


CHALCEDON

Report

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the
TRINITY
and the
SOCIAL
ORDER

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and Grown Old?

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Plus . . . **Two Letters: Postmillennialism Versus Premillennialism**

A Review of Paul Johnson's *A History of the American People* . . . and more

Chalcedon's View of Christian Reconstruction

Rev. Andrew Sandlin
[May be Freely Reproduced]

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

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

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

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

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

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

CHALCEDON *Report*

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

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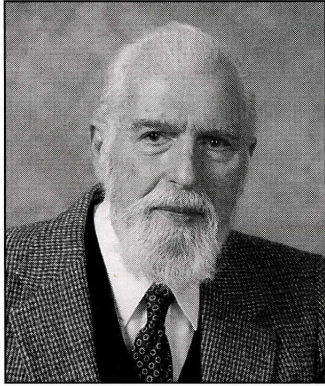
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Is God Now Shriveled and Grown Old?

By Rev. R. J. Rushdoony

(Reprinted from *The Roots of Reconstruction*,
originally published in *Chalcedon Report*, No. 163, March, 1979)



Blasphemy often loves to present itself as a new and higher truth and, therefore, the true way. Certainly this is true of many today who tell us that God, Who declares, "I am the Lord, I change not" (*Mal. 3:6*), has indeed changed. Apparently, with age and a new "dis-

pen-sation" of declining powers, their god now confines himself to purely "spiritual" concerns. Once, in his younger and cruder days, he may have spoken about weights and measures, diet, money, sanitation, politics, economics, education, and more, but, now that man and science have supposedly caught up with him in these spheres, and passed him, this god is silent, and he deals only with spiritual matters as befits an aged and declining person. The laws of this old and shriveled god are now primitive and obsolete, and man can now do, we are assured, a much better job in all these areas.

This is the plain meaning of dispensationalism and antinomianism. It limits God. It declares that God is now not sovereign and, therefore, has no word for every area of life and thought. These people, in effect, believe in an aged and old god who is for old or retreating people whose only thought is to leave the world, not to exercise dominion under God over it as their necessary service.

The recent conflicts with state and federal agencies over Christian schools have brought forth a coast to coast chorus of protests from these champions of retreat and flight. The schooling of our children, they declare, is not a Christian concern, but a secular and humanistic one. The concerns

of our faith are to be purely spiritual and ecclesiastical, they declare.

This very clearly denies God's sovereignty. It implies and declares that most of the word is *secular*, which the dictionary defines as "pertaining to this world or the present life, worldly as contrasted with religious or spiritual." If this be true, then it is a serious error for the church to regulate sex and marriage and to condemn adultery, because our Lord makes clear that sex and marriage are for this life only (*Mk. 12:25*). One of the most influential dispensationalists perhaps holds to this view, because he is currently adulterous and yet widely honored. Nonetheless, God does ordain and regulate sex and marriage strictly, because His law and government are total, not merely spiritual and ecclesiastical.

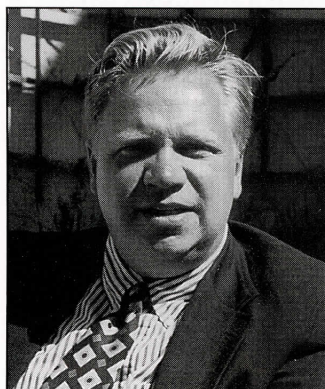
God's sovereignty, law, power, authority, and government cannot be limited. He is Lord and Savior of all things, their total Creator and Governor. Hence, in every area of life and thought, we must be under His law-word and jurisdiction. There is no sphere of life, nor any area of activity, which is outside God's jurisdiction. Man can never step outside God's government and law to create a purely humanistic area of government and law wherein man is sovereign. At no point in man's life or in all creation can we say, "Here God's government and sovereignty stop, or abate, and here man's word, sovereignty, and government take over." All such thinking, however spiritual it professes to be, is a radical compromise with humanism. It is an assertion of the tempter's principle that man is somehow, somewhere, and in some way entitled to be his own god, knowing, or determining for himself, what constitutes good and evil (*Gen. 3:5*). Such a view is original sin, whether in the mouth of Satan or in the mouth of a spiritual pastor. God is alone the Lord, in all things, over all things, and everywhere.

