, which he simply *assumes* is authentically *Christian* experience — that is normative for him, that is deemed by him to be revelational. But how can he know this? Is he not, after all, a thoroughgoing fideist, an irrationalist? Are not all experiences — however divergent — rendered equally valid by this total lack of content, by the lack of a criterion? This is the triumph of subjectivism, a mysticism or enthusiasm that has loosed spirituality from any control and which leads to a cacophony of competing claims concerning what authentic Christianity is and means. The liberalist occasional appeal to the Bible is highly selective and *post hoc*: an appeal to justify in a spurious manner what is already, for independent reasons, believed to be true. For the liberal, the Bible is not a record of special revelation, but merely a thoroughly human witness to human religious experiences, to human meditations on matters divine and human interpretations of the meaning of certain occasions of mystical encounter with the numinous. This reflects the basic antithesis between Christianity and liberalism: between a religion based upon the presupposition that God has authoritatively spoken and a religion of the perennial human quest for the transcendent divine in an inherently ineffable mystical experience for which religious texts can be at best merely fallible guideposts. Liberalism is "democratic" or egalitarian, in that it assumes that God has not objectively and definitively spoken in a perspicuous, verbal-propositional manner in history, but that the Spirit "speaks" nonrationally to every man in his inner experience, and every man's highly individual, personal-private impressions (*feelings*) of this mystical encounter with the divine is in principle of equal worth phenomenologically. All objectivity and normativity is lost, and it cannot be regained simply by the liberal's appeal to a vague idea of general revelation in abstraction from Scripture, for his idea of general revelation is false.

> *Our very knowledge of* anything — *the knowability of the world, the meaningfulness of our assertions — presupposes revelation.*

Although we believe that general revelation was never intended to stand alone, that it was always correlated to, and complemented by, special revelation in both covenant historical acts and words of God, it is not necessary for us to deal with this matter here. What is surely clear is that general revelation would, at any rate, be insufficient after the entry of sin into the world. The idea of *the Fall* necessitates special revelation of God's intention to establish a new covenant of redemptive grace. It requires God to act in history — to undertake a history of redemption and reveal special, *saving* grace — if man is to be saved from sin. Moreover, if we acknowledge man's present fallenness, his subjectivity, tainted by sin, is not to be trusted as a reliable guide to God's purposes. What man thinks and feels is prone to error and generates false religion. It is thus clear that theological liberalism does not truly affirm that man is fallen, for it makes no distinction in its appeal to religious experience between the Spirit of truth and the spirit of error. If a new covenant is to come in history, it requires *objective* revelation in historical acts and a canonical codification of the authoritatively revealed interpretation of those events of accomplishment. Finally, the liberals' objection to the possibility of direct *verbal* revelation — to wit, that our language, based as it is on our experiential horizon, is inadequate to the task of

expressing divine truth — ignores the general-revelational character of our horizon of experience; the immanence of God overturns this objection's supposed appeal to divine transcendence, exposing it as an unbiblical understanding of the meaning of divine transcendence.

History and Revelation

In the Biblical scheme, Word-revelation is bound up with salvation-historical *act*-revelation as an interpretation of such redemptive actions and their covenantal significance and implications. The historical acts of God occur in a meaningful context constituted by prior words, and new words accompany each new set of act-revelations as the revealed interpretation thereof. God bears witness to his own mighty acts through his inspired prophets, providing the meaning of what he has accomplished. Special revelation occurs in history as a progressive revelation that unfolds a story of redemptive accomplishment. As covenant canon, this is not primarily an account of the history of a people's religion, but a normative account and interpretation of God's covenantal dealings in history, the basis of the people's faith remembrance that binds them as covenant people to their God and that is constitutive of their identity and self-understanding.

Thus, we come again to the Bible. Here is a book that depicts a certain *definite* theology or God-concept (God as eternal, self-existent, transcendent, infinite, personal, Creator; God as possessing omnipotence, omniscience, etc.; God as Triune) and claims to be itself the very Word of God. Is this claim justified?

Liberalism is "democratic" or egalitarian, in that it assumes that God has not objectively and definitively spoken in a perspicuous, verbal-propositional manner in history, but that the Spirit "speaks" nonrationally to every man in his inner experience, and every man's highly individual, personal-private impressions.

If this God has not revealed himself, he could not be known; we could have no such God-concept as that with which the Bible provides us. For such a god, if he existed, would be wholly inapprehensible. Thus, the very existence of the Bible in its concrete content which depicts this God presupposes that this God exists and has revealed himself. Indeed, the existence of this God presupposes that the world, as his creation, reveals him. A denial that the world is revelational is a denial that it is created by God, and this denial that the world is created is a denial of the existence of the Biblical God. Moreover, our very knowledge of *anything* — the knowability of the world, the meaningfulness of our assertions — presupposes revelation. The Christian Theist offers a TINA argument (There Is No Alternative) — a *transcendental argument* — to justify this presupposition that God is there and is not silent.

