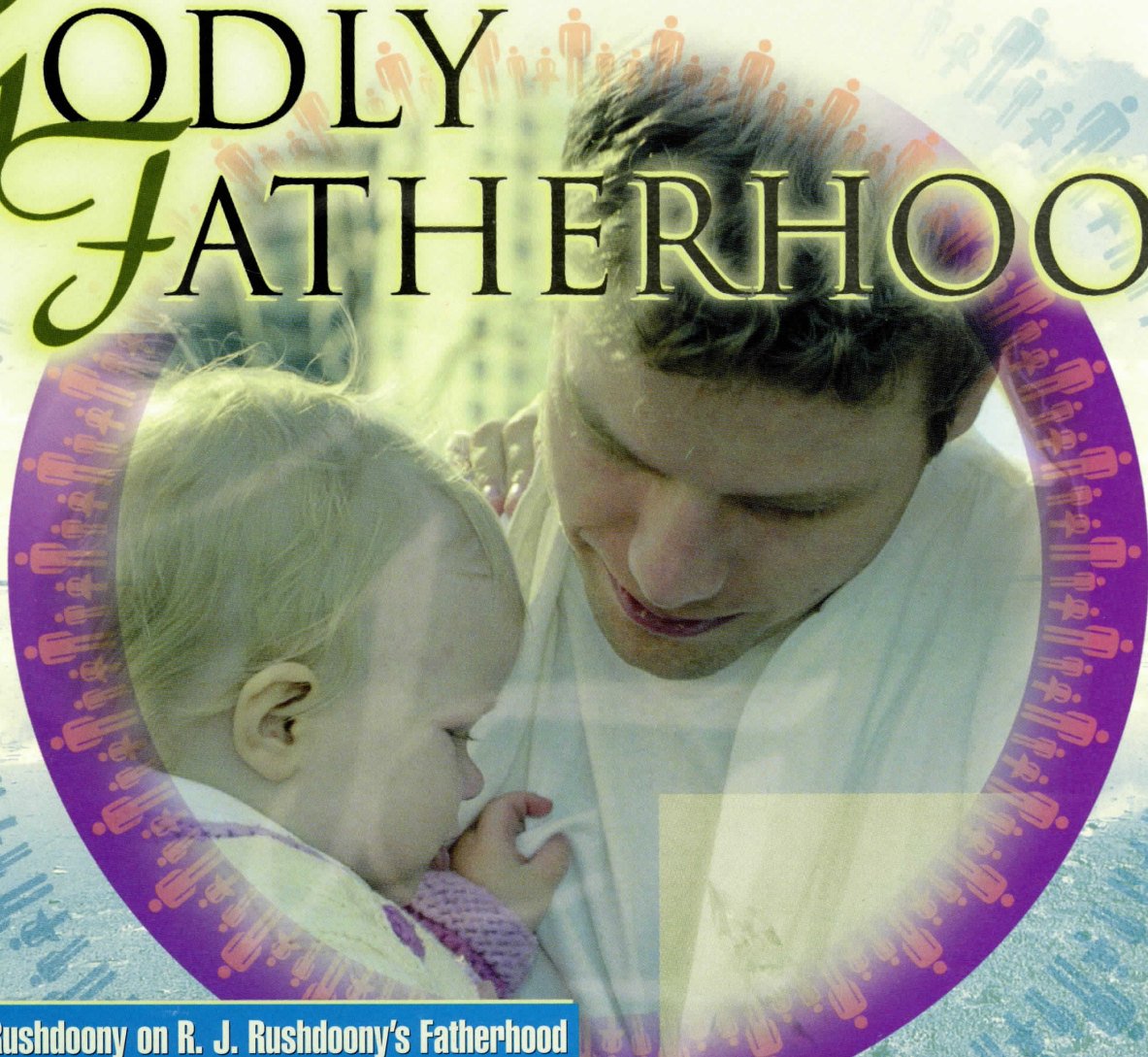


CHALCEDON

Report

No. 407, JUNE 1999

GODLY FATHERHOOD



Mark Rushdoony on R. J. Rushdoony's Fatherhood

Andrew Sandlin on Saying Yes to Godly Heredity

Ellsworth McIntyre on What's a Father to Do?

David Gamble on the Joy of Christian Fatherhood

Plus

R. J. Rushdoony on Serbia

Brian Abshire on WWJD

And Much More...

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CHALCEDON'S EXCITING,
NEW AUDIOVISUAL
MINISTRY

CHALCEDON Report

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

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Fatherhood

By Rev. R. J. Rushdoony



Detroit c. 1924, R. J. Rushdoony 8, Rose Ruschoony 6-1/2, with parents Y. K. Rushdoony and Rose Rushdoony

Andrew Sandlin has asked that I write about my father's influence on my life and faith. This is not easy to do, since his formative power was more than I can summarize.

Both my father and mother influenced me profoundly. I was closer to my mother but more taught by my father. Both all their lives read their Bibles daily. After his blindness, my father recited it from memory. My mother's faith was simple and uncomplicated. My father's was complex. In Armenian, he was a simple, trusting believer in the whole Word of God. In English, he showed the influence of his education at the University of Edinburgh and New Mound College, and he reflected the British systematic theology; he more or less took modernist views of the Bible on a tentative basis. But, as an Armenian, he held to the Faith of his fathers. When we argued, he

always ended up by commending my strong Calvinism and unreserved faith.

I cannot begin to delineate his influence on me. Before my birth, he dedicated me to the Lord and His ministry. I was told this very early, and though at times I rebelled against the idea, most of the time I felt honored and privileged.

My father told me, well before my teens, when I was already an omnivorous Bible reader, that there was much in the Bible I would not understand, but to believe and obey was my primary responsibility.

My father and I would often take long walks together, especially in the evenings, and these were times of informal teaching. My first ambition was to be a farmer, having even then a love of the country, and then an astronomer, for my father taught me to love and know the stars. Above all, he taught me that to serve God is man's highest privilege and calling, something I strongly still believe. If the Bible is true, no king or emperor has ever had a calling to rival that of God's servants.

Both my parents taught me to love reading. They read to us or bought books for us, something I have done for my children and grandchildren. I enjoyed talking with them and discussing things with them to the last.

The family was important to them, personally and religiously. My father laid down the law that, when we were apart for any reason, a weekly card or letter was a *duty*, one I honored faithfully, I think.

Very early, I was troubled and distressed by the lax and disrespectful attitude of American children toward their parents, and I found it as painful to hear as foul or obscene language. I saw it as immoral and religiously wrong. I loved my parents, and, even now after many years, I miss them, and I look forward to seeing them in heaven.

My father knew the Bible by heart, both in English and Armenian, as some of us, including my eldest daughter, Rebecca, can testify. It was a wonderful sound to hear him in his blindness as he walked around joyfully reciting the Bible, even to the many chapters of "begats." It was there that his faith shone through most clearly and joyfully. And it was a joyful faith. It saw him through orphaned years, the massacres and the loss of his firstborn, Rousas George, through the death march, and hard years of work, and finally blindness. He was a happy man because he knew his Lord, and the truth of His Word.

Husband and Wife as King and Queen in the Traditional Armenian Wedding

Rev. Y. K. Rushdoony

Introduction:

My father, R. J. Rushdoony, has long stressed the eternal nature of God's law. It is eternal because it is the Word of the eternal Sovereign. Because only God is sovereign, all man's legitimate authority is derivative, or ministerial. No one person or agency such as church or state can claim total jurisdiction. Power is limited because the law applies to and must be independently applied by different law spheres. This limits jurisdiction yet enhances authority because one acts in his own sphere as an obedient minister of God's Word. One central law sphere is the family. My father has emphasized the importance of parents exercising dominion in their homes. This is a necessary extension not just of the Dominion Mandate but of covenant theology. My father has frequently referred to the Armenian wedding as illustrating the fact that this is not a new concept, but was an ancient custom in his father's Old World experience. The following is an excerpt from a letter written by my grandfather to my father on February 24, 1956, illustrating this fact.

Mark R. Rushdoony

As to the Armenian wedding, yes, the bridegroom and bride are crowned as king and queen. The evening before the wedding the bridegroom is given a good bath, then a clean shave in the presence of all friends and relatives called to the wedding. He puts on his best clothes. A person, who is an expert in making the crown, makes one weaving it with red and green silk put around golden paper. In the villages where the old custom survives men wear turbans or headbands. The crown is made of an elongated cross in an oval circle. That circle is closed by green and red silk neatly woven around golden papers. They place the crown on the forehead in the turban of the bridegroom. He is now proclaimed as a king and seated on a chair. Friends and relatives hold each other's arms forming a circle. Slowly and in majestic gravity they dance singing the crowning song in a kind, moving way so that many burst into tears. I that am writing these lines can not restrain my tears because of past memories. They have a list of famous monasteries built in the name of some saint and the Holy Cross. After each stanza they repeat it over and over again, changing only the name of the saint or monastery. For instance, they sing, "Now you are facing the Holy Cross wearing red and green." Then the tune comes to other saints or monasteries, for instance — "Now you are facing St. Thomas, or Naregatjia etc. wearing red and green. May God keep you blameless to enjoy your queen." When this is finished, they dye their hands or only fingernails with the king by some red dye called "henna." They depart very late.

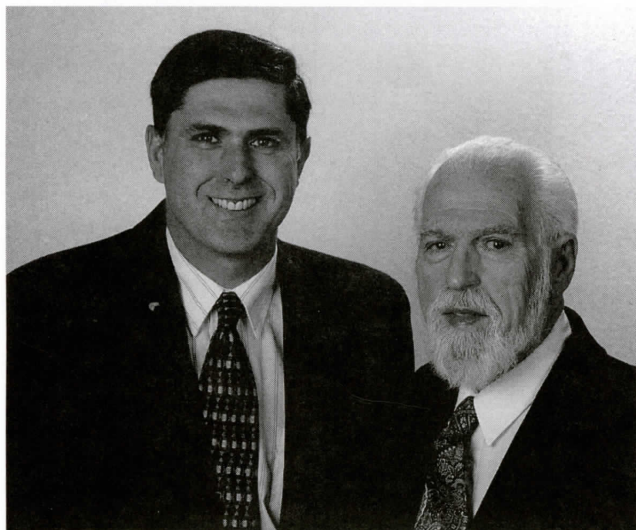


Y. K. Rushdoony and Rose (Gazarian) Rushdoony, August 30, 1913

At the bride's home, the bride, takes her bath and puts on her best clothes. The Godmother takes the red and green silken girdle and seven times girdles the bride making good wishes; then they put the ring-like crown on her head, a shining star on the forehead proclaiming her the would-be queen. Then also they redden their hands or fingernails with the queen with red henna. At the time of the wedding with solemn music and dancing they take out the king and queen from their homes and lead them to church. Before entering the church, the king and queen have to meet. The king goes in front and the queen fast behind him. They enter the church. At the wedding or marriage both bridegroom and bride take communion. Then the bridegroom is mantled as a king, having also a dagger in his belt, holding a Gospel on his breast and a cross, a small one, hung from his crown on his forehead. The bride also is mantled as a queen, having a stole put on her and a cross on her forehead. Then the bridegroom and the bride by religious singing are led from the church to the wedding-hall. The "Sharagan" or hymn that is sung pertains to king crowning. The festivals last three days. The king has his throne in the festival-hall on an elevated place, having his guards by him. The queen with her maidens is screened off in the hall of the festival. The third day at dinner each person that was invited to the wedding gives his or her wedding present; then by a religious ceremony, the festival is over.

My Father

By Rev. Mark R. Rushdoony



Mark R. Rushdoony and Rousas John Rushdoony

My father is Rousas John Rushdoony, Chalcedon's founder and Chairman of the Board. From him I have learned more than to honor my parents; I have learned to honor my Christian heritage and pray for God's covenantal blessing on my children; and I have learned that I am in a line that represents generations of faith.

Islamic Ottoman Turks blinded my father's grandfather. When this did not stop his performance of his duties in the Armenian Apostolic Church, they killed him. My father's father was left orphaned as a young boy but was rescued by American Presbyterian missionaries to whom he expressed lifelong love and gratitude. As a young man working at that mission, he escaped the Armenian genocide of 1915-16 by escaping with his wife, then pregnant with my father, into Russia and then to the United States. From my father I learned that his family had been uprooted from the land of their birth and centuries of proud tradition because they were Christians held in contempt by a non-Christian culture. From my father I learned that, as a Christian, I must always stand in terms of my faith.

My father in some ways represents a thinking older than his eighty-three years. In more than the literal sense he was conceived in the Old World and yet born in the New. His parents were uprooted from a place where their history went back over two millennia; much of that tradition was passed on in the Armenian communities and churches in which he was raised. The "old country" was still a very real part of their lives. He was surrounded by Christians who survived massacre yet could project

dignity and Christian grace. When he entered school, English was his second language. He learned to have a keen understanding of Christian history and a special appreciation for the persecution of believers. His early years were spent on a farm in a rural area of California. He remembers the first time he saw an automobile. He has often felt closer to an earlier generation of not only Armenians but even Americans, for he very early came to appreciate the strong Christian Faith that created the United States. Defending America's Christian heritage, and that of Armenia, sprang from a religious conviction to stand for the Faith far more than nationalistic motives. This is why he can be critical when some would wish him to remain silent. The Faith takes priority in his thinking over both country and ecclesiastical institutions. This is not to say he is past-bound. His work is in the Kingdom of God, which shall not see its fullness until every knee shall bow and every tongue confess the name of Jesus. From my father I learned that my first allegiance is to the Kingdom of God and His Christ.

My father takes Scripture very seriously, yet he does not wrestle with it. He is not an evidentialist; he can accept Scripture because it's God's Word without feeling he must understand the mind of God. His theology is not based on his understanding; it is based on faith in the sovereign, all-knowing God who reveals Himself in his Word. Many times he has responded to those struggling with an issue in Scripture by calmly saying, "We must believe it because that is what the Word of God says." From my father I learned my presupposition must always be the truth and wisdom of God's Word.

My father believes actions rather than words best evidence faith. Yet he has not tried to build a large organization. He has instead tried to encourage others to use their expertise in their own calling to further the Kingdom. From my father's influence I have learned that God's Word does not return to Him void.

My father preaches the Word of God, but never in a vacuum. He seeks to understand thought and culture. Hence he reads an amazing spectrum of subjects. But he reads not just good books but some bad books as well. He has, therefore, been able not only to preach the truth as a minister, but also to explain error as a scholar. From my father I learned that ideas have consequences.

My father is future oriented. He is a postmillennialist but his optimism is not limited to his theology. He was once offered a large salary and a fine house by a man who wanted him to stop his denomination's already advanced slide into modernism. My father said he had more

important work to do. He saw the real battles, both culturally and theologically. He denounced humanism when many churchmen thought it a noble concept. He encouraged Christian education long before most admitted there were real problems in public education. He proclaimed the validity of Biblical law when it seemed the church was universally gravitating toward the gospel of love. He started Chalcedon when such religious foundations were an anomaly. From my father I learned it is most effective to preach the Kingdom of God while you are working toward it.

I, like many others, respect my father as a man of God and a scholar. I also respect him as a father. I am gratified

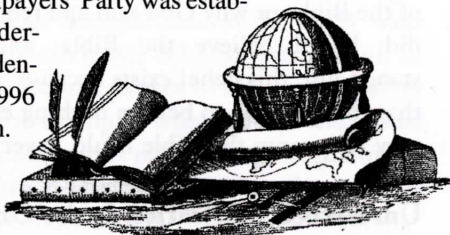
at the respect people hold him in. Many are awed at his impact. But his influence has not been through his originality but because of his faithfulness. His scholarship has had as its purpose faithfulness to God and His Word. His scholarship draws man back to God and points out the past and future victories of God's people. In the sense of proclaiming God's truth he has been a faithful prophet. He is not a perfect man, and we should not look for perfection in others or ourselves. But as our teachers and ministers we should look for men who are faithful to God's Word and who see God as the center of life, meaning, time, and eternity—like my father, Rousas John Rushdoony.

Fourth Annual **CHRISTIAN WORLDVIEW STUDENT CONFERENCE** *July 12-17, 1999 • Christopher Newport University Campus • Newport News, Virginia*

CAL BEISNER is an associate professor of interdisciplinary studies at Covenant College, Lookout Mountain, Tennessee. He has authored 11 books. Additionally, he has edited a newspaper, a magazine, and has served as a radio commentator. He will speak on the environment and related issues.

GEORGE GRANT has authored over 25 books. His work on behalf of the homeless, for international relief and development, and the sanctity of life has been profiled nationally through television and the print media. This year he will speak on the impact of Scottish theological and political thought on colonial America.

HOWARD PHILLIPS is president of Policy Analysis, Inc. The United States Taxpayers' Party was established under his leadership. He was a presidential candidate in the 1996 presidential campaign. He will be speaking on politics from a Christian perspective.



STEVE SCHLISSEL will be preaching each evening and teaching during the day on the covenant—the Christian's covenantal relationship to God and faithfully maintaining that relationship in the midst of the world. Steve is pastor of Messiah's Congregation in Brooklyn, NY. He has a wide-ranging speaking ministry. His congregational ministries include Urban Nations—a multifaceted reformed outreach to immigrants.

GERRY WISZ has spent the past five years covering the Wall Street investment community as a journalist. He has also taught writing and literature courses in New Jersey community colleges. Through Urban Nations he ministers to Polish immigrants in Brooklyn. He will be speaking on a Christian view of Wall Street and related topics.

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A “Yes” to Godly Heredity

By Rev. Andrew Sandlin

The young depend on the choices made for them by their elders. An heir is not somebody who can choose what he will inherit; if he could make his choice, he could be self-made. But in so far as his inheritance is determined, he is an heir, and under the laws of heredity. And to his heredity a man may say either yes or no, but he is caught in this one alternative which is not creative.