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Divinizing the Temporal Order

By Rev. Andrew Sandlin



The Council of Chalcedon (A. D. 451), as Rushdoony insightfully observes, lays the foundation for Western liberty by prohibiting the divinization of any aspect of the temporal order.¹ It does this by setting forth in sharp terminology the Christological definition of the relation between

God and man in the Person of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. Jesus Christ is truly God and truly man, His divine and human natures united in His Person, but never confused or blended. This preserves the absolute distinction between Creator and creature. Man cannot become God, and God cannot become man. This latter point must be properly qualified. In a general sense we sometimes say that God in the second Person of the Trinity became man as Jesus Christ. We are actually asserting, if we are orthodox, that our Lord took to Himself a human *nature*. He did not assume a human *person* (this is the heresy of adoptionism), because God the Son is eternally a Person. This divine Person, the eternal Son of God, the second member of the Trinity, took to Himself a human nature which, along with the divine nature, is manifest everlastingly in the single Person of the Lord Jesus Christ.

The Council of Chalcedon clarified the basics of the precise relation between the divine and human natures in our Lord. In this “hypostatic union,” the divine and human were said to be related “without confusion, without change, without division, without separation.” This means that the divine and human are everlastingly united in our Lord. The natures are united in a single Person and at no point are in conflict with each other. Terminology does not suffice to express accurately this union, but suffice it here to say that both natures in the Person of our Lord are conversant, coordinate, and cooperative. But they are *not* confused. The divine nature is not blended with the human nature; the Creator does not blend with the creature. In this specific sense, God does not become man.

This implies, among other things, that man does not share in divinity. This dogmatic statement was a radical break with the thinking of the ancient world. Much of it held the idea of the great chain of being—that all life

existed within a single continuum sharing in a single, macrocosmic being. The gods were at the top, then man, then the animals, and on down to the rest of living things. As one moved *down* the continuum, he participated less in the divine being.²

The Bible and orthodox Christianity know nothing of this pagan idea. The distinction between God and man is not merely quantitative, but qualitative. Man is gloriously fashioned in the image of God, but in no sense participates in God’s being. In ancient Egypt, Babylon, Greece, and Rome, the state in the form of the emperor or other political leader was usually divinized; he was significantly higher up on the vertical continuum and was, in fact, a god himself.³ Christianity broke decisively and unwaveringly with this divinization. It held that God and man are qualitatively distinct, and that in the great Mediator of salvation, our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, divine and human are forever united but never confused. The drastic implication of this Christological definition is that *no aspect of the temporal order can ever be divine*. All men stand *immediately* under divine authority; no man or human institution stands between God and man as a full or partial divinity.

The Divinization of the Family

It is often hard for us today to think of the divinization of the family, since modern Western democracy has become such an anti-family ideology. The ancient Roman world (particularly during the Republic) saw the family as an extension of divinity. Until this century and the incursion of Western ideas, this divinization of the family almost equally obtained in Oriental cultures like China and Japan; ancestor worship is a logical practice when the family is divinized. Of the ancient Roman divinization of the family, Nisbet elaborates:

The head of the family was not merely father, judge and protector; he was also priest. The traditional religion of Rome was scarcely more than an extended spiritualization of the high points of family life: birth, marriage, and death. Nothing violated the religious, any more than the legal, autonomy of the family. The father was the supreme priest of the private gods of the family and its hearth, the Lares and the Penates. No child was ever born into a family; he had to be accepted, following birth, through the religious authority of the house father.⁴

In the Western world, the divinization of the family gradually collapsed before the divinization of the state and

the church. Today it is virtually nonexistent, but shades of it survive in Mafia families and, interestingly enough, in perverted views of family authority among some conservative Christians. One popular family counselor, for instance, has taught for years that a wife and children must obey the father's authority, even if he requires them to sin. He states that God will not hold them accountable for their disobedience to His objective law, only for disobeying duly constituted family authority. While the Bible and Christianity strongly emphasize the authority of the father and of the family, they do not place in any man's hands the prerogative to compel disobedience. Nonetheless, the divinization of the family has almost completely disappeared.