Natural and Special Revelation

If we grant that the very existence of the Bible necessarily depends on the actuality of God's revelation, we might still think that this only necessitates acceptance of natural (or general) revelation. Yet, if this revelation is as ubiquitous, as *pervasive,* as it indeed must be if every fact in our experience of the world is exhaustively revelational, then we must speak of natural revelation as *perspicuous* and as *sufficient* for true knowledge of God. Indeed, the objection that the Bible, rather than being itself a revelation, merely depends on the existence of natural revelation for the God-concept it presents would seem to take seriously the idea of the sufficiency and perpiscuity of natural revelation. Yet, we must ask why, as a point of historical fact, it is the Bible alone which is the source of this God-concept? Why do religions that have not been cross-pollinated from Biblical religion lack this theology? Why are there false religions, false god-concepts?

If we grant that natural revelation is perspicuous and sufficient, we can only account for the many idols by acknowledging the Biblical view of man's ethico-religious *fallenness.* The idea of creation presupposes that both the objective and the subjective conditions for knowledge by natural revelation were so ordered by God to make knowing God's perspicuous revelation both possible and actual. The objective situation remains perspicuously revelational; God is there to be clearly and sufficiently apprehended in every created fact, for the doctrine of creation implies the immanence of God, the inescapability of God's witness in the things made.

The problem must therefore be located in, and attributable to, man's present *subjective* condition, in a state of *abnormal* human incapacity akin to a form of *blindness.* It is a fault in man, not in the objective revelation of God, and this defective existential condition is what the Bible refers to as *sin.* If man is in his normal, natural (*i.e.*, his original, *as-created*) state, functioning as designed and intended, we would have to deny the idea of natural revelation in order to account for human error in religion, for the revelation of God is not sufficiently perspicuous to prevent serious misinterpretation. If we do not accept the fallenness of man and assume instead that man remains in his original state *coram Deo,* we are forced to believe that revelation is not objectively perspicuous, that God remains the *Deus Absconditus* (not immanent in covenantal *koinonia*) in order to allow man opportunity to seek him out. In such

a case, man is excused if he is errant in this spiritual quest in view of the ambiguities of his unillumined situation, groping in the darkness of God's absence. If, however, we assume that natural revelation is *in itself* (objectively) sufficient and perspicuous according to the original design and order of things and man is objectively situated in the midst of light, we are forced to accept the Biblical idea of the Fall, to man's culpable act of severing *koinonia* that was his original state. False religions are then distortions of the revealed truth that are due to a present maladjustment in man's orientation to God's world, to a subjective *proneness* to *err* that constitutes the present, abnormal human condition. Man does not now willingly and self-consciously accept and submit himself to the revelation of God but perversely reinterprets it in culpable misinterpretation.

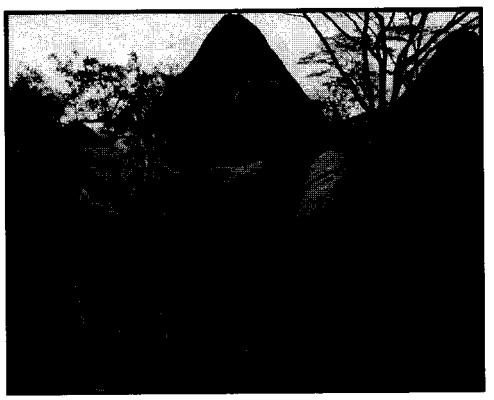
However, if we accept this idea of man's existential estangement from the truth that nevertheless surrounds and confronts him, we must ask how it is that one Book stumbles upon a true account of the situation rather than offering, as all other religious traditions, an idolatrous distortion of the God-revealed truth? If it is not due to God's renewed, special-revelational activity in addressing human sinfulness and restoring him to the truth, but is instead nothing more than just another *fallen* human interpretation, how is it that the Bible presents us with the correct interpretation of God, man, and the world? And if the Biblical presentation is not a true account of these matters, we have no justification for knowing anything whatsoever.

If God has recalled man to *koinonia* through a new covenant, seeking to restore the severed relation, then that must be *revealed.* No other claimant to be God's redemptive revelation than the Biblical record has any credibility. If the Bible is not the Word of God, Christian-Theism falls to the ground, as does any genuine theism; and if theism cannot be upheld, then we are but the products of impersonal chance events and our existence is ultimately meaningless and futile. If, however, we believe that we are made in the image of God for communion with God, then we must believe that God has spoken, that he has revealed himself in nature and in Scripture. It is on this basis that we unabashedly make our appeal to Scripture as authoritative Word of God, the infallible rule for faith and life.

Joseph Braswell has done undergraduate and graduate work in philosophy at the University of South Florida, but his real interest is in theology and Biblical studies. He has published several articles in various journals (including the Westminster Theological Journal, *the* Journal of Christian Reconstruction, *and the* Chalcedon Report*). He currently resides in Palatka, Florida and is engaged in research and writing.*

Why Did Christianity Die Out In Northern Sudan?