Eugen Rosenstock-Huussy, *The Christian Future*

I was born into a devout, Bible-believing Christian home. Aside from my salvation, this was the greatest act of divine grace in my life. As a young Baptist evangelist, my father met my mother, a profoundly gifted church soloist, in southwestern Ohio. I was the first of four offspring of that marriage, whose longevity is now moving toward forty years. Like most people, the greatest influence in my life has been my parents. That influence for me was overwhelmingly beneficial. While, like all of Adam's seed, I was born into sin, there was never a time that I can remember not knowing of the saving gospel of Jesus Christ. I was converted at a remarkably young age—so young, as a matter of fact, that I do not even remember the experience. This is quite common among Christian children raised in devout homes, and it testifies to the great fact that God's preventive grace is even greater than His reclaiming grace. (I am amused by the pious little “gospel tracts” I sometimes receive from humanist Arminian types who are convinced that if one cannot *remember* his “conversion experience,” there is no way he can be converted. They can offer no Scripture in support of this view, of course; and their comments testify to their woefully deficient view of the grace of God. May God grant us more conversions of Christian children who are swept into the kingdom of God by His sovereign grace at such an early age that they can never remember the experience!)

The influence of my father on my life (like that of my mother) has been incalculable. He has been a fervent, dogged preacher—in every sphere possible: pastorate, missionary, on street corners, in Christian day schools, in homes, as an itinerant minister, and so on. He has given his life to preaching the Word of God and training others to greater devotion to God—and all over the globe Christians who have been decisively influenced by his ministry live and themselves minister. My father's chief themes of training faithful, dedicated Christians continually echo in my mind: learn to blame yourself, anything worth doing is worth doing right, you are either

master or mastered, make your stumbling blocks stepping stones, take care of little things, the greatest ability is dependability, learn to say no, and on and on. He never backed down from a fight, theologically or otherwise, and never feared to face any man or any problem. Men of lesser character have resented him for this. All of this made a profound, lasting impression on my life.

Nonetheless, in assessing how profoundly my father has influenced my life, three themes stand out in particular.

The Bible Is the Word of God

First, my father always taught me that the Bible is nothing less than the very inspired, infallible, and preserved Word of God. This was a matter about which there was no dispute. We could be mistaken in many things, but we could never be mistaken in our faith in the Bible as God's Word. My father read, studied, marked, loved, consumed, obeyed, and defended the Bible. (He has purchased and given as gifts to young preachers more Bibles than most people actually see in a lifetime.) I have always accepted this simple faith in the Bible without question. It is for this reason that when I first encountered the writings of Cornelius Van Til and Rousas John Rushdoony in my late teens, I was so quickly convinced of the truth of their teaching. They set forth an entire system of life and thought based entirely on the Bible; in seminal form, this is exactly what my father had taught me. When later I was exposed to the supposedly sophisticated, intellectual attacks on the Bible by liberals, neo-orthodox, and evangelicals, I remained adamant in my simple faith in the Bible. Like most Christians, my faith has suffered Satanic attack and has wavered at times, but I have never doubted one word of the Bible's truth: from literal, six-day creation, to the universal Flood, to the plagues of Egypt and parting of the Red Sea, and the miracles of the Old Testament prophets; to the virgin birth, miracles, substitutionary atonement, and bodily resurrection and ascension of Jesus Christ; to the inspired teaching of the apostles; all the way to the glorious promise of the physical return of Christ and the eternal abode, heaven and hell. I do not claim to understand all of the Bible, or why God said and required everything He did; but I believe the Bible; and, from a human standpoint, this belief exists because my father taught me that it is possible to believe nothing else. Everything else may be wrong; the Bible could never be wrong.

Unreserved Dedication Is the Only Kind

Second, my father taught me that the only sort of

Christian to be is an unreservedly dedicated one; half-hearted Christianity is worse than none at all. He would often remark, "Isn't it amazing that as hell-bound sinners, men can get sloshy drunk, be out until four or five in the morning and still get up for work the next day, knock themselves out in sin, but that when they get saved, these same men want to be 'moderate' and don't want anybody to think of them as religious fanatics." There was never a time in my father's home when I felt that Christianity was something only for Sunday school and morning worship, that it was anything less than the entire passion of life. In my upbringing, the lordship of Christ was not a matter of lip-service. Children can forgive parents for many sins and errors in judgment, *but they expect them to live according to what they say they believe*. In other words, children despise hypocrisy. I never detected a hint of hypocrisy in my Christian upbringing. This fact had a powerful influence on my unquestioned commitment to the Christian Faith.

I was given my first job (I believe the pay was \$5.00 a week) trimming the hedges around the church building. When I first got paid, my father sat me down and told me, "Son, God requires ten percent of all the money you make—this is the tithe, and it belongs to Him. If you start tithing on \$5.00 a week, one day you will have no trouble tithing on \$500.00 a week." He was right. The tithe of my income has never been difficult for me, not because I am in any sense virtuous, or "spiritual," but because I was trained from a youth that there was simply no other legitimate alternative. An objective of Christian parents should be to train their children from infancy in such a way that Christian obedience is *natural*. This is what my father did.

To my father, Christianity is entire life. Jesus Christ is not a helpful appendage to life's plan, but the center of everything. This is another reason I so readily adopted the Reformed Faith at a relatively young age—it is a faith that declares, "There is no secular-sacred distinction; the Word of God is designed to govern all of life in every dimension. If Jesus Christ is Lord of the individual and church, He should be Lord of every aspect of life and society. There is no neutral territory over which He does not claim absolute, sovereign jurisdiction."

But I learned this first from my father.

Gratitude Is Essential

Third, I learned from my father the necessity of gratitude. There are few people worse than ingrates, he always told me. God graciously blesses men, but they are often not thankful to God for His goodness. Christians help an individual, but he does not express gratitude. Ingrates are people who constantly *take*, who constantly benefit from others' friendship, kindness, generosity, wisdom, instruction, and so forth, but somehow think they are *entitled* to these benefits. This is an evil attitude, but it is all too pervasive. We must constantly be on our guard against taking advantage of those who have helped

us: parents, friends, schoolteachers, spouses, children, pastors, authors, and so forth. If today each of us enjoys any measure of success—a strong marriage, faithful children, a steady income, health, friends, prestige, etc.—it is because, first, God has been gracious to us and, second, *somebody helped us*. No man is an island; every man has been helped by someone else. Those who have helped us deserve gratitude—and they deserve to hear our gratitude expressed.

Which reminds me: Thanks, Dad, for all you have been and done for me.

Thank God for *all* godly fathers whose influence on their children is incalculably profound.

"[T]o his heredity," observes Rosenstock-Huessy, "a man may say either yes or no."

I have chosen to say yes.

And that has made all the difference.



Richard and Andrew Sandlin

Cultural Dominion in Western Civilization

By Rev. Andrew Sandlin

A Review of Michael W. Kelley's *The Impulse of Power: Formative Ideals of Western Civilization Contra Mundum* Books, Spring Lake Park, Minnesota, ISBN: 0-9637768-1-9, \$19.00.

This is the best new book I have read this year. Kelley is by no means a new author (consult his *On Stone or Sand: The Ethics of Christianity, Capitalism, and Socialism* and *The Burden of God: Studies in Wisdom and Civilization from the Book of Ecclesiastes*), but this is a more sweeping work revealing the author's keen grasp of the philosophy of history and particularly of Western civilization. Although the work cites R. J. Rushdoony but twice and Cornelius Van Til not at all, the author is clearly operating within the ambit of a Calvinistic presuppositionalism, including the recognition of the necessity of the cultural mandate to be effected according to explicit scriptural teaching.

Pagan Greece

Kelley posits the roots of Western civilization in the Homeric and Platonic world of ancient Greece, but unlike many Christians and previous generations and today will brook no compromise with this "enlightenment paganism" as a valid expression of culture. He shrewdly observes that today's increasing calls for a return to the medieval synthesis of Christian and classical civilization is misdirected: "Should we accept the argument of those who wish to restore the displaced ideals represented by the medieval synthesis of Christianity and Humanism? Can such salvage operations succeed? Is it possible to remake Western civilization on the same basis from which it first sprang up? If so, why should one accept that it will turn out better the second time?" Kelley's answer is unequivocal: "There are but two options available: that which comes from God and His revealed Word, or that which arises from man's sin-darkened imagination" (pp. 16-17).

Kelley observes Plato's attempt to depersonalize the pagan religion of the Homeric era, replacing the gods of ancient Greece with an abstractionist rationalism whereby the entire universe would be explained by recourse to human reason: "[I]t was more than just a struggle between science and religion. Their [the Greek philosophers'] interest was to shift the locus of *ordering power* from the gods to the mind of man, so that the mind of man becomes the source of order and is able to govern reality according to the principles innate in the reasoning power of man alone" (p. 56, emphasis in original). For Plato and the other Greek philosophers, the creation of culture was

to be exclusively the work of the intellectually gifted, the philosopher-kings especially endowed with rational faculties capable of reshaping all of society and life.

The Medieval Synthesis

Kelley moves on to discuss "The Grand Synthesis" of the medieval world: pagan classicism and historic Christianity. Like Christopher Dawson, Alister McGrath, and other deeply informed observers of this era, Kelley is aware of the dominating influence of monasticism on it. It was not merely one religio-cultural factor among many, but in many ways was *the* dominating feature of medieval life. Kelley posits the origins of the monastic ideal in certain aspects of pagan Greek philosophy, and correctly suggests that "Christianity's eventual triumph over the ancient pagan world was tragically undermined by an opposing development, the incursion into the life of Christianity of a deeply rooted pagan outlook that took hold as monasticism" (p. 83). The Platonic dualism, according to which matter, material substance, and the things of this world were considered vastly inferior to the world of eternal Forms and Ideas, heavily influenced Christian monasticism, as did the Gnostic heresy. Further, monasticism carried on that aspect of the pagan Greek philosophical tradition which divided humanity into the elite and the masses: for Plato and company, the philosopher-kings comprised the elite, while for the monastics, those who separated themselves from the "world" and devoted themselves exclusively to a pious devotion to God constituted, in fact, the Christian elite. Kelley notes, moreover, how the ancient Greek notion of man's coming to the fullest measure of his humanity in civic or political association was perpetuated in the monastic ideal of the Christian elite communing together in the monastery (p. 87). Even St. Augustine, while recognizing many flaws of the patristic monastic order and, certainly, the pagan heresies from which it sprang, did not break decisively with this monastic ideal and thus bequeathed to the later Middle Ages, along with his sound, Biblical theology, a certain measure of monastic paganism. Kelley is surely correct, therefore, in labeling monasticism "a false Christianity" given virtually free reign until the Protestant Reformation (pp. 82-83).

Ecclesiocentrism

In what is surely one of the most valuable features of the book, Kelley outlines the provenance of ecclesiocentrism—the notion that the institutional church should govern and dominate all of life. Like

others before him, he recognizes that the idea of the church in the West was patterned largely after imperial Rome and that, therefore, its origin is not Biblical but pagan (p. 116). In addition, however, Kelley discloses that this imperial institutionalization of the church is essentially an ideology of *power*. The architects of patristic and medieval ecclesiocentrism were interested in employing the church as an instrument in giving meaning to life. Not so much God and the Bible, but the institutional church itself, furnished life's meaning. God and His Word were remote and proximate, while the church was near and immediate. Kelley declares that to use the language of church-state conflict to describe the great medieval clash of religious powers is anachronistic:

The dichotomy of church and state belongs to a later period of history. It is out of place in the medieval view of things. Instead the dispute was over which *side*—clerical or laical—of the *Ecclesia Universalis* [church universal] had been granted the Divine right legally, morally, even politically, to regiment the life and behavior of each and every member, and to decide upon the uses to be made of every institutional arrangement of that society. (p. 119)

The great conflict, therefore, was not between church and state, but between which part of the church (for the emperor was surely its leading lay member) would control all of Christian society. Like Rushdoony, Kelley perceives that this medieval ecclesiocentrism errs on the side of the “one” in the age-old problem of the one and the many: the important thing in medieval life was *unity*, with no room for diversity as a harmonizing counterpart to that unity. Likewise, Kelley implicitly manifests Abraham Kuyper's understanding of sphere sovereignty, which was almost totally obscure in medieval ecclesiocentrism (p. 122). Kelley's explanation of how the early church gradually degenerated into such an ecclesiocentric state, including its transformation from a Hebraic understanding to an Hellenic understanding, is choice (pp. 128-130). Furthermore, the author observes the irony of much of the Latin church in its treatment of the Old Testament: it retained or perpetuated the structure of the Aaronic and Levitical priesthood, which were designed to be replaced by the universal priesthood of the New Testament era, while the church *abandoned* the moral and judicial dimensions of the Mosaic law which were never set aside by the New Testament. In other words, the Roman church retained the part of the Old Testament that was designed to be abandoned, and abandoned that part which was designed to be retained (pp. 136-137).

Scholasticism

Next, Kelley exposes and criticizes scholasticism, the chief academic expression of the synthesis between Biblical Christianity and classical culture. The scholastics

attempted to maintain and defend historic Christianity within an Aristotelian framework and epistemology, but this synthesis pushed this version of Christianity almost to a breaking point:

This created enormous tension, for Christianity and this pagan culture were deeply at odds, not simply due to the fact that this classical world of thought was a product of the old polytheism and Christianity was monotheistic, but because they had contradicting explanations on just about everything, most especially the claims to possess the solution to the problem of human existence. (p. 159)

There were therefore no distinctly Christian schools, only humanistic schools with heavy doses of Christianity tacked on for good measure. This was possible in the Aristotelian scheme of things, and from this Thomas Aquinas hammered out his famed (and lethal) nature-grace distinction: that in most matters of human life and understanding, man can rely on his own innate resources, but in certain “higher” matters (the doctrine of the Trinity, personal salvation, etc.), he must rely on the special revelation of the Bible. This epistemological dualism eventually undercut Christianity altogether, in the Italian Renaissance and, especially, the European Enlightenment (p. 169). If Christianity and Biblical revelation are not necessary for a correct understanding of many areas of life and thought, why should they be necessary for any at all?

Renaissance Paganism

In his chapters dealing successively with the Renaissance, the Enlightenment, and Romanticism, Kelley addresses the “new paganism,” the revival of ancient, pagan Greek ideas. Contrary to a great deal of scholarly opinion, the author correctly observes that the Renaissance was not merely *instrumental*, that is, it was not merely about the recovery of ancient texts, cogent rhetoric, and new methods of scholarly investigation (contra McGrath). Rather, its impulse was deeply pagan, and, in particular, its program was driven by a lust for elitist political power. Kelley thus holds that the modern age did not begin with the modern European Enlightenment, but with the Italian Renaissance and its distinctly anti-Christian character (p. 197). Here he states how greatly medievalism failed the Faith. For, “when men were ready to break definitively from their [monastic and hierarchical] mold, no real Christian-Biblical alternative was available to direct the Western civilization to more genuinely Christian pathways. This void allowed men to turn back enthusiastically to the ideas of ancient pagan Greece and Rome, almost emptying the developing culture of anything discernibly Christian” (p. 197-198).

The European Enlightenment

The European Enlightenment carried forward the

Renaissance program by increasingly locating ultimate authority of arbitration in human reason. While, the author asserts, modern science and all of its benefits would have been impossible apart from Christian presuppositions, the early modern scientists quickly abandoned any genuinely Biblical approach to their discipline:

Everything that could not be objectively measured or numbered was viewed as an intrusion from an alien sphere. In his quest for knowledge, man must eliminate all that is subjective and non-material. This included God, for God is not someone or something that comes within the realm of tangible observation. The only place God retained in the thought of modern scientific man, and this lasted until the rise of evolution in the nineteenth century, was the hypothetical place He was thought to occupy in the necessary order of cause and effect." (p. 228)

God was simply a "limiting concept.

The startling technological and scientific achievement of the Enlightenment led its intellectual elite to presume that the same successes accomplished on what were thought to be purely rationalistic grounds would serve as a pattern for social engineering:

[K]nowledge not only meant power over the *forces* (a Newtonian term) of nature, but power over men and society. Even as man can engineer the workings of nature to benefit his life, so, too, he can superintend the workings of society to create better order and harmony between human beings. Indeed, in the new Enlightenment faith, the two were viewed as being necessarily interrelated. Baconian optimism allowed modern man to think that he could erect a culture and civilization from a blueprint discovered in nature by an infallible method of reasoning. (p. 259)

Human society, like the material universe, is one great machine.

The Romantic Revolt

Then came the revolt in the form of Romanticism. For if nature were effectively reduced to a methodical, mechanized system whose structure was immediately grasped by human reason, and if man himself participates in this nature as an agent in reordering this vast machine for human purposes, how can the human mind itself be anything other than part of this machine? Late eighteenth and nineteenth century Romanticism constituted a reaction against the Enlightenment's rationalistic mechanization of life. While the Enlightenment exalted reason, Romanticism exalted intuition, feelings, emotions, the mystical, the bizarre, the monstrous, and even the occultic. Like the Enlightenment, Romanticism had its own form of elitism, but the Romantic elite was the truly romantic *individual*, the man of great mystical insight,

emotion, and passion. A prime example, Kelley notes, is the messianic artist:

In the Romantic world, the artist was a man above men, a veritable messiah-type. Romantics saw in the artist the light of the world, the salt of the earth, the image of divinity, the reveler [*sic*] of the secrets of God, the interpreter of nature, prophet, priest, and king. All the symbols of the religious past, as re-worked in the Romantic mind coalesced in the soul of the artistic genius. (p. 286)

Kelley correctly contends that one factor contributing to the rise of Romanticism was the medieval "pietism" which shifted attention from the victorious redemptive work of Christ to the emotions of His suffering (p. 274); much Christianity became emotionally rather than theologically oriented as a result, and it is this pietistic strand that later contributed to a humanistic romanticism.

While nascent Romanticism stressed inhibited freedom, it soon swung to the opposite extreme and embraced political totalitarianism. This transformation was effected by the Romantics' assessment of the supposed depersonalizing effects of capitalism and the industrial revolution on society. The Romantic ideal became socialistic: the early romantic utopia of all men living together in bliss and peace, sharing all resources, eschewing private property, and so on. While Enlightenment man wanted to accomplish his rationally oriented society by education, the Romantics were committed to violence and revolution. In this sense, all modern political revolutions are Romantic.