The Divinization of the Church

Unfortunately, this is not true of the church. In the Bible, the church—beginning in the Old Testament era—is the visible covenant community. It is the *ekklesia*, the called-out assembly of believers under Christ's absolute, and elders' derivative, authority.⁵ It is never an expression of deity but of the visible saints in covenant with God, in the midst of which the Word of God is faithfully preached, the sacraments duly administered, and the true Faith affirmed and practiced. This is the pattern of the Biblical church in both Old or New Testaments. Unfortunately, as the anti-Semitic polemic intensified in the patristic church, so did its willingness to abandon the Biblically Hebraic conception of the church, and look to the gradually collapsing Roman Empire as its pattern. Michael W. Kelley has expertly summarized how this occurred:

One of the chief reasons for this transformation was a shift in the composition of the members of the church from being predominantly Jewish-Christian in character to almost exclusively Gentile-Christian. This alteration also marked a change in the cultural thought-patterns that influenced the vision of the nature of the faith and especially the meaning of Scripture as a total covenant word. For with the transmission of Christianity to a larger Gentile world there entered into the thinking of many churchmen much that reflected the older pagan cultural milieu. This was especially evident in the kind of church-idea that began to emerge. The church began to assume an organizational form that was patterned on the type found in the secular Roman world. It reflected the belief in a natural ruling aristocracy as a top-down principle of command and control. Gradually the bishop becomes less a pastor or minister, a servant of the church, and more a bureaucratic voice of power.⁶

The authority structure of the church itself became a complicated hierarchy, an arrangement totally foreign to the Bible. Later the church graduated to become Christ's incarnation on earth, the very ontological Body of Christ.⁷ The pope became the new emperor of the

church; and when Rome rendered papal infallibility an official dogma of the church in 1869-1870, she was only solemnizing her centuries-long practice. If, after all, the Roman institution is the incarnation of Christ in the earth, her "emperor" could scarcely be expected to speak anything less than infallibly. Infallibility, as Rushdoony declares, is an inescapable concept; it is never merely abandoned, but simply transferred from God to man or some human institution. Naturally, if we believe that the Roman communion is the institutional expression of Christ's incarnation, and if we believe that incarnation includes not only His humanity but also His deity, we will conclude that excommunication from this institution consigns one to eternal hell. Both Rome and Eastern Orthodoxy perpetuate the pagan idea of the great chain of being. For this reason, the Eastern church teaches that sanctification is deification ("theosis"), and asserts that it is the church, not the Bible, which is man's final authority.⁸

Protestants have every reason to oppose this monstrous tyranny, but in practice, some are little better. Like much of the patristic church, they have abandoned the Biblically Hebraic conception of the church as the visible covenant community, and have substituted for it a pagan, Gentile-inspired authoritarian hierarchy (*Mt. 20:25-28*). The church then becomes magisterial rather than ministerial, and to be excommunicated from the institutional dimension of the church is to be excommunicated from heaven itself. Excommunicants are not merely to be treated as heathen and publicans, as the Bible requires (*Mt. 18:17*), but are actually deemed unregenerate.⁹ To depict the institutional dimension of the church in this way is to ascribe it at least a partial divinity, and thereby to rob Jesus Christ of His rightful authority in the church. It is idolatrous.

The Divinization of the State

When the crowd responded to Herod's eloquent oration, "And the people gave a shout, saying, It is the voice of a god, and not of a man" (*Ac. 12:21-22*), it was simply expressing a long-held perversion of the state corporately or its leaders individually as divinity. The Roman Caesars were considered—and considered themselves—divinity and expected homage. The persecution of Christians in the Roman Empire was *not* elicited by their worship of Jesus Christ; Roman citizens worshipped all sorts of deities without the interference of the civil government. The difference with the Christians was that they were bound to the First Commandment—they refused to worship anyone or anything but God.¹⁰