By Peter Hammond



For one thousand years Christianity predominated in Northern Sudan. From the sixth century to the fifteenth century Christianity was the official religion of the three Sudanese kingdoms of Nubia, Makuria (later Dotawo) and Alwa. For nine hundred years the Christians of Sudan successfully resisted the southward expansion of Islam.

Yet by the late fifteenth century the weakened Christian kingdoms reeled from waves of Arab attacks. Towns were burned and confusion spread. Nubia fell. The fall of the Christian kingdom of Dotawo in 1484 and the fall of the southernmost kingdom of Alwa in 1530 heralded the demise of the Christian Faith in Northern Sudan. Today Sudan is officially an Islamic state. The National Islamic Front (NIF) regime has declared Jihad (holy war) against the Christian South and against the Arabic-speaking Nuba Christians in central Sudan.

Article 1 of Sudan's Constitutional Decree (October 16, 1993) states: "Islam is the guiding religion . . . it is a binding code that directs the laws, regulations and policies of the State . . ." The government of Sudan's leaders regularly proclaim their goal of transforming Sudan into an Islamic state with one language, Arabic, and one religion, Islam. Nearly two million Christians have died so far (most from a man-made famine) in the scorched-earth and bombing campaign launched by the Muslim North.

While most of the Black South of Sudan claim to be Christians and steadfastly resist the Islamization and Arabization policies of the North, the question still remains: Why did Christianity die out in the North of Sudan?

The first Sudanese to be converted to Christ was the treasurer of Queen Candace of the kingdom of Meroe in A.D. 37 (*Ac. 8:26-40*). From this time on Christianity came to be increasingly embraced by the intellectuals and royal households. In Nubia and Alwa the kings seem to have accepted the Gospel first. The churches in the Nubian kingdom were always closely associated with the king. In fact, the king himself was often also a priest and it was a common practise for bishops and priests to hold leadership positions in the government. There is little historical evidence that the common people were effectively evangelized. As a result, when

the kingdoms began to break up politically, the church collapsed. The church in Northern Sudan was heavily centralized with ecclesiastial heirarchy and a separation between the clergy and the laity.

Even more seriously, the churches in Northern Sudan relied heavily upon the services of foreign bishops and priests. Most of the leaders of the church were Egyptian or Greek or Coptic. These languages were understood by the king and the educated people in his court, but not by the common people. Hence, Christianity in Northern Sudan was a religion of the educated elite and not of the common man. The churches were also strong in the towns and cities but had much less impact among the rural farming communities.

The over-dependence of Northern Sudan on foreign bishops and priests later starved the church of leadership as the Muslim armies cut off all contact between Egypt and Nubia in the thirteenth century. As the bishops had been appointed by the Greek and Coptic patriarchs in Egypt, the Islamic stranglehold made it very difficult for the church in Nubia to continue to grow.

Simultaneously the continuous migration of Arab traders and nomads into Sudan eroded the Christian dominance and spread the influence of Islam. The last years of the Christian kingdoms were years of confusion.

Intermarriage with Muslims brought dissention. The treacherous compromise of the Nubian kings to sell slaves to the Muslims as part of a peace treaty undermined the Christian civilization which had thrived for nearly a millenium.

It is important to understand that Christianity did not die out in Northern Sudan because of external persecution by Muslims. The churches were empty and abandoned long before Islam filled the vacuum and became well established. The churches were too closely allied to the political power structures and fell with the kings.

There was much quarrelling and conflict within the royal families. The Mamluk rulers in Egypt eagerly interfered and exploited the divisions in Nubia. The churches were so closely connected with the kings and to the patriarchs of Alexandria (in Egypt) that they rose and fell with them.

Sadly, during the final chapter of the demise of Christianity in Northern Sudan, six men from Alwa were sent as Ambassadors to the king of neighbouring Ethiopia. They begged him to send them priests and monks to teach them. Yet this desperate cry for help was ignored. The Christians in Ethiopia refused to help their neighbours to the west.

It is important to understand that Christianity did not die out in Northern Sudan because of external persecution by Muslims. The churches were empty and abandoned long before Islam filled the vacuum and became well established. The fact that few Nubians were literate and that services were in Greek and Coptic meant that the Word of God was not well known among the common people. The over-dependance upon foreign bishops and priests made the churches vulnerable when communication links to the outside world were cut.

The churches were too closely allied to the political power structures and fell with the kings. By compromising with Islam and allowing a quota of their own people to be enslaved in order to buy assurances of peace, a Nubian kingdom condemned itself to be judged by God.

The lessons to us today are clear: It is essential that we give priority to literacy training, Bible teaching and leadership training. We need to build for healthy, self-supporitng, self-governing and self-propogating churches. We need to teach and practice decentralization and the priesthood of all believers. And we need to be very careful not to be co-opted by secular politicians, only to be used to advance their humanist agendas. Nor may we ever compromise our Faith in order to buy some temporary illusion of peace.