Explicitly Biblical Cultural Dominion

Kelley concludes by arguing that each of these phases—ancient Greek, medieval monastic, medieval scholastic, medieval ecclesiocentric, Renaissance, Enlightenment, and Romanticism—constitute a decisive deviation from Biblical Christianity, and the only hope for establishing Christian culture lies not in restoring some version of a discredited pagan or synthetic culture of the past, but in building our culture squarely on the written Word of God, the Bible. Man is an inherently dominion being, and therefore the dominion commission is inescapable. The only question is whether man will exercise dominion in terms of the Bible, or in terms of his own depraved ideas. Thus far, "it was possible to conclude that man's impulse to power, *i.e.*, the urge to form culture, has given shape to a cultural product that bears more the stamp of man, the covenant-breaker, than man, the covenant-keeper" (p. 309). Man's only hope for cultural reclamation is explicitly *Biblical* Christian culture.

This is a reverent, learned, profound, and penetrating work that probably will not get the widespread recognition it deserves. The evangelicals and fundamentalists are too pietistic and anti-intellectual to take it seriously. The Roman Catholics and Eastern Orthodox are too ecclesiocentric not to be offended by

its full-Biblical foundation. Even the Reformed, from whom it should get nothing but praise, may ignore it since it would require of them a greater responsibility than they are willing to undertake. But it is a great book nonetheless, and it deserves wide reading. One recommendation: I wish the author had brought the work

up to the present period by addressing the issue of postmodernism, the leading ideology of today's Western elite. Perhaps he can do this in a second edition—and I greatly hope there will *be* a second edition. Kudos to Tim Wilder and Contra Mundum for giving us this outstanding work.

Books and Things 7

By Andrew Sandlin

1. Ted Baehr is doing a stellar job as the head of the Christian Film and Television Commission, a non-profit organization committed to educating the entertainment industry and the public about the media's impact. His newest book, *The Media-Wise Family*, is subtitled "A Christian Family Guide to Making Morally and Spiritually Responsible Decisions about Movies, TV, and Multi-Media." The book documents its blistering attack on what Michael Novak calls "Hollywood's assault on America." Baehr observes how Hollywood has capitulated to the agenda of homosexuals, feminists, pornographers, and so forth. He shows how deeply modern media influences the thinking of Americans. The value of the book is greatly enhanced by Part 2, "The Keys to Discernment." Here Baehr sets forth practical steps as to how Christians can insulate their children from the debilitating effects of TV and other modern media. Baehr's conclusion is titled "Winning the Culture Wars," and he sounds a note of optimism as Christians become involved in modern media in order to subordinate it to the historic Christian and Biblical message. The book is published by Chariot Victor Publishing and is available for \$11.99 from Movie Guide, 2510-G Las Posas Road # 502, Camarillo, CA 93010.

2. A work that did not receive sufficient publicity when it was first published is John Gerstner's *Wrongly Dividing the Word of Truth: A Critique of Dispensationalism* (Wolgemoth and Hyatt, 1991). I read this powerful work when it was first published, and had occasion recently to review it. I was again struck by Gerstner's refusal to compromise a single iota with the dispensationalist interpretation of Sacred Scripture. While part 1, his historical sketch of dispensationalism, is of somewhat uneven and questionable quality, part 2, in which he discusses the philosophy and hermeneutics of dispensationalism, and part 3, in which he addresses its theology, are simply masterful. His section on dispensational epistemology shares with the treatment in Vern Poythress' *Understanding Dispensationalists* a penetrating insight into the fountainhead from which

dispensational error flows. In addition, chapter 12, Gerstner's discussion of the dispensational doctrine of sanctification is, to my knowledge, the most insightful treatment of that issue ever published. Here Gerstner demonstrates a profound knowledge of the spiritual psychology which the dispensational theology necessarily assumes. This work, as far as I know, is out of print; but it deserves a renewed reception.

3. Lately Alister McGrath, British theologian, has been concentrating on large introductory textbooks to the topic of theology—for instance, his *Reformation Thought: An Introduction* and *Christian Theology: An Introduction*. Generally, these works are excellent; but some of his earlier and more technical writings deserve even greater attention. A prime example is his *The Intellectual Origins of the European Reformation* (Oxford, 1987). The main part of the book traces the influence of humanism and nominalism on late medieval theology and the early Reformation. A chief theme that comes out is how different were the theological and philosophical origins of the Reformed and the Lutheran churches. McGrath notes, further, the heterogeneity of theological opinion in the late medieval church, and suggests that Luther, far from being an innovator, concentrated on a single theological stream emerging from late medieval theology; and, in fact, McGrath concludes "that the intellectual origins of the Lutheran Reformation appear to be linked with the doctrinal pluralism of the later Middle Ages" (p. 28).

In dealing with the sources and methods of the Reformation, McGrath contends that the fervent conflict over the relation between Scripture and tradition requires an understanding of tradition in two distinct senses. The first, which the Reformers soon assimilated, saw Scripture as the sole formal authority of theology and theological tradition as the context in which Scripture was to be interpreted. The second, which the Council of Trent later codified, saw Scripture and tradition as two coordinate, independent but cooperative sources of divine authority. McGrath observes that it is a serious mistake

to assume that later medieval theology did not recognize Sacred Scripture as “the sole material base of Christian theology” (p. 140). I have simply touched the surface of the notable insights of this book. It is worth careful consideration, as is his *The Genesis of Doctrine* (Eerdmans, 1990).

4. Speaking of tradition, Yves Congar’s *The Meaning of Tradition* (Hawthorn Books, 1964) articulates in the clearest possible terms the relatively recent Roman Catholic interpretation of ecclesiastical tradition. Historic, confessional Protestants can deduce from this work the bold relief in which our view of tradition stands against that of Rome. Such assertions that “the liturgy, which is thus the inmost nucleus of Tradition and would be sufficient in itself to teach the whole of Christianity” (p. 85), and “the gospel content in the form of truths and rules of behavior, is not limited to the Scriptures alone, but is also contained in books and unwritten tradition” (p. 79, emphasis in the original) set forth the unbridgeable chasm between the historic Roman tradition as a revelational supplement to Scripture itself, and the Protestant view of tradition, which sees godly tradition largely as an accurate summary of what the Bible actually teaches (thus, the ecumenical creeds and Reformation confessions). A balanced Protestant view is set out quite comprehensively in Philip Schaff’s *The Principle of Protestantism* (United Church Press, 1964).

5. Bruce Mazlish’s *The Revolutionary Ascetic: Evolution of a Political Type* (Basic Books, 1976) explicates the topic other writers are aware of and sometimes touch on: the tendency of modern revolutionaries to develop (and expect of their followers) an ascetic life, transmuting the healthy enjoyment of bodily appetites into fervent, and often tyrannical, revolutionary ideology. While Mazlish finds some evidence of this in Cromwell, he acknowledges that there is not very much, and concentrates instead on the obvious revolutionary asceticism of Robespierre, Lenin, and Mao Tse Tung. A key theme: these revolutionaries could justify their harshness and tyranny by their own sacrifices occasioned by their asceticism—in other words, they could rationalize tyrannizing others because they tyrannized themselves. This is quite an interesting work.

6. Mary Sennholz has edited a collection of writings from *The Freeman* published by the Foundation for Economic Education, 30 South Broadway, Irvington-on-Hudson, NY 10533. These articles show beyond a reasonable doubt that the United States’ Founding was anchored squarely in either historic Christianity or ideas plainly derived from historic Christianity. I especially enjoyed James C. Patrick’s “What the Bible Says About Big Government”; but other titles such as “George Washington on Liberty and Order,” and Erik von Kuehnelt-Leddihn’s “The Roots of ‘Anti-Capitalism’” also pique the imagination. This is a fine collection.

7. John Baillie’s *Belief in Progress* (Charles Scribner’s Sons, 1951) is one of those works that anyone interested

in postmillennialism should read. It is not a defense of postmillennialism, but it demonstrates how decisively Christianity broke with the pagan notions of cyclical history in setting forth the possibility of real progress in human history on the basis of Christianity itself. Baillie points out that the Christian notion of progress was heavily indebted to the Hebrew view of history: “The religion of the Hebrews is thus from the beginning, and increasingly, a religion of hope. In almost every other ancient literature hope is regarded as an evil thing. . . . The Hebrew on the other hand, lived on hope, and the whole orientation of his thought was towards the future It becomes a sin not to hope” (pp. 64-65). Baillie then summarizes the Christian view of progress:

God has dowered man with an understanding and conscience and spirituality of his own which moves from discovery to discovery by the propulsion of its own interior logic as well as under the stimulus of unpredictable providential visitation. The Christian doctrine has always been that God is at the same time immanent and transcendent, indwells as well as overrules. It has never denied the reality of growth in grace and in insight, and has never, by denying all interior connexion between the stages of such growth, desired to interpret it solely as the result of a series of discontinuous divine actions. (pp. 169-170)

This work is out of print, but may be available via the web through MX Bookfinder.

8. An explicitly postmillennial treatment of the idea of progress is Gary North’s *Dominion and Common Grace* (Institute for Christian Economics, 1987), which I judge to be the most insightful and cogent treatment of the topic of Christianity and progress written in the English language. While this work contains several dazzling insights, its principal claim to fame is the suggestion of an actual *mechanism* of a postmillennial vision, something virtually no other work on this topic has ever offered. This, in my opinion, is by far North’s superior work. Not long after the work was published, I gave it a firmly favorable review in the old *Biblical Editor* (probably one of the few favorable reviews the book received), and in rereading it today, I am no less impressed by its profundity.

9. Robert Rayburn’s article “The Presbyterian Doctrines of Covenant Children, Covenant Nurture, and Covenant Succession,” in *Presbyterian*, 22/2 (of Covenant Seminary), is of such value that it warrants rereading at least once year. Rayburn notes that the historic Presbyterian view of the covenant sees Christian children as the proper objects of nurture, not evangelism, and demolishes any notion of Anabaptism as applied to these children. I cannot recommend this article highly enough. It will inspire, enlighten, convict, and instruct. It is potentially life-changing.

10. As I dictate this, I just received *Van Til’s Apologetic: Readings and Analysis* by the late Greg Bahnsen

(Presbyterian and Reformed, 1998). I hope we can review this work more fully in the *Report* before long, but I wanted to mention that this is an excellent treatment of Van Til's thought. I was particularly impressed with Bahnsen's cogent response to the criticism of Van Til by the followers of the philosophy of Gordon H. Clark. Bahnsen observes, for example, that, contrary to such criticism, Van Til never denied that God and man do not share the *objects* of knowledge (pp. 231-232).

11. Despite serious flaws, Phillip Lee's *Against the Protestant Gnostics* (Oxford University Press, 1987) issues a clarion call for a return to a historically grounded Christianity—one recognized to rest squarely within the bed of history, resistant to Gnosticism and undue theological speculation. Lee wrongfully, in my opinion, indicts Calvin for Gnosticism, but he is right on target in many other of his criticisms. His exposé of the Gnostic elements in 18th century Unitarianism and revivalism, as well as modern evangelicalism and liberalism, is quite telling. He accurately recognizes that the logic behind infant baptism is one of the strongest assaults on Gnosticism. I strongly commend this work.

12. Franklin Hamlin Littell's *The Anabaptist View of the Church* is a dated work (Starr King Press, 1952, 1958), but his sympathetic treatment of the most prominent sector of the radical Reformation documents quite clearly the chasm separating the Anabaptists not only from the church of Rome, but also the Magisterial Reformation. It is a mistake to assume that the Anabaptists are simply the most logical expression of the inner principles of the Protestant Reformation. For one thing, as Littell points out, the Anabaptists were primitivists—attempting to reproduce the unadulterated “New Testament” (not Old Testament) Christianity, the great Golden Age of the church, apart from any recourse to historic Christianity. For another thing, they saw the church as a sequestered body of regenerate adult believers, rather than as the visible body of the covenant people of God. Further, the Anabaptists reveled in suffering, persecution and martyrdom, seeing these as marks of the genuine Christian. Moreover, they were eschatological cataclysmists—they did not see the progress of the plan of God over the ages of history, but believed themselves to be the truly restored church immediately preceding the Second Coming of Christ. The modern evangelical church is heavily Anabaptistic in many ways, and Littell's work extensively documents the leading views of the Anabaptist movement.

13. Those interested in the history of philosophy and of ideas can't afford to miss Richard Tarnas' *The Passion of the Western Mind* (Ballantine Books, 1991). The book's subtitle is “Understanding the Ideas That Have Shaped Our World View,” and his work does precisely that. Starting with ancient Greece and moving right up to the “postmodern” period, Tarnas posits the leading ideas of successive ideational epochs in something of a narrative style. The book is anything but dry, arcane reading; at

some points, it reads more like a novel, and is hard to put down. Though far from Christian, the author treats Christianity quite fairly and sympathetically. His background is in psychology, and his insights into the development of psychology as a discipline are choice.

14. One of the finest magazines in the country is E. Michael Jones' *Culture Wars*, 206 Marquette Avenue, South Bend, IN 46617, jones@culturewars.com. Jones himself has authored such potent and disturbing works as *Degenerate Moderns*, and his magazine contains original insights on the dilemma of the modern world. Protestants should not be turned off by his Roman Catholicism; most of his arguments spring from the broad Christian tradition, and not from any distinctive Roman Catholic viewpoint. The November 1998 issue carried his classic article “Darwin and the Vampire: Evolution's Contribution to the Holocaust,” and February 1999 features his “Incest and Authority: Sigmund Freud and the Illuminati.” The idea that Darwinism contributed to the ideas which generated the Holocaust is an unpopular—and accurate—statement, as is the fact that modern psychology is sexually perverse in its motivation and origins. Jones' works must be read to be appreciated.

15. I am ambivalent about R. C. Sproul's *The Last Days According to Jesus: When Did Jesus Say He Would Return?* (Baker Books, 1998). On the one hand, he seems clearly to adopt postmillennialism, but this book is not mainly about postmillennialism; rather, it is a defense of “partial preterism,” conceding a little too much ground to “consistent preterism” (or rather, the Hymenaen heresy). As one reads the book he begins to suspect that the alteration in Sproul's eschatological viewpoint was less exegetically and theologically than apologetically driven. He is deeply concerned that the critics of Jesus Christ not get an upper hand. In the context of eschatology, the prime charge of critics which troubles him most is that Jesus is a false prophet in that Jesus claimed that His Second Coming was near, or virtually imminent, while clearly the physical Second Advent which the Bible predicts was not. Sproul's response is to adopt a partial preterism, in which many of the New Testament prophecies referring to the Second Advent are assigned to His “coming” in judgment and the destruction of Jerusalem in A. D. 70. This eschatological interpretation does have some historical precedent, and it has grown quite popular in recent years as a ringing alternative to the dispensationalist obsession with the “Last Days.” Sproul adopted this position because it accounts, to his way of thinking, for those texts which describe the Second Advent as “near” or “at hand.” He relies heavily on “consistent [heretical] preterist” J. Stuart Russell, and the thoroughly orthodox partial-preterist Reconstructionist, Kenneth Gentry, who has firmly and vocally repudiated the Hymenaen heresy. The most recent reprinting of Russell's book contains a glowing, though slightly qualified, introduction by Sproul. He

argues that, “the preterist is a sentinel standing against frivolous and superficial attempts to downplay or explain away the force of these [eschatological time] references” (p. 203). (Perhaps Sproul believes that all of the orthodox, non-preterist interpretations of these passages throughout the history of the church are “frivolous and superficial.”)

Like most preterists, Sproul is convinced that A. D. 70 constitutes the “end of an age.” This is supposed to be the end of the old covenant era, God’s dealings with the Jews. I fully dissent from this interpretation, as I explained briefly in my August, 1998 *Chalcedon Report* editorial. Robert S. Rayburn is much closer to the truth in his dissertation “The Old and New Covenants in the New Testament”: the old covenant and the new covenant refer not to historical epochs at all, but to the experiences of individuals—equivalent to the “old man” and the “new man.” The old covenant was no more concluded in A. D. 70 than the new covenant was instituted in A. D. 33. Both the old covenant and the new covenant pervade both the Old and New Testament eras—and today’s world. Clearly, at this point, Sproul is a partial preterist, seeing the old covenant as historical, though he does disagree significantly with “consistent [heretical] preterists,” leaving room for the future Second Advent and attending events. Therefore, Sproul defends historical, orthodox Christianity, but he leaves open the door for a change of mind:

Personally, I cringe at the idea of going against such a unified and strong testimony to the historic faith, even though I grant the possibility that they [the historic creeds] are wrong at points. All who are inclined to differ with the creeds should observe a warning light and show great caution. Of course this warning light pales in comparison to the authority of Scripture itself.... To be completely candid, I must confess that I am still unsettled on some crucial matters. (pp. 157-158)

By the historic creeds he seems not to be referring specifically to the Reformation confessions, but to the early ecumenical Christian creeds, which all Christians affirm. What, then, one may inquire, could Sproul find potentially in them to disagree with? The deity of Christ? His bodily resurrection? The Trinity? I am certain that Sproul would not for one minute say that one could deviate from historic Christianity at any of these points and still be considered a Christian. One presumes, therefore, that he is referring to Christianity’s teaching of the future, physical, Second Advent of Christ, the resurrection of the just and the unjust, and the final judgment. But if he is willing to at least consider jettisoning these aspects of Christianity, why not the others as well? To say that the others are clearly taught in the Bible begs the question. All sorts of heretics claim to believe the Bible while repudiating the Trinity—this, in fact, was precisely the position of the ancient Arians.

Though Sproul does not at this point deny creedal Christianity, or come close to it, he leaves the reader with the distinct impression that he may be willing to do so if he were convinced that the Bible taught this. However, to alter one’s views of a future physical Second Coming, resurrection of the just and the unjust, and the final judgment, is to restructure Christianity itself. We cannot alter these doctrines without altering Christianity, any more than we can alter the orthodox Trinity, or the two natures of Christ, without altering Christianity.