The divinization of the state has become even more pronounced in the modern world, not only in Europe's Enlightenment monarchies, but also, and even more extensively, in democracy—both communistic and Western. Western democracies divinize the state in the form of "the people." This, in Alexis de Tocqueville's

inimitable thesis, becomes a subtle, benevolent, but equally strangling tyranny.¹¹ The *vox populi* (voice of the people, in the form of the majority) is the voice of God. In communist states, it is the party itself that claims to be the voice of the people, and, consequently, the voice of God. In either case, to dissent from this statist divinity is to invite its divine wrath. Only a deity can claim absolute property rights, and this is precisely what the modern state—both Western and communistic—does, in the form of eminent domain and property taxes. Only a deity can establish fiat law, springing from his own being. This the modern state—both Western and communistic—does, in the form of “positive” law. There is no transcendent foundation for law—law is what man says it is. Only a deity can assign retribution for offenses. Today’s state—again, both Western and communistic—does precisely this. Man determines what crimes actually are, and what penalty men will suffer for them. Further, in the godless gulags of the communistic world, secular perverts create hell on earth—the secular state’s counterpart to eternal perdition.

The divinization of the state is the supreme expression of the divinization of the temporal in the modern world.

The Divinization of the Individual

Increasingly, it has a close competitor. The libertarian ideology correctly exposes the evils of state tyranny, but simply replaces it with individual tyranny. This is most marked in the thinking of Ayn Rand and her followers, but is popular among libertarians of most stripes.¹² Man himself becomes his own god (almost a pure revival of *Genesis 3:5*). Man is to be free from virtually all external restraints—except, of course, that which the “truly free” individual can impose on that which threatens his autonomy. The leading example is the pro-abortion stance of most (not all) secular libertarians. They despise *Christian* libertarianism, maximum individual freedom under God’s law,¹³ and substitute maximum individual freedom as determined by the individual. When this freedom conflicts with the freedom of other individuals, the secular libertarians inconsistently respond that at this point, and this point alone, they must curb others’ freedom—in the case of the unborn child, in a legal massacre—to fuel the antinomian dream of the divinized individual. Secular libertarians, that is, do not actually stand for individual freedom as such (they deny freedom to unborn children), but for the freedom of certain antinomian individuals who wish to defy God and all His restraints—that is, they wish to be gods themselves.

Conclusion

In the Bible and Christianity, *man cannot become God*, and no human institution can share in divinity. The most

Biblical outworking of this fact is the Reformed view of *sphere sovereignty*: Human institutions and disciplines operate autonomously in relation to other spheres, and subordinately in relation to God and His law-word.¹⁴ They operate autonomously but *cooperatively* in relation to each other, but each is directly subordinate to God and His infallible revelation of the Bible. Man, for example, is subject to the three main, divine ministerial institutions—family, church, and state—but is immediately and fundamentally responsible to God and His Word. Man cannot be a familial, ecclesiastical, or civil anarchist—he cannot defy or abandon these ministerial spheres unless they directly require what God forbids or forbid what God requires. Further, these spheres cannot act as anarchists against God. The family, the church, and state may not legislate at will, but are strictly bound by the Word of God and necessary consequences from it. This sphere sovereignty maintains the Biblical balance between the one and the many, and forbids the divinization of individual, family, church, state, or any other aspect of the temporal order. It means that God *alone* is God, Lawgiver, Judge, Legislator, and Royalty (*Is. 33:22*). Humans and human authority may be legitimate *ministers* of divine authority, but their authority is never ultimate, and it never participates in any aspect of ultimate authority.

The Creator and creature are fundamentally and forever distinct.

¹ Rushdoony, *The Foundations of Social Order* (Fairfax, VA, [1968] 1978), ch. 7.

² Heinrich A. Rommen, *The Natural Law* (Indianapolis, 1998).

³ Ethelbert Stauffer, *Christ and the Caesars* (London, 1955), 168-171.

⁴ Robert Nisbet, *The Social Philosophers* (New York, 1973), 37.

⁵ Stephen C. Perks, *The Nature, Government and Function of the Church* (Taunton, England, 1997).

⁶ Michael W. Kelley, *The Impulse of Power* (Minneapolis, 1998), 128-129.

⁷ Christopher Dawson, *The Formation of Christendom* (New York, 1967), 287.

⁸ Clark Carlton, “A Note for Evangelicals Considering Rome,” *The Christian Activist: A Journal of Orthodox Opinion*, Winter/Spring, 1999, 18.