May God be merciful to us and keep us from repeating the errors of the past. Let us be faithful to His Word and to His work. And may we not fail those who are being persecuted for their Faith and who are looking to us for help.

"Cush will submit herself to God" (*Ps. 68:31*).

Peter Hammond is the Founder and Director of Frontline Fellowship and the Director of United Christian Action (a network of 20 Bible-based groups working for revival and reformation in Southern Africa). He is an international speaker, presenting about 400 lectures or sermons each year throughout Africa, Eastern Europe and America.

Peter is married to Lenora and they have been blessed with three children — Andrea, Daniela and Christopher.

Donations for Peter Hammond should be made through:

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P.O. Box 28240
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The Free Market Lifts All Boats

By Don Mathews

"In the free market, the rich get richer while the poor get poorer." How often we read or hear such a statement! What it asserts is familiar. But is it true? Does the free market really leave the poor behind?

A good way to determine how the poor fare in the free market is to examine how the standard of living of the poor has changed over time. One factor is real income. Between 1900 and 1990 in the U.S., the growth in real (inflation-adjusted) income — generated by the free market — was enormous: Real national income in 1990 was 15 times greater than it was in 1900. Real per capita income was over four and one-half times greater in 1990 than in 1900.

Another important measure of income is real money earnings from employment. Real earnings were almost four times greater in 1990 than in 1900. But statistics on real earnings mask significant changes in work hours and the way workers are compensated. In 1900 nonfarm workers toiled 60 hours a week; by 1990 they worked 39.3 hours a week, a decrease of over one third. By our current definition of poverty, 56 percent of families in the United States were poor in 1900. By 1947, even after the economic shocks of the Great Depression and World War II, the percentage of families in poverty had been reduced by more than one half, to 27 percent. By 1967, the percentage was halved again, to 13 percent. Notably, the decrease in poverty between 1900 and 1967 occurred before the advent of the greatly expanded welfare state. In other words, it was the free market, not government welfare, that caused the poverty rate to fall from 56 percent in 1900 to 13 percent in 1967.

Obviously, what happened to real incomes and poverty rates demonstrates that the free market does not leave the poor behind. Another measure of the standard of living is the level of goods and services consumed. Real per person spending on consumer goods rose dramatically between 1900 and 1990. Health is another important component of the standard of living. Life expectancy at birth was 47.3 years in 1900, and 75.4 years in 1990. Deaths from once-common diseases have dropped dramatically since 1900. It was not primarily medical advances, but improved water and sewer systems and housing, that lowered mortality rates — and helped the poor far more than the rich.

By the official definition of poverty, a household of four is classified as poor if its annual income is less than $14,400. But, as noted earlier, living standards depend on the goods and services consumed, so a family should be classified as poor on the basis of its level of consumption, not income.

Households officially now counted as poor are as likely to own a host of major consumer goods as was the general population just two decades ago.

In the United States today a household which owns a washer, dryer, refrigerator, stove, microwave, color TV, VCR, and car might still be considered poor. The point is, the free market has not only dramatically improved the material well-being of the poor; it has generated so much wealth that it has completely transformed what we consider poverty to be.

What has happened to the living standards of the poor in our predominantly free-market economy shouldn't surprise us. The soul of the free market is not wealth creation but liberty and private property, and it is liberty and private property which allow entrepreneurs to create more efficient production methods that yield better goods and services. The free market does not leave the poor behind; it makes them, as well as everyone else, richer. Much richer.

Professor Mathews teaches economics at Brunswick College, Brunswick, Georgia.

Wanted: Unexceptional People

By Andrea Schwartz

If you want something done, ask a busy person. Why is this true? Simply, because busy people are busy because they are getting things done and there's always plenty to do and others have asked them to do things that they are busy doing and thus can probably do the thing you want them to do, too. Right?

Exhausted yet? So are many dedicated people involved with Christian Reconstruction. In fact, they are as exhausted from the things they are doing as from the things they know need doing and don't have time to do themselves.

Please don't make the statement, "I'm not exceptional like they are. I couldn't do the things they do!" Wrong!!! Most are not exceptional people at all — they are un-exceptional people who have received God's grace by doing the practical things He has laid before them to do. "But, God hasn't told me to do these things like He's told them!" Really? Could it be they read the same Bible you do and have taken the Lord's directives more personally than you have?

This is not a guilt trip. This is an invitation. We at Friends of Chalcedon exist to assist Chalcedon in the many tasks God has laid before its leaders. We are looking for and need un-exceptional people (like we are) who see a need and are eager to fill it. The pay? Treasures in heaven and increased fellowship

here on earth as you work with a team that is dedicated to bringing all areas of life and thought under the dominion of Jesus Christ.