Protestants correctly hold that the Bible as our sole authority is never uninterpreted. Nor is the Faith itself to be neglected (Jude 3). As Philip Schaff observes, flowing out of the Bible itself is a godly, holy tradition which as the Christian Faith has been handed down for 2,000 years. In Charles Hodge’s language, no one can reject any fundamental tenet of this Faith and be considered a Christian. Our principal calling is not to answer every cavil of skeptics, or to provide an absolute answer to dispensationalists and other eschatologically misled evangelicals. *Our first calling is to defend the Holy Scriptures and the Faith.* To a certain extent, Sproul’s recent book does this, but it leaves too many questions unanswered and, in this reviewer’s opinion, makes far too many concessions to heterodoxy—all, ironically, with the noble intention of fully answering skeptics of the Bible.

16. *The Religion of the Heart: A Study of European Religious Life in the Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries* by Ted A. Campbell (University of South Carolina Press, 1991) extensively relates the excessively experimental forms of Christianity since the Middle Ages, as well as that of Hasidic Judaism in the 18th century. Campbell traces the roots of 17th and 18th century pietistic religion, both Protestant and Roman Catholic, to the ascetic and mystical traditions of the Middle Ages. He notes how these traditions were revived in Reformed and Lutheran circles, English Puritanism, Scots-Irish revivalism, the Quakers, the Moravians, and the Roman religious movements of the baroque age (the Jansenists, the Quietists, and the Devotion to The Sacred Heart of Jesus). Campbell goes on to show how the religion of the heart expressed itself in the Wesleyan evangelical revival and in Eastern and Russian piety. Campbell concludes by showing how the religion of the heart lead first to radical sectarianism and then to its own institutionalized expressions, and then discusses its dilution. Like other writers before him, Campbell recognizes the religion of the heart’s contribution to 19th century Protestant liberalism. Campbell observes that every expression of the religion of the heart resisted an historic Christianity that “relied on ‘traditional’ authorities, i.e., on the ‘objective’ publicly accessible authorities of the Bible and the traditions of the Christian churches” (p. 177). Campbell observes, further, that a general feature of the religion of the heart’s movement was the increased place given to women in leadership roles.

Campbell’s work, a highly sympathetic treatment of

the religion of the heart, demonstrates how it gradually eroded the objective authority of the Bible and confessional orthodoxy.

17. Almost any work by libertarian economist and philosopher Thomas Sowell is valuable, and this is certainly true of his book, *Marxism: Philosophy in Economics* (William Morrow, 1985). Contrasting with an academic literature filled with turgid and arcane treatment, Sowell's work cuts through the sophisticated talk, gets right to what Marx actually taught, refuting in the process many myths about Marxism, from both Right and Left.

18. As we approach the year 2000, we can expect increasing apocalyptic fervor from both Christians and non-Christians alike. Otto Friedrich's *The End of the World* (Fromm, 1986) presents narrative accounts of times in history when the world did *seem* to come to an end: the sack of Rome, the Medieval Inquisition, the Black Death, the Anabaptist "New Jerusalem," the Lisbon Earthquake, the 1905 Russian Revolution, and the Auschwitz concentration camp. Though the author's orientation is agnostic and therefore lacks any source of faith by which he can comfort those who suffer from man's and creation's calamities, his account of these summits of collective tragedies agonize the heart and fire the emotions. His treatment of Auschwitz is harrowing.

19. Jeffrey Siker's *Disinheriting the Jews: Abraham in Early Christian Controversy* (Westminster/John Knox Press, 1991) recounts the transition from a Biblical assessment of the exalted place of the Jews in God's program as the people of God, to the union of converted Jews and Gentiles in God's salvation purposes, to the patristic "disinheritance" of the Jews and the denial of any future place for a converted, ethnic Israel. At times, unfortunately, Siker seems to tilt toward a Judaic notion of the possibility of the salvation of the Jews apart from Christ, but at other times, he is fully orthodox. I agree with his final conclusion:

In short, the way for Christian theology to move out of the ghetto in regard to non-Christian Judaism is not by moving out of christological exclusivism (that is, by claiming that Jews may gain salvation apart from Christ). Rather, the way out of the ghetto is to take seriously both halves of Paul's statement regarding non-Christian Judaism in Romans 11:28: "In terms of the gospel they have become enemies on your account, but in terms of election they remain beloved on your account of the patriarchs." In particular, the way out of the ghetto is for Christians to rehabilitate in their own theological formulations God's continued election of the Jews, which Paul expresses so clearly in Romans 11:28b. Thus it is not Paul's use of Abraham in Romans 4 that provides a way out of Christian exclusivist claims. Rather, it is Paul's use of Abraham in Romans 9-11 that provides the opportunity for Christians to make inclusive claims regarding the mercy of God,

lest they be subject to Paul's warning of Romans 11:17-25. (196-197)

I myself agree with John Murray's exegesis of Romans 11 that there remains yet a glorious future for ethnic Israel at which time a multitude will be sovereignly converted by the grace of God and ushered into His kingdom. This view does not coincide with the typical amillennial vision; and not surprisingly, much of "Christian" anti-Semitism has sprouted historically within amillennialist soil. Dispensationalists are quite mistaken to presume that God maintains a "separate program" for ethnic Israel than for the church of Jesus Christ, but many amillennial Christians make the almost equally fatal error of denying the obvious truth of Romans 11, that God has not cast away His people whom He foreknew, nor backed out of His promises to the patriarchs. Siker's work, although tinged with some liberal bias, is a most useful historical analysis of patristic error on this topic.

20. The libertarian movement in the United States has splintered over the last 10 or 15 years, but among the groups maintaining a sound libertarian tradition, anchored in moral principle, is the Center for Libertarian Studies, 875 Mahler Road, Suite 150, Burlingame, California 94010 (800-325-7257), publishers of *The Rothbard-Rockwell Report*. Though we cannot endorse all of its conclusions, this group strongly defends individual freedom, free enterprise, and decentralized political power without falling into the errors of Randian hedonism. Please get on their mailing list.

21. I believe I mentioned over the last two years in an earlier "Books and Things" contribution the invaluable works of Roman Catholic church historian Christopher Dawson. It would be hard to find a more even-handed, conservative and insightful analysis of church history by a Protestant. Dawson's works like *The Formation of Christendom* (Sheed and Ward, 1967) and *The Dividing of Christendom* (Sheed and Ward, 1965) are only two of these works. Virtually everything Dawson wrote is worth obtaining, although unfortunately most of his writings are out of print (*Religion and the Rise of Western Culture*, however, may be an exception). Dawson's outlook is *truly* catholic—not primarily Roman—and his appreciation of and reverence toward Christian culture is a trait all Bible-believing Protestants would do well to imitate.

22. The most devastating blow to liberal approaches to the Bible ever written may be Gerhard Maier's slender volume *The End of the Historical-Critical Method* (Concordia Publishing House, 1977). Maier shows how that after the historical-critical school removes its grimy hands from the text of Sacred Scripture, there is nothing of supernaturalism or Biblical Faith left. He demonstrates that because these men have given up any hope in an objective divine revelation, they eventually must find refuge in nothing but experimentalism or "spiritual experience," that is, man-centered religion. His own

counterproposition, which he terms a historical-Biblical method, presents a much-needed corrective to the theologically liberal approach to the Bible.

23. David Lawton's *Art, Faith, Text, and History: The Bible in English* (University Press of Virginia, 1990) is useful not from any prescriptive angle, but because of its interesting observations regarding the English Biblical text. Lawton agrees with an assertion I made in an article in the *Chalcedon Report* two years ago: while the Geneva Bible was designed for private or family reading, the King James Bible was a public, institutionally-based translation (p. 81-82). He points out that the King James translators were dedicated to Tyndale's "Biblical English," a form of the English language especially suited to convey the text of Scripture in the native tongue. Lawton further observes that, unlike the Geneva Bible, the King James Bible excluded marginal notes, interpretative aids, and other helps to the reader. On the one hand, "such a Bible leaves a primary role for the Church, the traditional role of teaching and preaching. The text is open to institutional mediation. More than any other text, the King James Bible best captures the circumscribed and paradoxical nature of English freedom" (p. 82), but on the other hand, he observes that this also leaves the text open to any—including modern secular—interpretation. This means that, according to Lawton, "the Bible [*i.e.*, translation] that readers prefer is the Bible they wish (or wish not) to believe" (p. 83). To assert, therefore, that the choice of translation is something merely discretionary is refuted by the nature of Biblical translation itself. Christians intent to read, study, and obey a translation that reproduces as accurately as possible the wording of the underlying original language texts will therefore insist on a translation like the King James Bible, whereas "modern" Christians for whom the actual wording of the Biblical text is less important will be easily seduced by commercials for modern English translations favoring their "understandability," "modernity," and so forth. Biblical fidelity, not style, is the issue.

24. Albert Mirgeler's *Mutations of Western Christianity* (Palm Publishers, 1964) is a unique work. The author, a learned political sociologist, outlines the extent to which primal Biblical revelation and the patristic church with its Semitic origin has been altered and reshaped by its Westernization. Of course, a main plank in the liberal intellectual program has been to attack orthodox Christianity for its assimilation of Greek elements. But Mirgeler does not implement this tack. He recognizes the inescapably historical imprint on all human theological formulations (a fact no Protestant dedicated to *sola Scriptura* dare deny) and states, much in the vein as C. S. Lewis, that, "Confessional divisions, like most of the spiritual conflicts of history, in spite of their present urgency and insuperability, may one day be seen to be the result of that universal blindness which underlies the historical existence of mankind" (p. 4). While I would

have stated it much less audaciously, since the truth of the Biblical Word shines through accurate theological formulations due to the predestinating hand of God, it is true that the prejudices of a particular age will likely manifest themselves in human doctrinal formulations—sectarian confessions of faith included. For Christianity this began very early: "It was a very definite form of Antiquity and a very definite form of Christianity which entered into the first, Carolingian shaping of Europe, and both had acquired their historical character precisely in the late Roman age" (p. 6). We Bible-believers must be careful to maintain just this sort of approach, as, for example, Van Til and Rushdoony have, because at certain points, even the patristic church compromised certain aspects of the Faith with Greek philosophy and Greek culture, thus breaking with the Bible and the ancient ecumenical creeds, which were decidedly anti-Hellenic in their main features. In short, to preserve primal, infallible Biblical authority, it is necessary to "relativize" all expressions of the Faith in terms of it. This is never to say that they are evil or useless, only that they are imperfect. God's Word alone is our absolute standard.

Mirgeler's analysis of Germanic Christianity is fascinating, and he is one of the few writers of the modern times who plainly recognize the quandary of medieval ecclesiocentric institutionalism from which the best aspects of the Reformed Faith (including Kuyper and Christian Reconstruction) are a healthy reaction. In the rarefied ecclesiocentric atmosphere, "anything 'worldly' appeared to be justified without further argument as long as there was some ecclesiastical connection" (p. 53). Thus, "the secularization which actually set in through the distinction made between spiritual and secular was concealed by the fact that Christendom emerged in a way from an ecclesiastical leadership and was seen as a part of the tradition of the old sacred unity of Empire and Church" (p. 111). Secularization, therefore, far from beginning as a Renaissance or Enlightenment assault outside the walls of the institutional church, actually began *within* medieval Christianity under the momentarily mistaken notion that contact with and subjugation to the institutional church somehow guaranteed the valid religious character of any discipline or practice. It was only when the Reformation was seen to shatter the ecclesiastical monopoly of Romanism that this secularizing tendency became painfully evident. And it was principally with men like Kuyper and Bavinck, and especially Van Til and Rushdoony, that this "sacramental epistemology" was shown for what it was—a bankrupt compromise of the Faith under the guise of the church. This point, by the way, is made powerfully from another angle in Frederick Beiser's *The Sovereignty of Reason* (Princeton University Press, 1996), which I review in detail in the current issue of the *Journal of Christian Reconstruction*.

Christian Reconstructionists are sometimes accused of

an insufficient reverence for the institutional dimension of the church. In some ways this is an odd charge, since it is the genius of our movement to recognize how that it is precisely this institutionalized ecclesiocentric notion which undermined the Faith from within the church and rendered the Reformation necessary in the first place. The Reformation was a much more decisive break with medieval soteriology than with medieval ecclesiology, and the ecclesiological imperfections of the early Reformers hound the church to this day, despite the Reformers' towering work. It is only when we affirm the fullest expression of the Reformed Faith, with foundations in Kuyper and the superstructure in Van Til and Rushdoony, that we can once and for all achieve a genuinely Reformed Faith in which religion and culture are not held hostage to an institution (though institutions are integral to the Faith), but rather in which all of life is lived directly and immediately to the glory of God with His inscripturated law-word as our guide. As Mirgeler observes of the church's futile defense against Enlightenment, "The church has struggled fiercely against this positivism, but without lasting success. They scarcely noticed that their comparative powerlessness was due to the fact that they had for a long time justified their own existence mainly from the same standpoint and therefore had to share the responsibility for the positivist deviation of the 19th century" (p. 129). For hundreds of years the church, by and large, had been operating on Enlightenment premises; and it could scarcely attack the horrific logical conclusions of Enlightenment without calling into question its own misguided convictions.

Mirgeler's work, though no doubt hard to find, warrants careful study by scholars and serious students of Western Christianity. While contemporary Christian faith—genuine faith, I mean—must revere its heritage and uphold its historic confessions, it must never be held hostage to merely institutionalized forms of religion, certain aspects of whose character were shaped by transient forces no longer at work in the world. The Christian Faith must always be ready to reorient ecclesiastical institutions and itself in terms of Biblical revelation—never forgetting, of course, its own historically shaped character and the structure of Christianity itself without which it cannot exist.

25. Finally, I should mention Rushdoony's *The One and the Many*. This is one of his most significant works, but it is also, unfortunately, one of his least popular. The book does presuppose a basic grasp of philosophy on the part of the reader, but it is a choice work. The age-old problem of the one and the many is not discussed much these days, but there can be no fundamental answer to human life apart from an answer to this question, and as Rushdoony observes, following Van Til, only the Christian Trinity furnishes that answer. Rushdoony's chapters on "The Ground of Liberty," "Christ: The World De-divinized," and "The Immanent One as the Power State" are especially powerful. This book is currently out of print. We hope to get enough money to republish it. When we do, I urge you to buy it and master it. I will go so far as to say that you cannot really understand Rushdoony's thought until you have grasped the leading themes of this book.

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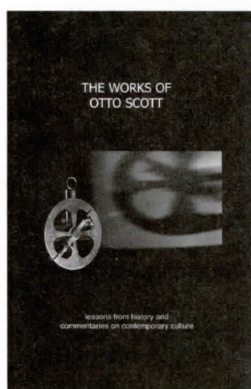
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WWJD

By Rev. Brian M. Abshire

Editor's Introduction: Pastor Brian Abshire's ministry and writing are characterized by a direct, no-nonsense, practical application of the Faith. This is refreshing in a generation of sophisticated religious facade that obscures a bankrupt heresy and antinomianism. A prime example is the "WWJD" rage that is sweeping the country. Pastor Abshire's assessment of this evangelical cotton-candy religion is right on target.



Every so often, another silly fad hits Christian circles. Years ago, it was an upraised index finger calling for "One Way." Later it was little fishes (my wife and I have them on our wedding rings!). Mostly these fads are harmless enough, just a bit tacky, sometimes perhaps a little insipid

but nothing really to get upset about. They too will pass—and do no real damage to the Kingdom.

The most recent craze is "WWJD" or, "What Would Jesus Do?" The idea behind this is that, throughout the day, when confronted with various decisions, the little logo is supposed to remind us to ask ourselves, "What would Jesus do in this situation?" First, these initials were put on a bracelet, then like some horrible, growing blob creature from a 1950s B movie, they began appearing on anything and everything. ("It's ALIVE!")

Now, really, I don't have a problem with the WWJD bracelet, bumper sticker, baseball cap or pen and pencil set. Marketers have to make a living too. And though I think it a little adolescent, it's no big deal. However, I DO have a problem with WWJD being touted as a SERIOUS aid to Christian ethics. A number of e-mails, cards and advertising blurbs have recently crossed my desk telling me that THIS little logo is THE cutting edge of responsible Christian living.

Borderline Blasphemy

Now look, I know that I am a nasty, cynical and unsentimental type, caustic in nature with millennia to go in my sanctification, but, come on people, doesn't

anybody else see a problem with this? First of all, the very question itself borders on blasphemy. Jesus was the incarnate Son of God. We cannot always know what Jesus knows nor do what Jesus would do. If we saw thousands of people hungry, could we do what Jesus would do, *i.e.*, feed them with a few loaves of bread and a couple of fishes? If we were out on a boat with the wind and waves threatening to capsize us, could we still the waters with a word? Could you do what Jesus did if the IRS man came and demanded an unlawful tax ("Well Mr. Taxman, if you'll just go down to the local fishing hole, you'll find this year's taxes in the mouth of a big fat trout")? When was the last time someone wearing a WWJD bracelet stood up in a church business meeting and scourged the money lenders (er, I mean "finance committee") out of the church for going into ungodly debt for the building program?

Jesus Then and Now

Furthermore, we do not always know WHAT Jesus would do because the historical situation has changed since He came. Therefore, what He did THEN might not be the same thing He would do today. For example, say Jesus was driving in bumper-to-bumper freeway traffic (I have visions of His parting the Los Angeles rush hour traffic jam like Charlton Heston—sorry!) and some numskull cuts Him off in traffic. Would Jesus just smile and drive on His way? In His first advent He might have because He was in His state of humiliation. He came to serve, not be served. But today He is the risen and ascended King of Kings and Lord of Lords. If Jesus were physically here today and somebody flipped him a rude gesture, wouldn't this be an affront to His divine majesty resulting in a squadron of angels, blasting this sacrilegious turkey off the face of the earth? (Well, at least we can hope.) The point here is that Jesus had divine prerogatives that we do not. He had divine power that we do not. He had divine knowledge that we do not. We do not always know what He would do, nor do we necessarily have the power to do it, even if we did.

Antinomian Christians

But even more importantly, the REAL problem with this little catch phrase is that few Christians today in broad evangelical circles really have a clue as to what Jesus would actually do in any given situation because they are Biblically illiterate. When they give their cliché, most people immediately turn inward and subjective and ask themselves "What do I THINK Jesus would do?" They

do not know the Scriptures, so they look to their feelings as their guide. In reality, they substitute the sinful impressions of men for the power and clarity of the unchanging Word of God.

What would Jesus do? Really? **He would keep the Law.** Yup, that's right. Jesus would keep the whole law (*Mt. 5:19*). But since we live in an antinomian age, most Christians don't have a clue as to what the Law requires. For example, the average born-again, Bible-believing, broad-evangelical Christian cannot even state all of the Ten Commandments. Seriously! Back in the Dark Ages when I went to a Christian college, one of the professors had us write down the Moral Law as a quiz. In a class of 30 odd students (well, not really THAT odd) only one was able to list all ten (modesty forbids identifying the one spiritual giant in the class). Here were Christian kids, who had grown up in the church, been to Sunday school, VBS, innumerable Christian camps, sat through thousands of sermons, and they did not even know God's Top Ten.

Hence if people do not even KNOW the Law, how can they possibly do what Jesus would do? They can't. And they don't. And that, my friends, does much to explain the utter irrelevancy of modern, broad evangelicalism.

Unlike modern Christians, David loved God's Law; it was his meditation all the day (*Ps. 119:97*). Joshua was told to meditate on the Law day and night so that he would be careful to do all that was written in it (*Jos. 1:8*). Jesus said, "if you love me, keep my commandments" (*Jn. 14:15*). But we live in a lawless age, where even the King's

own household believes that they are under "grace" not law. Consequently, they think up witty catch phrases, put them on bracelets, bumper stickers and baseball caps, and then go right on doing their own will.

Jesus said that His great commission for us was to disciple the nations, teaching them to observe all that He had commanded (*Mt. 28:19-20*). But if we do not *know* His commandments, we cannot *teach* His commandments.

Law and Love

Some people will ask, "Isn't it enough just to love God and one another?" True, these are the two greatest commandments. And what Jesus would do is always the loving thing. *But what is the "loving" thing?* Love is the summary of the Law. The Law tells us what it means to love God and to love one another. You cannot use a summary to deny one of the things that it summarizes! Hence, we cannot understand the content of love without knowing the Law. If we don't know the Law, we can't love in spirit and truth. Unfortunately, Christians today define "love" as a warm, mushy feeling. God defines it as keeping His commands. Most modern Christians hate and fear the Law because to their unsanctified eyes it appears hard, cruel, and "oppressive." They don't want that nasty old God of wrath from the "Old" Testament, but the "loving" god of the New, not realizing that without the Law, there is no content to love.

So the next time some genius inquires, "What would Jesus Do?", be gracious, be kind, be gentle. But also be firm. Remind him, "Jesus would keep the whole Law."

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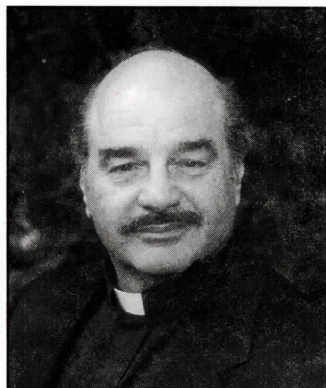
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What's a Father to Do?

By Rev. Ellsworth McIntyre



The most important lessons of life are learned in the marketplace, not in the classroom. Practical education is not graded on the curve. The Bible reads, "And we know that all things work together . . ." (*Rom. 8:28*). It was the common opinion among ancient Hebrews that "a man

who did not teach his son the law and a trade, the ability to work, reared him to be a fool and a thief" (R. J. Rushdoony, *Institutes of Biblical Law*, Vol. I, p. 183). Classroom education, on the other hand, is almost always impractical and most distant from learning the law, a trade, and the ability to work. For this reason, the majority are always fools and thieves, because—well, that's what they have been trained to be. Socialism (collective thievery) and cultural Marxism (collective foolishness) are the natural product of a classroom education. What is a father to do? The good father will teach his son a trade.

Death by Science

The Holy Spirit will guide the godly father who trains his son in a practical skill. I remember a lesson taught to me by my father. I was very young, only two to three years old. I remember the lesson because of the pain and embarrassment. (Pain and embarrassment greatly increase learning.) In my formative years, there seemed to be always a project underway. My parents restored and improved two houses during my childhood. For eighteen years, there seemed to be a fine coating of plaster dust over everything. I received a classroom abstract Greek education at school and a practical Hebrew education at home. My first lesson began with my father's stern command, "Don't put your finger in there!" I noted his words and stared into the light socket on the end of an electrical extension cord. I had put my finger there before with no consequences; therefore, I proceeded on experience instead of obedience. Ah! A bitter lesson for all budding scientists. One must honor thy father and thy mother if one wants to live long upon the land that the Lord giveth (*Ex. 20:12*). My empirical evidence (scientific facts) told me my father was mistaken. My father, on the other hand, knew that the electrical cord was charged

with power on this occasion, unlike those other times when I stuck my finger in the socket gathering my scientific facts.

Humanists always assume too much—that's why humanists don't dwell long on the land. Poverty, sickness, and premature death follow those who refuse to follow godly authority. Those who live by science die by science. The terrifying sting of electricity fired through my little body. I screamed and simultaneously wet my pants. It is not a good idea to wet your pants with 120 volts coursing through your flesh. My father roared with laughter, saying, "Well, boy, the next time I say 'Don't' you'd better listen."

My mother was all sympathy. She swept me into her arms. "Are you all right, Ellsworth?"

My father answered for me, "He's okay, but be careful, he wet his pants."

Laughter, embarrassment, humiliation—no wonder I can't forget that lesson. Experience guided by the Holy Spirit is very good education, absolutely essential if the child of God is to earn a reward. (2 *Jn. 8*: ". . . lose not those things which we have gained. . .") Isn't it ironic that pain, embarrassment, and humiliation are forbidden tools in the classroom?

Education for Status or Money?

A good father needs to know the difference between classroom education and marketplace education. Our anti-Christian culture values degrees and diplomas more than demonstrated achievement. My father taught me how to work. He didn't consciously make that choice, but I believe the Lord certainly used that experience to overcome the foolishness of a classical education.

Our culture makes fools out of those who follow the majority. To illustrate how foolish we are, please read *The Millionaire Next Door* by Thomas J. Stanley and William D. Danko. It was on the best seller list for weeks and weeks, so I am sure you can get a copy at your local library. These two Ph.D.s note that it is still possible to become a millionaire in America *if you avoid the professions, government work, and higher education in general*. Instead, go into relatively unregulated businesses like pest control. The title of the book notes that the millionaires they surveyed live in middle-class neighborhoods next door to doctors and lawyers. The pest control business owner often has a net worth fifty times greater than his professional next door neighbor, but the businessman has less status than a doctor or lawyer. The relatively poor, debt-laden professional and the foolish

majority look down their noses at the entrepreneur. As a result, the new millionaire (if he follows the majority) sends his children to college to become professionals. The millionaire trades his children's estate for status. I found the book reassuring, because at Grace Community Schools, we teach our teachers to start, own, and operate their own schools, instead of becoming "executives" in someone else's school. Class conscious fathers blinded by snobby degrees won't find *The Millionaire Next Door* a cheerful read. Fathers who follow the Great Commission to have all nations submit to God's law will understand that owning and controlling private property by means of righteousness is much better than many college degrees (See *Gen. 2:28* and *Mt. 6:33*). Our purpose in this world is not to impress the majority of fools and thieves with our classical education. Our goal is to expand the dominion of Christ, and owning private property is our best weapon. That is why socialists hate capitalists. The saint in the marketplace will best all rivals most of the time.

The Last Laugh

My father taught me many lessons as I worked at his side for eighteen years. I asked him once if he remembered laughing at his son getting zapped with electricity. He was indignant and sure that I made the whole thing up. My mother remembered, however, and this time she was not sympathetic but laughed and laughed.

I am sure the Holy Spirit can overcome a stupid abstract classroom education. He did for me. I made certain that my eight children learned a trade. Yes, my children earned college degrees as well, but the ability to work and to know the law of God and a trade came first. The good father should follow the example of God the Father. God sent Christ to Joseph who taught Him to be a carpenter, and now Jesus is the ruler of the world. He that sitteth in the heavens is laughing. Make sure He's

not laughing at you (*Ps. 2:4*). God always has the last laugh.

Ellsworth McIntyre, one of America's leading Christian educators, is pastor of Nicene Covenant Church and founder of Grace Community Schools, and author of How to Become a Millionaire in Christian Education. He is available for speaking engagements, often without charge. For further information, contact him at 4405 Outer Drive, Naples, Florida 34112. E-mail revmac@mindspring.com.

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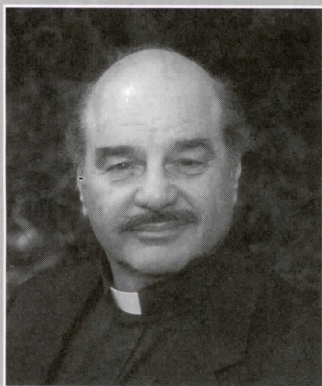
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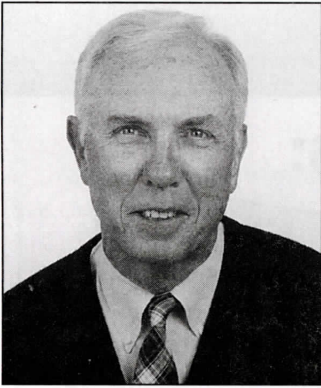


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Reflections on Fatherhood

By Rev. Ford Schwartz



How we raise our children reveals who we are. I am passionate about the law. I am convinced that in God's Word there are directions for every, even the most bizarre, situation we can encounter. It is important to have the right theology. It is important to know the right answers. It is more

important to know how to think Biblically. When we teach the Faith like multiplication flash cards, we can have neat rows of children who can spout the right words. But, the fabric of character that brings forth the self-sacrificing courage we are called to as Christians includes having freely come to one's own conclusions. The creativity we are capable of as Children of the Promise is a product of intellectual freedom as much as righteous discipline. When the devastating blows of life impact our children's lives, when impossible inconsistencies and unresolved aspects of their understanding of the Faith trouble their souls, will pat answers do? When our children can teach their children and we are not there to watch, what will they teach?

Learning to Think Biblically

Shortly after my conversion, I met the man who would be my spiritual father, R. J. Rushdoony. I went to listen to what I anticipated would be the very fount of spiritual truth. Rush would patiently and wonderfully answer all the questions I had written down as I studied his books, Calvin's, and the Bible. His responses were always directed at helping me to think Biblically, not to have the "politically correct" reconstructionist response. Our conversations would cover nearly every topic from current events to ancient history, from politics, to farming, to sports. Over the course of years, I would sit happily with this great man and converse for hundreds of hours.

However, my Heavenly Father would simply not allow me to absorb Rush's wisdom. I had to fight him for it. I had to learn to *think* Biblically to play with this "big boy." I would sit with Rush for hours, arguing heatedly though respectfully, with a man I knew was far superior to me in his understanding of the Faith. The fact that he sat surrounded by hundreds of books in a house containing thousands more—most of which he had read, as opposed to my ignorance—did not get me off the hook. The fact

that Rush wrote the books that introduced to my mind Biblically ordered thought wasn't particularly relevant. God kept having our discussion move to areas that I had more direct experience with than Rush. God kept having me open my big mouth and voice my experienced opinion in contradiction to his and an argument would ensue. Our debates would focus on the facts under discussion and the law-word of God was the only relevant standard by which to judge, understand and interpret them. It was, at times, a no-holds-barred situation. I don't know how he tolerated me. I say this though I am still certain that some of the time I held the correct position!

What was happening during those lively discussions was that I was learning to think using Scripture as my reference. That is a very different thing than accepting someone else's conclusions on a matter. In truth, the conclusions are important but not more so than the process of arriving at them. The law is a list of specific don'ts with a few general dos. So, in general terms, God has given us the way to see when we are off His highway of righteousness. Whether or not we are in the right lane is often a lot harder to discern. A narrow road need not be single file, at least not at every point along the way.

Like all things in God's economy, once you learn a lesson, you are often called to teach that lesson—specifically to your children. Rest assured, it is pretty scary teaching your daughter that in the end, things are between her and God. Recently, the subject under consideration in our household was infant baptism. My daughter had been baptized as an infant by R. J. Rushdoony and she really wasn't taking exception to the scriptural basis for it, just whether or not it is a point of doctrine to hinder fellowship. I can make the case from Scripture on the merits of infant baptism. It was a bit scary when she posed the question, "Would you allow me to marry a Reformed Baptist?" She's only 14 at present and the question is hypothetical, but still it mattered. My immediate answer was that I would have to think that one through. My wife's answer to her surprised both my daughter and me, for it showed a speck of her awesome freedom under God's law. My wife said that if the prospective husband were a godly man with a love and hunger for God's Word, and if he were open to the possibility that infant baptism was glorifying to God, that we would have no grounds to prohibit the marriage.

When you give others the right to think through things on their own terms and only demand that Scripture inform their thoughts, you run a risk. They might come up with wrong answers. Of course, they also

might dazzle you with their brilliance and add light to your world. Being a husband and father is pretty scary either way you go. I'm reasonably sure that if you asked my wife and children, they'd say I tend to go both ways. I demand they have the right answers (my answers) and that they have thought them through Biblically. So, like all families, we don't always agree and I won't always know the entire story.

Freedom is a funny sort of thing. One can only approach it in complete submission to God's law-word. Reasoning from our own perversions and lusts is treason to our God, the covenant, and our freedom. Similarly, within the framework of the family hierarchy of authority lies immense personal liberty for all family members. Being a father requires somehow letting God communicate and administer this complex message through you. We want to protect our children from wrong ideas just as we want to protect them from all evil. But, in being satisfied with memorized answers calculated (or not) to please or placate us, we allow our children's natural defenses to become very susceptible to a host of other evils, evils that only discernment can handle. When we force them to build emotional walls that "protect" them from the inconsistencies of their understanding of their faith, instead of being able to address them openly, we are not strengthening but weakening their faith and their usefulness in God's Kingdom. It is sinful and perverse to pretend or assume that God will not test them as He has tested other generations. Through God's gracious dealings with me, it is clear to me that He does not require or desire mindless automatons with the right answers. Our Heavenly Father treasures obedience based on our freely using His admonitions to analyze our situation and to determine our response to varying circumstances. It would have been a lot easier to have built automatons. Man can do that with machines and he is tempted to do that with other men, women, and children. Since a father is uniquely positioned to be thus tempted because of his position of authority, he should be on guard against philosophies and so called "Biblical teachings" which feed, bolster, and justify this temptation to dominate, manipulate, and enslave.

Men whose wives are not eager to serve God and grow in their faith are particularly vulnerable to "Reformed" teachings that undermine the wife's and children's liberty under God. It seems so much easier to bludgeon her into submission with Scripture that seems to work for the moment but produces no lasting personal change, rather than to actually address the reality of her spiritual state. Relegating women to the "craft classes" while men study the Word of God is symptomatic of such impotent solutions. Men need an informed, spiritually vibrant helper, especially when it comes to training the children

to think Biblically. Crushing perceived rebellion within the family by numbing thought is an ungodly, unbiblical, however popular, solution.

From a human father's perspective, life can present so many variables that there is no way to teach my children the right response to every possible variation of a multitude of possible situations. Further, they are to be prepared by me to carry on after my death, an event that will come sooner or later. I won't be there to coach them, and even if I were, I wouldn't know all the right answers. Moreover, internal forces and callings I will never fully know influence them even if they faithfully attempt to describe them to me. I will never fully feel what it's like to be them; I will never see with their eyes or hear with their ears.

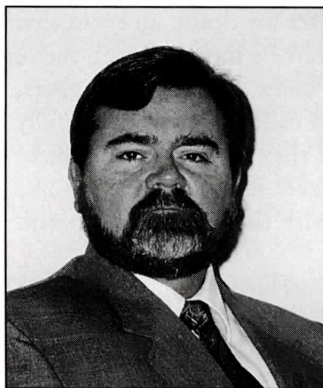
Decisions are rarely made exclusively on the basis of reason, even Biblically founded reason: wants, fears, heartfelt desires, and pain play their roles also. Routinely, reason is used to *legitimize* decisions or *explain away* behavior well after the fact. Often, the fabric of people is exposed by their decisions, some of these decisions made before all the factors that drove the path of action or non-action could be personally separated and analyzed by them. Thus, from a father's perspective, the only practical and godly thing to do is to help them to learn to think Biblically, to let that thinking shape their character and the fabric of their being, and rely on their Heavenly Father whom they can depend on to always be there to know them inside and out and to always care for them, defend them, and forgive them.

Rather than being watchdogs of "religiously (politically) correct" conclusions being reached by our children, it is the standards which rule their decisions and thought which we must jealously police and insist are Biblical. In this way, God has ordained an open, non-manipulative pathway to their souls. By insisting they use an outside, verifiable standard (the Word of God) to which we as parents also submit gives our children an assurance against arbitrary, self-serving dictates and allows our behavior to be held up to the same light of Scripture. Truly, how we raise our children reveals who we are.

Ford Schwartz lives in San Jose, CA and works as a sales manager at a car dealership. He was ordained to the ministry in 1995 by R. J. Rushdoony, Mark Rushdoony, and Andrew Sandlin and serves as pastor of Emmaus Christian Fellowship in San Jose. He is on the Board of Ross House Books, which publishes R. J. Rushdoony's books and is co-director of Friends of Chalcedon. He and his wife, Andrea, have been married for 23 years and have 3 children. He can be reached at (408)997-9866 or via e-mail at ecf_sj@ix.netcom.com.

The Joy of Christian Fatherhood

By Dr. William D. Gamble



When all else fails, read the instructions. Today's hapless male has been inundated with a plethora of sickly theology and wacko psychology and feminized ideology to the point that the poor guy hardly knows what to do. It's so hard to be politically correct when the rules constantly

change. The godly man then must refuse this worldly "wisdom," must disavow all the "facts" (both of them) he learned in public school, and must turn to the only authoritative and infallible Book of instruction regarding his calling as man, husband, and father.