This invitation is not a request for project ideas or avenues Chalcedon should pursue as an organization. It is an invitation to work — sometimes very unexciting work. If you are interested in finding out more about how you can get involved, send a self-addressed, stamped envelope to:

Friends of Chalcedon
4960 Almaden Expressway, #172
San Jose, CA 95118

and we'll send you a questionnaire to fill out that will help us identify areas of your skills and interest.

Who knows? You may end up being one of those exceptional people that others marvel at.

Andrea Schwartz and her husband Ford head Friends of Chalcedon. More information about their work is available on the inside back cover.

POSITION PAPER NO. 213

Rationalism and the Mind of Man

By R. J. Rushdoony

One of the great fallacies of rationalism is its failure to take the fall of man seriously. Man's original sin is to try to be his own god, his own source of law, morality, and determination (*Gen. 3:5*). The Reformed view is that man is totally depraved as a result of the Fall, *i.e.*, every aspect of his being is corrupted by his sin. This does not mean that fallen man is not capable of some limited good but rather that the ruling and over-ruling premise in his life is his will to be god, to supplant God and to efface His memory.

Now, if the Bible be true, we must agree with St. Paul that "the carnal mind is enmity against God: for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be" (*Rom. 8:7*). What we are told, *first*, is that fallen man's *mind* "is enmity against God." This certainly applies to the Scholastic view of the mind as well as Protestant rationalism. We are not told that the natural man's mind entertains enmity against God but that it *is* enmity against God in all its being. The evidence for this is its refusal to be subject to the *law* of God. Moreover, given the premise of the Fall, natural man's mind cannot be other than "enmity against God." The rationalist's premise is that reason can prove God's existence and vindicate His claims to fallen man, an impossible tenet.

We can neither presuppose that fallen man can be convinced of God's existence and law by reason nor can we assume a neutral stance on his part. But this is precisely what the rationalist tries to do. James Oliver Buswell, Jr., in *A Christian View of Being and Knowing* (1960), in criticizing Cornelius Van Til, insisted on the innocence of many unbelievers: "I know many unbelievers who are simply lost, bewildered, and in the dark" (James Oliver Buswell, Jr: *A Christian View of Being and Knowing*, p. 175: Grand Rapids, Michigan: Zondervan, 1960). It is a pity that Buswell did not notify God that He was in error in His judgments concerning fallen men! The Bible obviously needs revision if Buswell was right.

The rationalist begins by placing himself outside time and history.

This is not a trifling matter. If the Bible is true about man, man's knowing is determined not by pure reason, but by his relationship to God. This means that pure reason does not exist, nor can man's reason function without reference to his relationship to God. As against all rationalistic philosophies, certain moral premises precede or undergird and condition all man's thinking. Is man the thinker at war with God, or is he at peace with Him? The thinking of John Dewey is not the thinking of Cornelius Van Til. We can concede that a non-Christian and a Christian are both good thinkers, but we must recognize that each begins with a different presupposition to argue to a logical conclusion.

The rationalist begins by placing himself outside time and history. His reason is supposedly objective and timeless. Of course, he may be in a chain of development, a Hume, a Hegel, a Dewey, or a Wittgenstein, but, somehow, for the rationalist, a philosophical rationalist transcends time to speak out of the clouds of being as the voice of logic. The rationalist begins with irrational premises about logic and reason.

Moreover, the rationalist insists on placing God Himself under the judgments of man's reason. E. J. Carnell wanted all revelations to meet the test of his reason. The arrogance of the Fall is in abundant evidence in rationalism.

The mind of man "is enmity against God" whenever and wherever it seeks to think without beginning with God. Whether they intend to or not, men put first things first, and the rationalist places his reason before God: he begins with reason, not with God.

The starting point of rationalism is more the Fall than it is reason. Its pride, arrogance, and neglect of the Biblical revelation is evidence of this. Cite the Fall and the noetic effects of sin to a rationalist and he derides it as not a rational argument while professing to be a Christian.

In recent years, humanistic rationalism has largely left philosophy. At the same time, it has flourished within the church. It is very much an Enlightenment survival and alien to theology in spirit.

Random Notes, 69

By R. J. Rushdoony

1. One of the happy experiences of 1996 was seeing again some of my school and neighborhood friends of the early 1930s. One of them was a still beautiful and gracious woman, perhaps three years my junior. Her family was, in a Christian community, notable for the caliber of their faith and works. A son, a bit older than I, became a pastor and is now retired. My cousins and I, and various neighbors from nearby farms, went often to the river to swim in its refreshing, clear waters, running over clean sands.

On one occasion, as we changed into swim wear, two of my cousins, girls, came out from behind the shrubs giggling, while E., the girl from this family, was blushing. We finally teased the reason for it out of the girls. In those depression years, farm women not only made all their bread but they bleached flour and feed sacks of all imprints and made clothes out of them. It seems E. was wearing a slip which had not bleached completely, and, across her abdomen the lettering still read, "Guaranteed Pure!" Very true in her case, and for all of us. All were poor in those years, but also good, and happy.