In this perfect Book the Christian man will find the perfect pattern for his fatherly duties: the Fatherhood of God. We are to rear our children as God the Father rears His children. We are to love our children as God the Father loves His children (and we are to love our children's mother as Christ loves His church). We are to pity our children as God the Father pities His children (*Ps. 103:13*). And we are to rejoice in our children as God the Father rejoices in His children.

Joy in Our Children

Many passages of the Bible teach us about the joy of the Heavenly Father in His children. God declared, ". . . for the Lord delighteth in thee . . . and as the bridegroom rejoiceth over the bride, so shall thy God rejoice over thee" (*Is. 62:4-5*). "Yea, I will rejoice over them to do them good . . ." (*Jer. 32:41*). "For behold, I create new heavens and a new earth: and the former shall not be remembered, nor come into mind. But be ye glad and rejoice forever in that which I create: for, behold, I create Jerusalem a rejoicing, and her people a joy. And I will rejoice in Jerusalem, and joy in my people: and the voice of weeping shall be no more heard in her, nor the voice of crying" (*Is. 65:17-19*). "The Lord thy God in the midst of thee is mighty; he will save, he will rejoice over thee with joy: he will rest in his love, he will joy over thee with singing" (*Zeph. 3:17*). And our Lord Jesus proclaimed, "These things have I spoken unto you, that my joy might remain in you, and that your joy might be full" (*Jn. 15:11*).

These verses clearly teach something quite contrary to the modern children-are-a-nuisance mentality. God delights in His children. God rejoices in His children. They are His joy. Wonder of wonders, God sings for joy over His children. This eternal, unchanging, sovereign joy of God in His children is to be the model for the Christian father's joy in his children. This is not just a natural parental affection, for the fruit of the Spirit is joy (*Gal. 5:22*); this is a spiritual grace to be sought and perfected.

God the Father rejoices in His children, and it is His children's blessed duty to respond in kind. In a sermon preached over a century ago, Charles Spurgeon declared, "What a gracious God we serve, who makes delight to be a duty, and who commands us to rejoice . . . for a joyous God desires a joyous people." God's children are to rejoice in their God. "I will greatly rejoice in the Lord my God; for he hath clothed me with the garments of salvation, he hath clothed me with the robe of righteousness, as a bridegroom decketh himself with ornaments, and as a bride adorneth herself with her jewels" (*Is. 61:10*). "For thou wilt shew me the path of life: in thy presence is fulness of joy; at thy right hand there are pleasures for evermore" (*Ps. 16:10*). Joy of the Father in the children; joy of the children in the Father—here is the model, the heavenly standard, for the Christian father.

When a man, by grace, is enabled to pursue his high and holy calling of godly fatherhood, his well-taught children are a joy to him and his house. Solomon taught us that a "wise son maketh a glad father," but "the father of a fool hath no joy" (*Pr. 10:1; 15:20; 17:21*). Many of the Proverbs speak to this. "The father of the righteous shall greatly rejoice: and he that begetteth a wise son shall have joy of him. Thy father and thy mother shall be glad, and she that bare thee shall rejoice" (*Pr. 23:24-25*).

Results of Fatherly Joy

A father's joy in his children will have many very practical applications. His love for them will be evident, not a well-kept secret. His desire for their good will govern his every word and deed. The ever-growing friendship between the father and his children will create bonds that will endure forever. The father who joyfully acknowledges that his children are a gift of God will talk with his children, worship with his children, pray with his children, study with his children, work with his

children, play with his children, serve God with his children (Timothy served with Paul "as a son with the father," *Phil. 2:22*), and dwell in peace and fellowship and harmony with his children, forming them into "straight arrows" (*Ps. 127:4*) which multiply the father's ability to fight the Lord's battles.

The Apostle Paul wrote these words in his first letter to the church at Thessalonica: "As ye know how we exhorted and comforted and charged every one of you, as a father doth his children, That ye would walk worthy of God, who hath called you unto his kingdom and glory" (*1 Thes. 2:11-12*). Here we learn three aspects of the father's calling. He is to exhort his children; the Greek word implies that he is called alongside his children to be their helper, their encourager, their confidant. He is to comfort his children; literally, to be "near of speech," to take them tenderly and closely to him and whisper words of grace and truth. He is to charge them; testify to them of God's words and deeds, bear witness to them of the faithfulness of his and their God, calling them to a life of godliness and duty and honor. He is to do these things, that his children might walk worthy of God, who is faithful to call His covenant children into His kingdom and glory.

J. W. Alexander wrote of the joyful task of training our children:

No man knows what God has made him for. Some men, for all we know, may be sent into the world chiefly to form other men. The grand act of a servant of Christ, for which God has been preparing him for many years, may be to give an impulse to some other man, and this may be accomplished in a moment, and when neither of the two suspects it. No man knows when the great act of his life takes place. No man knows when he is doing the greatest good. The old monk who directed young Martin Luther, possibly did nothing so important in his life. Sometimes it is a child, and whom would a Christian more joyfully influence than the son of his bosom? It is for him we labour, pray, suffer, and live. How do we know but the chief purpose for which God has spared our lives is, that we may form an instrument for his work in our own family?¹

"Quit you like men" was and is the command of God to men of God (*1 Cor. 16:13*). Men need to be reminded to act like men, husbands need to be reminded to act like husbands, and fathers need to be reminded to act like fathers. If God is pleased to turn our hearts from the vain and worthless worldly amusements which so often entangle us, and turn the hearts of the fathers to the children, and the hearts of the children to their fathers (*Mal. 4:6*), then perhaps we will be able to echo the words of the beloved Apostle, "I have no greater joy than to hear that my children walk in truth" (*3 Jn. 4*).

Man's (and his children's) chief end is to glorify God, and to enjoy Him forever.

¹ J. W. Alexander, *Thoughts on Preaching* (Edinburgh, 1975), 75-76.

David Gamble, Ed.D., is an educational specialist, He and his wife, Stephanie, have been blessed with seven children. They reside in El Cajon, California. David is a teaching elder at Grace Covenant Church.

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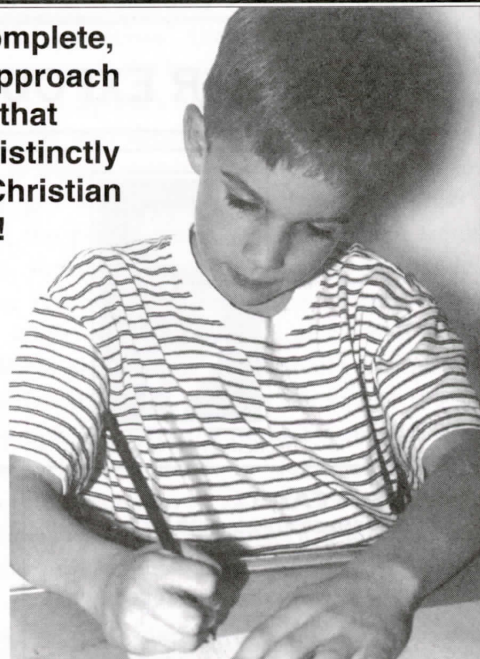
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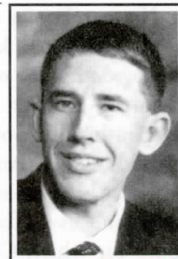
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Letters on Six-Day Creation

Dear Editors:

First, let me thank you for the usually very insightful, interesting, and useful *Reports*. Over the past ten or so years I have learned much about Reformed Christianity, and have been able to apply many lessons to my own walk with Christ. In the *Chalcedon Report*, No. 398 (September, 1998), several interesting articles appeared on the subject of a six-day creation. I have several comments related to this particular *Report*, which I completely read.

If other interpretations of Genesis 1-2 are to be viable, I think two conditions should be met. The first is a necessary condition that somewhere in Scripture we find evidence of a link between one day of creation and a span of time. The second is a sufficient condition that the word for day in Genesis 1 is used differently elsewhere in Scripture, and that the explicit qualifications and ordinal prefixes can be found with days in other Scriptures where the meaning is a span of time.

The sufficient condition is easily met. Genesis 2:4-6; 2:17; 4:3; 8:22; 29:14; 40:4; and 43:9 all use the same word for day that Genesis 1 uses, yet the time frame appears to be longer than a day in each case. Ordinals are used in Hosea 6:2 in connection with day, but the time frame again is a long period. Finally, Genesis 49:27 uses the day-night wording to describe the tribe of Benjamin. The wording is similar to Genesis 1, but the meaning is apparently a span of time. So the sufficient condition has been met.

The necessary condition, that Scripture give us evidence of a link between one day of creation and a span of time, can be found in Hebrews 4:1-5, and particularly verses 3-5. The basic theme of these verses is that a "rest" of God has existed from the seventh day of creation (*v.* 4), even though the disobedient generation could not enter it. The writer also states that the promise about the physical land of promise ultimately points to the divine rest (*Heb.* 3:11), which only those who believe may enter (*v.* 3). Furthermore, Colossians 2:16, 17 indicates that the Sabbath is a type of Christ. Thus the Fourth Commandment, in teaching that God is the sovereign Creator, gives us a reminder of the shadow of things to come, and indeed this is likely the commandment's main concern. By implication, Hebrews 4 indicates that the seventh day is a span of time. Therefore, the necessary condition is fulfilled.

So, in a sufficient and necessary manner, an alternative interpretation to Genesis 1 may be available. This leads me to several other observations concerning this particular issue. Several instances of reliance on extra-Biblical writings appear throughout this work. Mr. Gentry spends a great deal of time using the *Book of Church Order* (PCA),

and the Westminster Standards to bolster his arguments. Rev. Snapp relies on the Standards as well. The interesting point I would like to raise here is that the *Book of Church Order* (PCA) and the Standards are not canonical. They could be wrong. Yes, we are confessional people, but this does not mean that we accept extra-Biblical writings just because they were written by good men.

Brian Abshire's article could have been entitled, "The Spineless, Stupid, and Sinister." Rev. Abshire leaves no room for disagreement and intones a sense of arrogance throughout this particular work. Many godly, faithful, and well-reasoned Christian people will disagree with Rev. Abshire. As I indicated above, Scripture may also disagree with Rev. Abshire. When discussing difficult theological ideas, one should be prepared to recognize honest, thoughtful, and indeed possibly Biblical disagreements.

Frank Walker comments on the doctrine of perspicuity of Scripture. According to Mr. Walker, "the things necessary for our learning are so clearly revealed that even those of considerably diminished capacity can understand them well enough to be blessed by them." I am fairly surprised that this discussion made it through the editor's office. Do we seriously believe such a false doctrine? We know that God must open the eyes of man to His Word, whether they are highly intelligent or less so, before understanding may occur. In other words, only those to whom God reveals His Word will understand it. To others the Word is a stumbling block—see *e.g.* Romans 9. This is also pointed out by Christ in Luke 8:10. Furthermore, there are certain things in Scripture, and in our creeds, that are not easily understood by anyone, although they can be accepted: the Trinity quickly comes to mind.

I have not discussed any scientific issues above, as my principal concern has been theological. I would like to make two simple comments on scientific issues:

Mark Ludwig gives a very nice description of operational science. I would like to comment that deviations from Newtonian gravity are well understood when one employs General Relativity theory. That same theory, which is verifiable and has withstood many experimental tests, "predicts" a Big Bang origin for the universe. So, at least one scientifically verifiable theory exists which can at least be used to understand the evolution of the physical universe. A major test of General Relativity will come with investigations of the Light Interferometer Gravitational-Wave Observatory (LIGO). Albert Einstein predicted the existence of these gravitational waves in 1916 in his General Theory of Relativity, but only now in the 1990s, has technology become powerful enough to permit detecting them and harnessing them for science. Although they have not yet

been detected directly, the influence of gravitational waves on a binary pulsar (two neutron stars orbiting each other) has been measured accurately and is in good agreement with the predictions. Scientists therefore have great confidence that gravitational waves exist. Joseph Taylor and Russel Hulse were awarded the 1993 Nobel Prize in Physics for their discovery of this binary pulsar.

Of course, God came before the Big Bang. Other verifiable predictions of the Big Bang cosmology include the ratio of helium to hydrogen in the universe, and the expansion of the universe (studied with galactic red shift measurements). Concerning evolutionary biology, Dr. Ludwig is quite correct that little evidence exists for such a theory. Furthermore, the theory of evolution is not of the same caliber as that of General Relativity. Evolutionary theory, while in some ways complicated, does not, to the best of my knowledge, have a precise formulation in terms of mathematics in the same way that general relativity does.

Let me conclude with one scientific puzzle that I do not understand, and perhaps those who have considered these issue more than I can enlighten me. In Genesis 1:1-2 we read, "And the Spirit of God was hovering over the face of the waters. Then God said, 'Let there be light'" (NKJV). Physical water as we know it today is simply H₂O, two hydrogen atoms and an oxygen atom chemically combined. We know that the description of the water molecule requires several physical theories including quantum electro-dynamics—the unified theory of light, electricity, and magnetism. This theory is extremely precise in its descriptions of atomic processes, and perhaps the best tested and verified theory in all of the physical sciences. Concisely stated: water is held together by the electromagnetic force the mediator of which is the photon—light. Yet, the verses clearly say that the light came after the water. One could argue that the water is not the same water of today—but then one has a problem—are the days the same days of today? One could argue that things are actually happening simultaneously in verses 1-2, but then one has a problem that the clear reading is first water then light. One could argue that physical laws governing water change with time—but then again one is caught in the trap of the definition of day. Or one could shake one's head in amazement that some things will just have to wait to be explained. Today we see dimly, but then face-to-face.

Thank you for your kind patience in reading this short comment.

*David J. Dean, Ph.D.
Knoxville, TN*

Dear Dr. Dean,

The danger of merely interpreting the days of Genesis 1 as indeterminate periods of time is that one must either drastically alter the *modus operandi* of the universe during this period, or one must go further, and interpret Genesis 1 as having no relevance to chronological developments on the earth. Simply put, how could plants exist for a long period of time without sunlight?

Now, if one is going to arbitrarily alter the laws of physics during the creation because one believes the Scripture (whatever interpretation), one may as well posit a young earth and a fast creation. Laying aside those laws in the least degree represents a fundamental break with the atheistic scientist who has made the "laws of nature" his god. It is not at all clear that the young earth creationist is positing a bigger miracle, either. For plants to live how many millions of years without direct sunlight would be quite a feat. And what of the millions of years of darkness that covered the earth in each of the six creation nights?

Next, if you argue that Genesis 1 has no relevance to chronological developments on the earth, conveniently saying that the sun was created first, then the earth, then plants, etc., then you may as well also argue that Matthew 28, Mark 16, and the rest of the gospels have no chronological relevance. When the authors are talking about the disciples seeing Jesus after He rose from the dead, He really hadn't died yet. Maybe He didn't rise from the dead at all . . . And we become the most miserable of men.

In the end, if you take the step of interpreting the days of Genesis as ages, you land at a fork in the road. One direction takes you right back where you started. The other takes you to modernism and unbelief. Regarding your question about light, versus the electromagnetism that holds a water molecule together, I think I have to vote for the most common-sense approach here. Simply put, molecules at room temperature do not generally emit what is commonly called light, unless they are reacting in an unusual way (*e.g.* chemical luminescence). So if God did not initially create a hot earth, one wouldn't see much in the way of light.

Moving on, Newtonian gravity is of course a very useful approximation to the truth.

However, most scientists today admit that General Relativity is nothing more, at least inasmuch as it does not properly take quantum theory into account. In terms of understanding gravitation at a higher level than Newton did, it is a truly useful theory. Newton knew nothing of the wavelike nature of forces, or the fact that they do not act instantaneously. With the tremendous understanding of electrodynamics gained in the nineteenth century, it only made sense to apply the new concepts to gravitation as well. Einstein's theory is certainly very valuable in that regard.

As a Christian, I also find the idea of the Big Bang very exciting, inasmuch as it represents a fundamental break with a very anti-Christian understanding of the universe. The old Aristotelian/Euclidean universe which was the *de facto* standard for centuries seems to have given space the attributes of God, while taking away from God. In other

words, space itself was unchangeable and eternal. But then Aristotle's god, the unmoved mover, became a part of the universe. He was constrained by time. These ideas had deeply and unconsciously infiltrated the "Christian" understanding of the universe and of God Himself. Centuries ago, Christians would universally acknowledge that God had created the material things in space, but had He created space itself? The question would hardly have made any sense. Then Einstein came along and, in applying the concepts of electrodynamics to gravity, found out the universe itself was dynamic and his theory actually pointed to a creation event. Einstein's universe is really much more in accord with Scripture than the Aristotelian/Euclidean universe ever was. In it, God can be restored to His rightful position of uncreated Creator, whose existence is not dependent on space and time. The universe—space and time itself—is restored to its proper place as a created thing.

Were it not for the time frame predicted by standard General Relativity, I suppose Christians would have universally embraced it as creationism fulfilled. So how can one reconcile the theory with a young earth? At present no one really knows. One must either scrap the theory or scrap the young earth cosmology, or return to the pre-Einsteinian approach and constrain God to space and time. There isn't an easy answer for anyone who cares about both the theory and the Bible.

Obviously God has given us no guarantee that His act of creation is going to somehow pop out of the correct equations of motion for the universe. We may have to scrap the laws of physics in order to account for the creation. Yet Einstein's success entices us to try to reconcile the laws of physics with Biblical creation. Maybe somebody will succeed someday.

After all, it is not unusual for scientific theories to break down when pushed far beyond the limits of the data that they originally tried to explain. Herein we find both the real testing ground for a theory and the excitement of real

experimental discovery. Could General Relativity break down when the forces get dozens of orders of magnitude larger than anything we can ever experiment with? That probably wouldn't unduly surprise too many scientists. Or maybe quantum effects in gravitation are far more important than we can begin to imagine? (Along these lines, read *The Emperor's New Mind*, by Roger Penrose.)

On the other hand, getting the kind of experimental data to verify General Relativity in huge field limits, or getting enough data to formulate a better theory, if needed, may be a hopeless proposition. When push comes to shove, we have to realize that although science has been very valuable in helping us understand how God's creation works, we're still only scratching the surface. When scientists become deeply involved in a theory, be it General Relativity or anything else, they tend to start seeing it as the answer for everything. In fact, they're really limiting the scope of the questions they are asking to things that are immediately tractable in the theory. Yet there are whole realms of unasked, and often unaskable questions out there.