2. Remembering those early depression years and school days brings to mind another girl, from a hard-working dairy farmer's family. She came to our high school from a two-room, two-teacher country grade school. The farmer-trustees insisted on a very good education. My cousin Ed, among others in the family, went to Clay School and studied Shakespeare, Eliot's *Mill on the Floss,* and more, by the eighth grade. Well, this girl, whose name began also with E., milked 20 to 30 cows, morning and night. While it did not show, she had strong, powerful arms. Country boys then were too poor for dating, but not town boys, and E. had many town boys at *first* trying to date her. Going to the movies appealed to E., but "no fresh stuff." Town boys who were persistent found that she could slug harder than anyone they new! Each boy kept silent, wanting his fellow town boys to get a like punishment! Well, for her first semester in high school E. saw many movies, enough for a lifetime from her perspective, and she then went back, contented, to milking cows as always.

3. Gary and Deborah Burlingame sent some interesting reprints of various articles on diseases. One point interested me greatly. We often read that the white man's diseases decimated the natives of many countries, but the reverse was also often true: the diseases of natives wiped out Europeans. It was, for example, a long time before Europeans could live in Africa because native diseases killed them in *overwhelming* numbers. This protected Africa for centuries from European invasions, but it also delayed its entry into the world of nation states.

4. Recently, on television, PBS had a documentary on the life of Andrew Carnegie, well done on the whole except for a key fact. Carnegie was a very religious man, but his religion was Darwinism, and out of it came his brutal belief in the survival of the fittest and his hostility to the laboring man. This same religion still marks most of our corporate leaders, and it explains why most are now internationalists. They see the world state as the next step in social evolution, and opposition to it as regressive.

5. Recently I heard of a girl from a non-Christian family who reached puberty. Her mother gave her a lecture on "the curse," male oppression, the unfairness of life, and much, much more. Today I heard of what two wonderful friends, parents of eight children, did when their oldest girl began to menstruate. They held a family party to celebrate her introduction to womanhood, and all celebrated happily. Alice and Michael are indeed blessed in their wonderful children.

6. A telephone call brought the sad news of the death of someone I knew well, although in recent years we have resided in different areas. He was a quiet, hard-working man, perhaps 25 years younger than I. His daughter, a godly woman, has married well, but the son, tall, handsome, and talented, was marked by perversity. His father's business was successful, and the son had an assured financial future. He was good at work, but he wanted freedom, "I wanna be me," meaning irresponsible. His mother wept at his dereliction, but it killed his father. God's commandment concerning honoring parents means to me that, not only is such a son suicidal, and that his days may not be long on earth, but that he lives under God's curse.

7. Speaking of parents, one of the things my father taught me, and my mother underscored, was that life is best when we consistently show both gratitude to God and to man, and courtesy. So, very early after coming of age, I started writing (until recent years) yearly letters to different people whom I had never met, thanking them for what they had written and I had grown thereby. I would make clear that I wanted no return letter. One letter I wrote in the late 1960s or very early in 1970 produced an interesting response. It was to the remarkable economist and novelist, Elgin Groseclose. A telephone call in 1971, to our then home in Canoga Park, California was from Dr. Groseclose, who was in Los Angeles on business. He came over to see us, and we had a wonderful time together. On courtesy, my father taught me quite a lesson. My parents often took in friends and even needy strangers who were in need. Twice people exploited this, one man staying three months because he enjoyed it so much! Well, when I was maybe nine, we took in this widow and her son, two or three years my elder, for some weeks. Just before lunch, one day I discovered that the son had stolen some of my best postage stamps out of my collection. I went to the table and angrily confronted him. My father asked me to go with him, which meant a trip to the barn, where he told me that I could remain with the animals until I learned to behave myself like a man. I should have told him of the theft, he said, and he would have taken care of it *quietly.* After I calmed down, I came in, apologized, and ate. My stamps were later returned to me.

8. One of the saddest aspects of 1996 was the political debate on protectionism versus free trade. I am against both. Protectionism prevailed until Franklin D. Roosevelt's presidency, when free trade ideas were promoted by his Secretary of State, Cordell Hill. But both protectionism and free trade are political acts and therefore more governed by politics than economics. Under so-called protectionism, the U. S. became the world's major economic power, and under so-called free trade policies, it has still grown. The credit belongs, not to Washington D. C., but to businessmen who had been able to get around the roadblocks created by politics.

Announcements

Book Notice

That "scandalous" red book *Drinking with Calvin and Luther!* is now back in print. This is the second edition; there are many changes, mostly additional Reformation history and exegesis of Scripture.

Some samples: Did you know that it was not uncommon for colonial churches to place a bottle of whiskey in the cornerstone of their buildings as a drink offering to Christ?

Do you realize that Martin Luther unwittingly developed a crude grading scale for good and bad beer?

John Wycliff, "the morning star of the Reformation," could have participated in a town riot instigated by a protest against the poor quality of the wine.

Zwingli seemed to think that aversion to wine was a symptom of "sickness."

One of the last requests of John Knox pertained to finishing a hogshead of wine.

Learn why Psalm 23 is no friend to teetotalers and why the greatest statement in the Bible about salvation by grace alone was "inspired" by a refreshing wine.

These and many other additions are featured in this second edition of *Drinking with Calvin and Luther!*

Prices are $4.25 each or $3.50 for five or more. The shipping is included.

If you would like the second edition, please notify Pastor Jim West. Write to: Covenant Reformed Church, 2020 16th Ave., Sacramento, California, 95822. For orders over five, you may call: (916) 488-5569.

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MY BACK PAGES

Re-thinking Church Some More

By Steve M. Schlissel

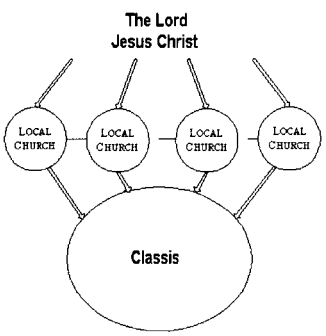
In our last article on church government we learned that — try as one might: jump and scream, twist and shout — Acts 15 does not even suggest, let alone justify, the normativity of abiding wider assemblies or regularly stated meetings. The Dutch Reformed are less hysterical, more sober in their reading of that passage than their Scottish-Presbyterian brethren. J. Van Dalen's comments are responsible, sound and to the point:

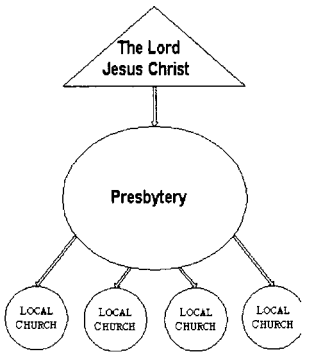
> From all this Scriptural data it is clear that the doctrinal differences which had arisen in Antioch were not resolved by a synod-in-principle, but by the congregation at Jerusalem, as temporary bearer of the evangelical New Testament Word, under the leadership of the apostles and by inspiration of the Holy Spirit. A bond of churches as we know it today, and a decision of the churches together, are not in view in all of this; to see in this apostolic convention at Jerusalem a major assembly as we know it today is to do injustice to Scripture.... Scripture does not give a single example of a major assembly as we know it today.

The ease with which many Reformed allow Acts 15 to speak for itself, compared to the distention of the passage by some Presbyterians is, of course, related to what each brings to the text. For all the similarities between the Reformed and Presbyterian, there are still reasons for their respective names. Presbyterians tend to be very big on church government. After all, they've chosen a form of government as a name to distinguish them in the Protestant bouillabaisse. The Reformed have chosen a system of doctrine (which system, praise the Lord, is shared by true, confessing Presbyterians). The Reformed view of church government, though sharing much with Presbyterianism, immediately commends itself as more in line with what we find in Scripture. There we read of this local church and that local church and the other local church. There are no New Testament letters addressed to a presbytery.

The accompanying illustrations might help you see how each approaches the subject of the local church. In the Reformed view, Christ administers His Word directly through local churches which, though *organically* related to other confessing churches through Christ, may or may not formally affiliate with

others. In the typical Presbyterian view, Christ delegates His authority directly to the presbytery. In the Reformed view, wider assemblies are not seen as necessary *for the being* of the church, but may contribute to her *well-being.* In the Presbyterian view, local churches are lesser *courts,* which may come or go; presbytery is the abiding court. (This "court" nomenclature has given birth to an unfortunate mindset which can distort a church's self-understanding. For a few, the idea of church as court has led to ecclesiastical litigation as some sort of macho proof of viability.) In the Reformed view the Classis gets its integrity from the local churches (*e.g.,* ministerial membership and credentials are held by the local church wherein Christ's ecclesiastical authority directly resides). In the Presbyterian view the local churches derive their integrity from the Presbytery (the minister's membership and credentials are in the Presbytery, not the local church).





Further, despite substantial doctrinal unity, there are some cultural differences between Reformed and Presbyterian bodies. In America, each order has generally operated within a denominational structure. If you wanted to practice Reformed church government or Presbyterian church government, you would normally do so by joining a denomination. These denominations have been, in the main, monoethnic or monocultural, carryovers from European national or territorial churches. Dealing with their cultural cargo, for good or ill (or both) would be part of the deal when joining.

The element of ethnic identity within certain Reformed and Presbyterian traditions cannot be dismissed as simply beside the point. People are often expected to abide by ethnic tradition, or habits of mind, as much as by Scripture. In our former denomination, the Christian Reformed Church, we were immeasurably enriched by contact with many compelling Dutch traditions. But there were downsides. To use an example which did not affect us personally, many churches, in calling a minister, seemed far more concerned to call a Dutchman who may or may not be Reformed than to call a Reformed man who may or may not be Dutch.