My personal experience as both a Christian and a scientist has been that the average person is not content to not know the answer to something. Often, I've had well-meaning Christians ask me questions about science and the Bible, and then get upset when I tell them nobody really knows. They don't like that. They'd rather have a sentence or two that will win a debate, than to appreciate the real difficulties involved. As honest men of faith, though, we have to face the difficulties without becoming unnerved. We may not live to see the new discoveries that resolve our questions. We may not be able to figure these things out with our minds. Then again, maybe one or two of us may be privileged enough to see the mind of God in one of these matters and discover something really beautiful.

Mark Ludwig, Ph.D.
Showlow, Arizona

Chalcedon Tape Ministry to Resume By Rev. Mark R. Rushdoony

Chalcedon is now in the planning stages of a major project that will make hundreds of R. J. Rushdoony's taped sermons and lectures available, some for the first time in many years. For many years, Chalcedon has allowed its tapes to be produced by independent vendors with varying degrees of association with Chalcedon itself. When Christian Tape Productions, our most recent vendor, ceased production in February, we were already negotiating for the rights and master tapes of all its Chalcedon tapes produced in the past thirteen years. These negotiations were successful and Chalcedon now owns these tapes and rights. Chalcedon intends to keep these series available. The subscriptions to these weekly sermons by R. J. Rushdoony, Andrew Sandlin, and myself are also being continued.

In addition, Chalcedon has in its archives many older tape series that have not been available for over thirteen years. We intend to make these available once again and are beginning the process of cataloging these tapes. We could, within months, have a tape catalog of over 1000 tapes, including nearly 500 tapes of sermons and lectures (most with two talks per tape) and over 400 Easy Chair tapes, which are monologues or discussions between my father and guests.

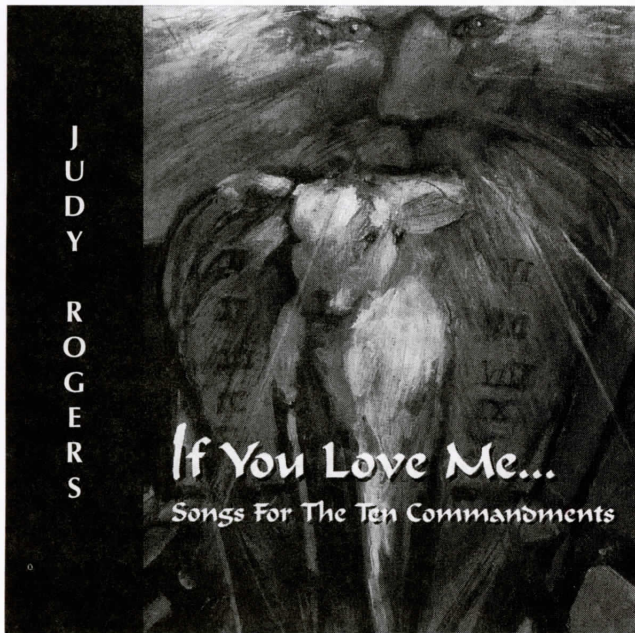
Bringing all of these into production at once is a massive undertaking. Chalcedon must sort, inventory, number, and catalog each tape. In addition, we must purchase production equipment and create a computer system and database of over 1000 labels. The data entry alone will be a time-consuming project.

When we have accomplished the above, we will tackle older tape series. What we do not have, George Calhoun of Mount Olive Tape Library has offered to make available to us from his extensive collection that goes back into the 1960s. I believe that eventually we could have a catalog of some 2,000 tapes. It is our goal to have these available individually as well as by sets, hence the great deal of cataloging required. Our progress in making these tapes available will be announced in the *Chalcedon Report*.

If You Love Me . . . Songs for the Ten Commandments

By Judy Rogers

Reviewed by Susan Burns



Judy's "If You Love Me" can be ordered from Judy Rogers, 5340 Hwy 20 S, Suite 10-309, Covington, GA 30016, (678)212-1514 or www.judyrogers.com. [CD \$14.95 Cassette \$9.95 (A \$1 discount per item when two or more are ordered)] Shipping is \$2 or 5% of the total over \$20.]

I have been blessed by Judy's music for years, as well as the music of her sister, Becky Morecraft. The majority of my driving time is spent listening to one or the other (and often both) of the Belcher women sing. Becky's "Songs for the Church Victorious" is one of my all-time favorites as is "Arise! Shine!" (by both sisters), and "Pilgrim's Praise," Judy's collaboration with Craig Pitman. And now added to my list of favorites is Judy's newest production, "If You Love Me," songs based on the Ten Commandments.

It is a masterpiece. The letter of the law and the spirit of the law are wed in Judy's music as they should be in our hearts. Although I have listened to the recordings many times now, certain songs, certain phrases still pierce my heart, sending sheets of tears down my face: "Coram Deo, wherever we go, we live before the face of God"; "We will honor and adore, hoping in Him evermore"; "But in beauty of holiness we worship you, we enter thy courts with praise." At other times, I play percussion on

my steering wheel and tap my foot, joining Judy with my loud voice, "By your Spirit I will live in your law, in your love." "One Man, One Wife"—a song about the Seventh Commandment—is romantic and glorious enough to be a wedding song!

I am not a musician. Give me a tune in a bucket and soon you will hear, "Splash!" I am among the throngs who make a "joyful noise" to the Lord—and not much else. So I cannot explain the musical technicalities of why this CD is so great. Even though a variety of musical styles are used, the transitions are such that you never feel as though you have skipped from one CD to another. Judy credits Michael Gleason, her arranger and producer, with transforming what she terms "living room" recordings into the musical masterpieces we hear. But, I am sure Michael would agree that he has great material to work with. And that comes from Judy's heart which has been "tamed by God" through, first, the nurturing of godly parents and, now as an adult, through a spirit submissive to the Word and godly counsel. She has been supported for years in her work by a loving husband and family who pray for her, lovingly critique her, and strengthen her so that she can make these remarkable offerings to the King she serves.

Becky has told me that when her sister composes, she does it with the Bible and the Westminster Standards spread open before her. After she has the lyrics and tune down, she checks with her husband, Wayne, and brother-in-law, Joe Morecraft (two of the Lamb's mighty warriors) to make sure she has been faithful to the Word. She then refines her work to make sure it is God-honoring and edifying to the saints. This explains the soundness of doctrine that has for years flowed from this sweet psalmist. Those who appreciate robust Calvinistic theology for its truth, grandeur, and soul-piercing qualities can learn from Judy just how melodious and beautiful sound doctrine can be. People who are not disposed to listen to sound teaching, and who would stomp away from someone who was explaining the five points of Calvinism, will find themselves tapping their toes to Judy's presentation and come away from the experience more Reformed than they ever planned!

I am thrilled at what I see God doing in and through Judy and her sister Becky. Both, through their music and now Becky through her writing, are testimony to the horde of covenant children coming on. Covenant children, when you feel yourselves veering off the narrow

way, enticed by covetous lust to become famous in a dead, God-hating, humanistic culture, look for and follow the bright lights of these covenant women who teach you that you can be a singer, songwriter, poet, and writer for the glory of your King. With diligence, hard work, persistence, and submission to your God you can outshine anything the world puts before you. And because you are

of the covenant, that light will shine for generations to come. If you want to learn how it can be done, listen and learn from masters of their craft!

Susan Burns is a native Virginian and graduate of Reformed Theological Seminary. She is Chalcedon's administrative assistant and managing editor.

POSITION PAPER NO. 231

Serbia, the United States, and Christianity

By R. J. Rushdoony

The United States, at its inception, under George Washington's leadership, took what came to be called an *isolationist* stand on foreign affairs. The term "isolationist" position meant a policy on foreign wars, alliances, and politics. But it took a radically different stance on moral and religious issues. As a result, the U.S. was known worldwide as the land of freedom and Christianity.

With World War I, a shift became apparent. Woodrow Wilson believed in world salvation by political and military force, and hence our entry into World War I and our one-world concerns. This has grown steadily since then, and the U. S. now seeks to play the role of world policeman and savior.

Serbia and other Balkan states gained their freedom from Turkey between the Crimean War and World War I. The oppressed peoples of the Balkans hoped for one state to include them all, *i.e.*, a Southern Slav country, with a notable Serbian family to provide the king. This would have created a powerful European state rivaling the great powers, and this was anathema to the latter. The various component groups were each persuaded to have their own kingdoms, and funds were provided toward this end, and German princes provided also to be their rulers.

Serbia's continuing independence toward the European great powers led to World War I, when supposed revolutionaries, probably in foreign pay, assassinated the Austrian prince. World War II followed.

After World War II, Tito, a Marxist, gained power in Yugoslavia (including Serbia) with allied help. Meanwhile, the Danube and the Rhine rivers were united by a great canal, making the Danube-Dardanelles waterway the world's most important one. The industrial development planned by Serbia on the Danube would have made it potentially perhaps the world center for commerce, rivaling the European powers, the U.S. and Japan. Once again, Serbia became a world villain.

Recent reports from Serbia from people who do not favor Milosevic are grim. Not only they, but other peoples of the area actually regard President Clinton as "worse than Hitler" under whom they suffered much in World War II. America has come to mean something radically different from what was the case before World War I.

This development should cause Americans to reassess their position. The U.S. has become a leading and crusading force for salvation by politics with guns. Its position is anti-Christian; nothing in the Bible can vindicate its present course.

The concern of the U.S. for Kosovo is a strange one. The rationale for its stance is an unusual one. The American southwest has many areas with a very high Hispanic population. What if these peoples seek independence from the U.S. *a la* Kosovo? Should the majority nationality in New York City have the right to demand independence under a foreign flag? How can we apply arguments to Kosovo and Serbia that we do not allow here at home?

The world is full of conflicts and evils. Are we called to try to save the world by guns and bombs? Have we not developed a pagan and evil plan of salvation radically at odds with Christian Faith?

On more than one ground, many Americans are opposed to this and any further foreign salvationist actions. For this, too many Americans are abused and slandered. It seems that dissent from this interventionist faith is immoral to these peoples!

Americans abroad at one time were highly regarded as a godly and helpful people. Now it is unwise in many areas to be identified as an American.

The issue in Kosovo is a religious one. It has to do with one's plan of salvation. It is a moral decision we must make, not a political nor a military one. We have done more than renounce Washington's policy: we have rejected the Faith on which it was based.

Letter to the Editor

Dear Editor,

Given the success of the militant feminist movement to redefine the place of a wife and mother in our culture, I applaud William Einwechter's attempt ("Keepers at Home," May, 1999) to raise a more Biblical standard. However, while his intent is certainly godly, I suggest that his idea of Biblical restrictions and spheres for women is more narrow than wisdom or the commands of Scripture warrant.

I agree that wives and mothers are to watch "over a household and family seeing to it that all members are cared for, and all things maintained in good order." I agree that the wife is called by God to be a helpmeet, a nourishing mother and a responsible steward of her home. What I do not understand is how this translates into a requirement for the wife/mother to stay at home and refrain from outside careers. Certainly, depending on the children's ages and demands of the household, it is possible at some point in a woman's life, to work outside the home without neglecting any of her duties, if she and her husband are in agreement.

From the article, it was clear that the author would not suggest it wrong for the wife/mother to teach younger women under the supervision of her husband and local church. What if this ministry becomes so successful that the church's leadership decides to begin paying her for her labor, with her husband's approval? (Sort of a Martha-Stewart-for-Jesus.) Would he then say that as soon as she began to be paid that she fell into error? Or is it the hours outside the house that constitute the error? If this is the case, then we have to ask, what would be the bewitching hours? I mean, does the lady move into sin after 8 hours or 12 hours a week outside the house? And how specifically do we determine this? I suggest that the outcome the Scriptures are after is for the children to be properly cared for and the household to be effectively managed. Therefore, the standard whereby a husband and wife evaluate whether a career outside the home for her

is wise or not is the on-going health and peace of the household.

Imagine a time in the future when a wife or mother is left alone because of death or divorce. Do we assert that it would be sin for her to go outside the home to earn the money needed to care for her family? And if it is not a sin for her, then can we not also imagine other circumstances whereby a couple may decide that it would be best for the wife to work outside the house? Clearly the principle of stay-at-home-wives/mothers that the author advocates is not universal in its application and therefore something we should be most careful with when we begin adding too much definition.

I agree with the author's assertion that the Bible has given us the overall responsibilities for wives and mothers. I simply do not see that the fulfilling of these responsibilities categorically requires all wives and mothers never to leave the home for a career. Further, and more importantly, in my opinion Rev. Einwechter did not sufficiently make his case from an exegetical standpoint. It is a long walk from overarching principles and maxims to detailed categorical commands that must be obeyed in every situation by every person for all time. The Bible gave us a clear picture of our overall familial responsibilities and the goals we are to strive for. However, it does not give us detailed and universally applicable patterns for how these responsibilities must be carried out.

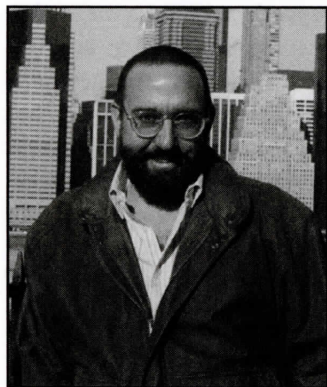
Rev. Monte E. Wilson

P. S. I do not believe any of the above. However, my oldest daughters—one (single) is a graduate of Florida State University and works for a political consultant, the other (married) a graduate of Hillsdale College and a manager of a branch bank—threatened to cut me out of their wills if I didn't argue their cases.

Really.

All I Really Need to Know About Worship ... I Don't Learn from the Regulative Principle (Part III)

By Rev. Steve M. Schlissel



We have been arguing that the Regulative Principle of Worship—if *it is not commanded, it is forbidden*—is not the principle given by God to regulate worship in the church of our Lord Jesus Christ. Important as it is for us to worship scripturally, we ought to recognize that in the

advocacy of the RPW we are confronted with something which extends beyond worship alone. As we have seen, we have here a matter inextricably bound up with the *way* we approach and handle the Bible. In this it is not unlike the issue of baptism.

Antipaedobaptists insist that the New Testament is so entirely new that our obligations are limited to what is commanded therein. Moreover, if it is not commanded in a certain way it is still forbidden, particularly regarding sacraments.¹ Hence, for Baptists, the absence of a clear NT command to baptize babies, joined to the many clear examples of adult baptisms following profession, leads to their conclusion that babies, covenant or otherwise, may not be lawfully baptized. This conclusion is inevitable once their premises are granted, but it is precisely their premises which are in need of repair.

You see a remarkably similar handling of Scripture by regulativists. They assume their principle and make it the unchallengeable starting point. Once the RPW is “baptized” as a given, all worship sins in the Bible are subpoenaed to support it, just like adult baptisms are enlisted to “prove” that infants may not be baptized.

But where did this worship principle come from in the first place? Does the *Bible* really teach that “only that which God has commanded may be done in worship”? We chose to begin our consideration of the RPW with an examination of its ostensible Biblical justification. In that examination we found a pattern of obfuscation rather than explication. For example, where God condemned Israel for flagrantly idolatrous practices, the regulativists in their citations would conveniently hide the contexts and pretend Israel’s condemnation was solely for “adding” to God’s requirements. We even found them creating

“versettes,” citing verse fragments which appeared to support their view. These are hermeneutical no-nos for which they remain unapologetic.

At the opposite extreme of the RPW is what regulativists call the Romish or High-Church Principle (HCP): *if it is not forbidden, it is permitted*. All Reformed agree that the HCP is inadequate. However, inadequate as it is, in virtually every example of worship sin cited by regulativists, no sin would have occurred if the HCP had been honored. In other words, regulativists *regularly* cite instances of Israel doing *what God had forbidden*—sins covered by the HCP—and then make believe that only the RPW could have prevented those abuses. Not so.

In fact, the only credible “proofs” for the RPW could be whittled down to those examples garnered from the strictly regulated Tabernacle/Temple service. But here, we said, *the* significant change between the Old and New administrations of the covenant must be fully taken into account. In the New Testament, the gospel goes global. With that change, the punctiliousness that once characterized the Temple service now characterizes the guarding of the gospel instead. New Testament anathemas are not issued for those who sin in worship matters, as the regulativists would have it, but for those who tinker with the contents of the gospel. This is as plain as day on the pages of the New Testament.

Remember: Old Testament worship from Sinai forward was bifurcated. There was a rigidly controlled, centralized, Levitically administered worship at the Tabernacle/Temple, *and* there was a less controlled, decentralized, democratically administered worship throughout the land in what would evolve into synagogues.

To be sure, New Testament worship is *anchored* to the Tabernacle/Temple in heaven: “*Now this is the main point of the things we are saying: We have such a High Priest, who is seated at the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in the heavens, a Minister of the sanctuary and of the true tabernacle which the Lord erected, and not man*” (Heb. 8:1-2).

However, while it is *anchored* in the heavenly Temple, it takes place on earth in Christian synagogues. “*My brethren, hold not the faith of our Lord Jesus Christ, (the Lord) of glory, with respect of persons. For if there come into your synagogue a man with a gold ring, in fine clothing...*” (Jas. 2:1-2 [ASV]).

We worship in Christian synagogues. The only blood

we have is Christ's, made known *through the gospel*. It is the gospel, therefore, which is heir to the strict regulations which governed the Tabernacle/Temple service. The synagogue was never so regulated and is not now. That the synagogue was the model for the organization and worship of the apostolic church is disputed only by two groups: Romanists (and their stepchildren) and regulativists (when it suits them).

Thus our first three headings of argumentation: Regulativists see their principle where it is not, they miss it where it is, and they skip the significance of the synagogue. So much for review. Let us now proceed.

Regulativists Stumble Over "Special Days"

The Regulative Principle of Worship has resulted in much good, but its advocates have committed many offenses. Sometimes it seems that for every worship error which offends them, they commit two exegetical errors in retaliation. A leading scandal is their filtering out of anything in Scripture which refuses to yield to their demand for servile texts. One prime example of this is the matter of special days.

As you know, "consistent" regulativists are *adamantly* opposed to the observance of any day but the Lord's Day. They have a sea of books, tracts, and articles devoted to this one topic going all the way back to the Reformation. Farel, Viret, Calvin, and Knox were all in favor of rejecting all special days sanctioned and revered by Rome. Undoubtedly, this served a good purpose in its time. It immediately distinguished the Reformed, both on the Continent² and in Scotland, from Rome, whose calendar was blanketed with such days. So the Reformation was well served in its early days by such a clear line of demarcation.

But are we to take a position which was manifestly adopted in and due to unique historical circumstances and enshrine it as if it were the Word of God itself on the subject? I think not. In this I stand with the sons of the Reformation from the Netherlands and elsewhere.

Some Reformers and their regulativist heirs went looking for verses to justify their rejection of special days. And I, for one, am glad they did! It served a good purpose. But does that make their use of Scripture on this point above criticism? Certainly not.

In fact, the very rationale used to justify jettisoning holy days is one which could properly be used to justify their qualified observance. It would depend on various other considerations. Let me explain.

The alleged Biblical basis for rejecting all days but the Lord's Day is in two parts: 1) the Lord's Day is (supposedly) clearly commanded,³ and 2) the observance of special days is supposedly forbidden in Galatians 4:10.

The church was well-served by having a day of rest distinct from the day of the old administration. No argument here. But to grasp this is to be near to understanding why the disapproval of "day observance" in Galatians was, like the same disapproval during the

Reformation, historically conditioned and not necessarily normative.

For the problem Paul was fighting in Galatians was *not* the observance of days *per se*. It could not have been! A reading of Acts 20 and 21 finds our beloved Apostle eager to get back to Jerusalem for Pentecost and more than willing to observe Jewish customs, even ritualistic/Temple-centric customs. Notice what rumor Paul hoped to put to rest by the observance of the latter: Paul was told that Jewish believers "*have been informed about you that you teach all the Jews who are among the Gentiles to forsake Moses, saying that they ought not to circumcise their children nor to walk according to the customs*" (Ac. 21:21).

This charge was *false*. Paul did not tell Jews they must reject those practices which formerly set them apart, but rather that they must accept Gentiles as coequals without *imposing* upon them the obligation to keep Jewish ceremonial distinctives. This agrees with what James and the other elders told Paul during the same meeting: "*But concerning the Gentiles who believe, we have written and decided that they should observe no such thing, except that they should keep themselves from things offered to idols, from blood, from things strangled, and from sexual immorality*" (v. 25).

The problem at Galatia, then, could not have been the observance of days *per se* because Jewish Christians were *never* told that they must not celebrate their distinctive calendar.⁴ Rather, the problem was that some were teaching that *Gentiles* could not be saved unless they, too, observed all the Jewish ceremonial distinctives. That Paul was addressing only *Gentile* believers in this passage, and was concerned to dissuade them from adopting "Sinai distinctives," is glaringly evident from the fact that Paul warns, "*Mark my words! I, Paul, tell you that if you let yourselves be circumcised, Christ will be of no value to you at all.*" But it was *only Gentiles* who could have considered becoming circumcised: the Jewish Christians already were! **Remember, remember, remember that the issue in New Testament polemics was this: Must Gentiles become Jews in order to become Christians? Keep that issue front and center and difficulties evaporate.**

Paul couldn't care less about days *per se*, just as he couldn't care less about circumcision. "*Circumcision is nothing and uncircumcision is nothing. Keeping God's commands is what counts.*" And again: "*For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision nor uncircumcision has any value. The only thing that counts is faith expressing itself through love.*" And again: "*Neither circumcision nor uncircumcision means anything; what counts is a new creation*" (1 Cor. 7:19; Gal. 5:6; Gal. 6:15).

Consequently, there is nothing in Paul's argument in Galatians which would lead us to believe that the observance of days *per se* was wrong, evil, unacceptable. What he was battling for was a gospel which held out to the whole world a free and accessible salvation, one *not* tied to Jewish distinctives.

One might even justly say that Paul was, in effect, arguing that the Regulative Principle of Worship does not

apply to the Gentiles. That is, he was arguing on the assumption that the Temple system in its entirety had been realized in such a way in Christ—realized for all nations—that to impose the Sinai worship strictures on the Gentiles would be untrue to the gospel. The reign of Christ from heaven makes those strictures irrelevant to Universal Judaism.

Therefore, Galatians 4:10 is seeking to keep the Gentiles—not from “day-observance,” as if they’d offend God by honoring Christ’s birth (for example), but rather—from being caught up in a system which could easily cause them to overlook the very core difference of the New administration: the gospel is now global, *not* local. You do not have to become a Jew to become a Christian. That’s the issue. None other.

So it was *Jewish days* that *Gentiles* were not obligated to keep. Mind you, to read Paul’s whole theology makes the conclusion irresistible that he would not have objected to Gentiles observing Jewish holidays if they did it for good reasons. He was fighting against an *imposition* which threatened the universal character of the gospel.

I trust that seeing the Galatians argument in this light is helpful. It makes the Reformers’ appeal to it legitimate within bounds. If their intention was to deliver the people of God from having “holy days” *imposed* upon them by the dozens, they were being true to the text and its meaning. But if they would go further and say that the observance of days is *essentially* sinful, they would be going too far. The community of Faith has always been free to corporately adopt a day or days to honor God’s great works in history on behalf of His covenant people. Just as Judaism was destined to grow up and become Christianity, so the Reformed Faith could grow up when historical circumstances warranted. Early adolescence, some say, is characterized by a teen fighting for who he is not. Maturity comes when he recognizes who he is. Distinguishing themselves from Rome by having *no special days* was very helpful. But a time would come, and has come, when the Reformed could freely choose to observe days, in moderation, to honor Christ in distinctly Reformed ways, making identification with Rome for that fact most unlikely.

But besides all this we find within Scripture itself sufficient warrant for the people of God to observe days commemorating God’s great acts of intervention on their behalf. Since I am writing this on Purim, 5759, let me start with that. Purim is the holiday celebrating the deliverance of the Jews from, and their victory over, their would-be destroyer, Haman. The events surrounding the holiday are, of course, found in the Book of Esther.

Its origin as a day to be observed is explicitly recorded for us in Esther 9:27-28. The passage is enough to cause convulsions in a strict regulativist:

The Jews ordained, and took upon them, and upon their seed, and upon all such as joined themselves unto them, so as it should not fail, that they would keep

these two days according to their writing, and according to their appointed time every year; And that these days should be remembered and kept throughout every generation, every family, every province, and every city; and that these days of Purim should not fail from among the Jews, nor the memorial of them perish from their seed.

There you have it. The covenant people *themselves*, quite apart from any divine precept or command, took it upon themselves *and their descendants* to observe a special holiday every year, forever. Quite a problem for the regulativists’ interpretation of “You shall not add to it.” Not only are we given to understand that there was no prophetic guidance, and no immediate divine instruction, to which authorization for this feast could be traced, but we find it originating in a book which has no mention of the name of God at all. Yet, it is in our Bible, “man-made” day and all.

And we, who reject the RPW, have no problem with this whatsoever. We think it is absolutely normal for God’s people to mark His extraordinary acts of deliverance with special observances and activities. And Purim wasn’t the only time the people of God did it. They did it with Chanukah, too.

Before discussing Chanukah, let me briefly tell you of the truly pathetic accounting of these Scriptural facts offered by the regulativists. They say, “It appears, that these days of Purim were only appointed to be days of civil mirth and gladness. . . .”⁵ Consider where this rationale leads: The people of God and their descendants may *remember, honor and celebrate* miraculous interventions and extraordinary deliverances of them by their covenant God *everywhere except in the churches which bear His name!*

This is not merely an example of extremism in the regulativist camp; it is an example of their principle logically applied and carried out. The principle pits itself not only against the Scripture from which it supposedly arose, but also against the historical sense and self-consciousness of God’s people. It is not merely the *application* which is errant: it is the principle itself.

Now let us move on to Chanukah. The word “Chanukah” means “dedication.” Thus in John 10:22 we read, “*Then came the Feast of Dedication at Jerusalem. It was winter, and Jesus was in the temple area walking in Solomon’s Colonnade.*”

The Form for the Solemnization of Marriage, as used in Reformed churches, says, “Our Lord Jesus honored marriage by His blessed presence at the wedding in Cana.” He similarly honored Chanukah by His presence at its celebration in John 10:22.

Chanukah is a commemoration of the divine victory over Antiochus Epiphanes at the hand of Judah Maccabee.⁶ The events surrounding the recapturing and *rededication* (hence the name of the feast) of the Temple are recorded in the apocryphal books, 1 and 2 Maccabees. Since the holiday is traced to that period there can be no question of its being instituted or authorized by a divinely

inspired prophet, for there were none during that period. Nevertheless, God was active on behalf of His people and His covenant.

In 2 Maccabees 10 we find the record of the origin of the celebration, a record which would surely induce hives in any regulativist:

It happened on the same day on which the sanctuary had been profaned by the foreigners, the purification of the sanctuary took place, that is, on the twenty-fifth day of the same month, which was Chislev. They celebrated it for eight days with rejoicing, in the manner of the festival of booths, remembering how not long before, during the festival of booths, they had been wandering in the mountains and caves like wild animals.⁷ Therefore, carrying ivy-wreathed wands and beautiful branches and also fronds of palm, they offered hymns of thanksgiving to him who had given success to the purifying of his own holy place. They decreed by public edict, ratified by vote, that the whole nation of the Jews should observe these days every year.

And Jesus didn't seem to mind. But then, the Lord Jesus Christ is not a regulativist.

Regulativists Stumble Over "Traditions"

Sure, it is easy to offer a misleading caricature of our Lord by portraying Him as altogether opposed to any human traditions whatsoever in the service of God, but such a portrait would be false.

Without doubt, our Lord condemned any human tradition which obscured, nullified, set apart or contradicted the Word of God (e.g., *Mk. 7:9* and context). But there is no indication that He opposed traditions which supported, magnified or drew attention to the Word and works of God. It is not, for us, a question merely of whether an observance can be traced to "human tradition,"⁸ but it is also a question of fidelity to Scripture, propriety in worship, and profitability to the people of God.⁹

All the New Testament authors are comfortable with tradition. The Epistles brim with references to uninspired texts and practices. Jannes and Jambres (*2 Tim. 3:8*)—for one, tiny example—are named by Paul in accordance with a Jewish tradition. The Apostles absorbed their Jewish traditions and lived them and repeated them in stride, so long as they met the criteria in the preceding paragraph.

To see how comfortable Jesus was with human traditions which properly honored God, it is only necessary to see Him in the synagogue. When we find Him attending synagogue, "as was His custom," we must remember that He was attending a service of worship at an institution which had no divinely authorized blueprint.¹⁰ The standards for establishing one, administering one or disestablishing one were all derived from "human tradition."

Moreover, when we find Him reading from "the scroll of the prophet Isaiah," we find His endorsement of one of many human traditions which constituted the worship

of God in the synagogue. We take readings of the prophets so for granted that the point could easily be lost, but *according to the Regulative Principle of Worship*, that reading of Isaiah by our own Lord in worship might have been called an act of presumptuousness—what they call "will worship."

Slow down—I am not being ridiculous. Consider this: the only Scripture we find God commanding to be read in public worship is the law (*Dt. 31:9-13*). It is the law, or portions of it, which you find publicly read throughout Israel's history whenever any *liturgical* readings are referred to. Even in the great scene described in Nehemiah 8, a scene which most regard as revelatory of the synagogue order of that day, the Scripture read is the law (8:2).

Who, then, has the authority to introduce into worship the public reading of the prophets? If we may only do what God explicitly commands, we'd need a command to legitimate the reading of anything besides Moses in public worship. An OT-regulativist need not have discounted the prophets' inspiration to argue that an obedient people, following the RPW, would simply trust that God had His reasons for commanding *only* the law be read in public assemblies, and that to add even *inspired* prophetic books was nothing but effrontery. That, in fact, is the very argument advanced today by regulativists for singing only Psalms!

If the RPW is correct, it was sheer temerity on the part of the Jews to allow non-Mosaic readings. That such readings were customary by the time of Jesus is obvious. That He took them up and hallowed them is also obvious. Equally obvious is this: they were contrary to the RPW. But, since the RPW itself is not Biblical, we shouldn't be concerned about that.

One more example of benign tradition can be found in what is really a network, an entire fabric, of human traditions: the Passover observance in which our Lord freely participated.

Jewish and Christian scholars alike recognize that, "The Bible includes extensive discussions of Passover and the Festival of Unleavened Bread; however, these descriptions do not correspond with later observances of the holiday."¹¹ That the Seder evolved quite apart from express divine warrant is an inescapable conclusion, unless one is prepared to adopt a Jewish/Romish view which would posit an independent, secondary source of equal authority with the Word of God contained in Scripture.¹²

If the Regulative Principle of Worship is true, and if the Passover is an institution of divine authority, given by God to His people as a means by which He was to be "remembered," honored, praised and thanked (in other words, worshipped), then nothing could have been lawfully added to it by man.

Yet that is exactly, and indisputably, what happened. Therefore, either the holiday was not of divine origin (but it was), or it was not a means of worship (but it was), *or* the RPW is false (it is). For when we come to the inspired New Testament Scriptures, we find our Lord and

Savior celebrating “the Last Seder” with, among other things,¹³ wine.

I will ask that we be concerned here with none of the other elements save the wine. Where is the command of God to use wine in the Passover service? It is not there. Commanded were *the pesach, the matzoh and the m'rowr*, i.e., the Passover lamb, the unleavened bread and the bitter herbs.

Yet by the time of our Lord we find not only the introduction of wine into the Passover service, but the organization of the entire Seder around four discrete cups of wine, every one of human origin.

If Jesus our Messiah was a regulativist, I tell you, He would have turned over that Seder table that night! Instead, He took the cup of wine called “Thanksgiving” and said, “*This cup is the New Covenant in my blood; do this, whenever you drink it, in remembrance of me.*”

The RPW—if it is not commanded, it's forbidden—is not Biblical. If it were, we wouldn't have our Savior approving of the predicate of what He made into the Lord's Supper, the very *emblem* of Christian worship.

[Part IV in July]

¹ Though this does not stop them from serving the Lord's Supper to women. This is an inconsistency in their system, since there is no clear NT command to do so. The same method that leads us to recognize women as fit recipients of the Supper can lead us to see covenant children as fit candidates for baptism. It's called “good and necessary consequence.” WCF, I, vi.

² A CRC church order commentary notes that the Synod of Dordt, 1574, held that the observance of all days except the weekly Sabbath should be discouraged. Again, in 1578, the Synod of Dordt declared the desirability of observing Sunday only. Yet concessions were made almost immediately until, at the great Synod of Dordt, 1618-19, Article 67 was adopted which called for the churches to “keep,” beside Sundays, Christmas, Easter, Pentecost and other days. Now, since Calvinism has historically, in no small measure, been defined by *that Synod*, can we glibly assert that it is *unreformed* to observe special days? We cannot. For though the Bible does not *command* us to observe them, *the Reformed Synod* said, “Go right ahead—in moderation.” Therefore it is perfectly just to affirm that holding to the Reformed Faith does not require adoption of the RPW.

³ Without getting too far afield, let me just say why I inserted “supposedly” in #1. It modifies the word “clearly” not the word “commanded.” I do believe we have more than adequate Biblical justification for observing the first day of the week. But I can see why some have suggested that the church, if it was to continue to have a Sabbath, would have done fine with keeping it as Saturday. There may be more than an ounce of truth to the suggestion that the church eagerly embraced Sunday to distinguish itself from the Jews. Be that as it may, we have apostolic example as well as Christ's own resurrection and appearances to justify a change of day, not to mention great theological reasons. And beyond that we have the nearly universal practice of the church from earliest times, something which should really help settle the matter for those with lightweight objections. So, we accept #1, above. Happily, the Bible requires a Lord's Day rest in our Creator-Redeemer-Sanctifier.

⁴ Further, Jesus assumes continued Saturday observance by Jews at least through A.D. 70. Matthew 24:20.

⁵ George Gillespie, *A Dispute Against the English Popish Ceremonies*, 264.

⁶ Sermons by SMS which more fully explain the origins and customs of Chanukah are available from Covenant Media Foundation, (800)553-3938.

⁷ The careful reader will recognize this phrase from Hebrews 11:37-38. It is not the only allusion in Hebrews 11 to the events surrounding Chanukah and its chronicling in 1 and 2 Maccabees. Both John Owen and John Brown affirm without reservation that it was to the incidents of Chanukah that the inspired author of Hebrews refers in chapter 11.

⁸ Traditions are inescapable and unavoidable: the Regulative Principle of Worship, after all, is a human tradition. And if its advocates would only admit that, our articles dealing with it would be greatly abbreviated!

⁹ These grounds would argue for a minimalist approach to traditions, an approach I gladly embrace.

¹⁰ In other words, we don't find its details in Scripture, and you don't find a suggestion in Scripture that God otherwise gave an uninscriptured blueprint. The synagogue evolved in the community of the covenant.

¹¹ Baruch M. Bokser in *The Origins of the Seder*, xi.

¹² For the Jews this authority is imagined to be possessed in the *Talmud*, for Rome in the *Magisterium of the Church*. Quite obviously, Protestants reject the claimed authority of both these sources.

¹³ The reconstruction of the Last Seder can be found in many sources, including Edersheim. It is laden with non-Biblical (*not* anti-biblical!) elements and ordinances.

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 24 years, Jeanne, and their five children.

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- June 27 Brian Abshire and Andrew Sandlin lecture. 10:00 a.m. Reformed Heritage Mini-Conference, **Salida, CA**. For more information, contact Pastor Brian Abshire (209)544-1572.
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- September 17-18 Andrew Sandlin lectures in **Denver, CO**, details to be announced later.
- October 2 West Coast Reformation Conference, Covenant Reformed Church, **Sacramento, CA**. For more information, call (916)451-1190.
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