Another complication when joining a denomination: Your relation to other local churches is commonly mediated through the denomination you have joined.

Of even greater concern to us is the tendency of denominated churches to focus their energies and attentions on the goings-on in the denomination to the disregarding of what's going on *regionally.* That is to say, denominational ties sometimes serve as a distraction from, if not a deterrent to, strengthening the regional witness of Christ *where he has placed you.* Whatever we may say about church government and denominations, it is rather clear that New Testament epistles were regionally-bound (bound, as in destination, not restriction). And the ascended Lord Jesus Christ dictated seven letters to John to be delivered to seven regional churches, not seven denominations. Contact and cooperation with local churches should receive greater attention from us Presbyterian and Reformed folk. Others will not become Reformed through neglect!

For a few, the idea of church as court has led to ecclesiastical litigation as some sort of macho proof of viability.

Is there a way, other than by denominational affiliation, to be both Presbyterian and Reformed? We think so. Let's call this way "Organic Reformed." That's "organic" as in "derived from a living organism." That's "living organism," as in the church of Jesus Christ. We will start with the proposition that a local church with a duly called plurality of Elders is to be regarded (absent any manifest heresy) as an instance of the true church (though it may be healthy or ill).

You will recall that I operate with the synagogue model in mind. A Jewish man recently complained, in a letter to a rabbi, that there were too many synagogues in his area. "By what authority can a group of observant men organize a new congregation?," he wanted to know. The rabbi reminded the questioner of the talmudic convention that ten men may constitute a lawful synagogue. He cited many authorities who agree that, though a new synagogue be a burden, it may not be prevented. He cited a passage from Gemara which says there were 394 synagogues and an equal number of "study houses" (which competed for students) in Jerusalem at the time the city was destroyed by Titus. He recalled the opinion of the sages that the era of Hezekiah was like unto a "Messianic period" because there were so many synagogues and schools. The rabbi counseled wisely: "It would seem better to complain that there are too few synagogues rather than too many." We should be anxious to recognize as many churches as we can, not as few. (*To be continued, D.V.*)

Steve Schlissel has been pastor of Messiah's Congregation in Brooklyn, NY since 1979. He serves as the Overseer of Urban Nations (a mission to the world in a single city), and is the Director of Meantime Ministries (an outreach to women who were sexually abused as children). Steve lives with his wife of 22 years, Jeanne, and their five children.

One of the things we are proud of is the many varied activities of our associates. Some of them are publishing important newsletters, and we take this opportunity to tell you of them.

1. ***The Lofton Letter*** by John Lofton, P.O. Box 1142, Laurel, Maryland 20725, e-mail address: JLof@AOL.com, $100 a year, monthly (20 pages).

2. Ian Hodge of Australia's Foundation for the Advancement of Christian Studies is an affiliate, and he publishes ***F.A.C.S. Report, Probe,*** and ***Christian Economics*** monthly, on a donation basis: write to him at P.O. Box 547, Ferny Hills, QLD 4055, Australia, Tel/fax 07-851-1265.

3. For those of you who read French, Jean-Marc Berthoud publishes several periodicals. For sample copies, send a donation and write to Jean-Marc Berthoud, Trabendan 16, Lausanne, CH 1006, Switzerland.

4. For the Chalcedon tapes, write to Christian Tape Productions, P.O. Box 1804, Murphys, California 95247. The twice monthly Easy Chairs are $4.50 each, and the weekly Bible studies (two lessons on each tape), are also $4.50. For a sample of either, send $5; California residents add 7¼% sales tax.

5. **Friends of Chalcedon** provides networking and other resources to Chalcedon and its supporters. It assists Chalcedon in producing books and video materials, hosts conferences to bring Chalcedon supporters in contact with each other, and refers Chalcedon supporters in ways to help Chalcedon. Friends of Chalcedon is at 4960 Almaden Expressway, #172, San Jose, CA 95118 [408] 997-9866 (phone and fax).

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Chalcedon derives its name from the great ecclesiastical Council of Chalcedon (A.D. 451), which produced the crucial Christological definition: "Therefore, following the holy Fathers, we all with one accord teach men to acknowledge one and the same Son, our Lord Jesus Christ, at once complete in Godhead and complete in manhood, truly God and truly man . . . ." This formula directly challenges every false claim of divinity by any human institution: state, church, cult, school, or human assembly. Christ alone is both God and man, the unique link between heaven and earth. All human power is therefore derivative; Christ alone can announce that "All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth" (*Matthew 28:18*). Historically, the Chalcedonian creed is therefore the foundation of Western liberty, for it sets limits on all authoritarian human institutions by acknowledging the validity of the claims of the One who is the source of true human freedom (*Galatians 5:1*).

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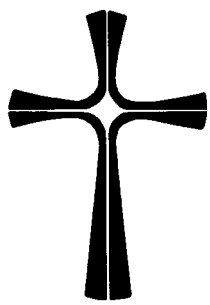

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