⁹ Gary North, *Political Polytheism* (Tyler, TX, 1989), 599-600.

¹⁰ Charles Norris Cochrane, *Christianity and Classical Culture* (New York, 1957), 181 and *passim*.

¹¹ Alexis de Tocqueville, *Democracy in America* (Garden City, NY, 1969), 250-256.

¹² David Boaz, *Libertarianism: A Primer* (New York, 1997).

¹³ Andrew Sandlin, “Libertarian Idea: Maximum Freedom Under God’s Law,” *Christian Statesman*, September-October, 1996, 16-20.

¹⁴ Abraham Kuyper: *A Centennial Reader* (Grand Rapids, 1998), 466-469.

The Trinity and Love

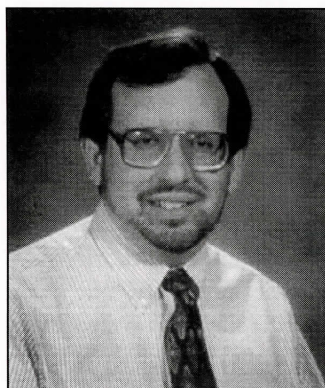
By Greg Uttinger

There will be no loyalty, except loyalty to the Party.
There will be no love, except love of Big Brother.

Winston, 1984

We are Borg. You will be assimilated. Resistance is futile.

3 of 5, *ST:TNG*



As a test question, I asked my high school class, “Why do we say that love is eternal?” We had just finished a study of theology proper in the context of Christian ethics, so I thought the question a fair one, even though I hadn’t asked it in that form before. Only one student, a senior, came up with the correct

answer. The others said either, “Because God is love,” or, “Because God loved us from eternity.” Both of those answers are right as far as they go, of course. The problem is that they don’t go nearly far enough. If we rest content with them, we will seriously misunderstand God, love, and ourselves. But let me begin at the beginning—before the beginning, actually.

In Titus 1:2, Paul tells us that God promised eternal life “before the world began.” This is one of many Scriptures that speak of relationships *within* the Trinity. Before there was anyone else, the Persons of the Godhead made promises to one another. The Gospel of John contains more than its share of such scriptures. Here are a few:

- 1:18 The Son is in the bosom of the Father.
- 3:16 God gave His only begotten Son.
- 3:17 God sent His Son into the world.
- 5:20 The Father loves the Son and shows Him all that He does.
- 10:15 The Son knows the Father as the Father knows the Son.
- 14:16 The Son prays to the Father, and the Father (in response) gives the Holy Spirit.
- 14:26 The Father will send the Holy Spirit in the Son’s name.
- 14:31 The Son loves the Father and does His commandments.
- 15:26 The Son will send the Holy Spirit from the

Father; the Holy Spirit proceeds from the Father; the Spirit will testify of the Son.

- 16:7 The Son will send the Holy Spirit.
- 16:13 The Holy Spirit will not speak of [from] Himself.
- 16:14 The Holy Spirit will glorify the Son.
- 16:15 All that is the Father’s is also the Son’s.
- 17:1 The Father glorifies the Son, so that the Son can glorify the Father.
- 17:2 The Father has given the Son a people and the power and responsibility to give them eternal life.
- 17:4 The Son glorified the Father by finishing the work He gave Him to do.
- 17:24 The Father loved the Son before the foundation of the world.
- 17:26 The Son has loved the Father.

In interpreting a number of these passages, we must take into account Jesus’ true human nature as well as the difficulty of explaining eternity in terms of time. Nonetheless, certain truths emerge from these texts.

Distinct Personhood

First, the Father, Son, and Spirit are *distinct* persons, capable of loving and communicating with one another. The Father loves the Son and gives Him commandments. The Son loves the Father, makes requests of Him, and obeys Him. The Father and Son both send the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit comes to glorify the Son and to testify to Him. We must leave no room for Sabellianism, that ancient heresy that makes “Father,” “Son,” and “Spirit” nothing more than titles that one person may in succession assume, or phases through which one person may, in succession, pass.

Second, the Father, Son, and Spirit love one another. We are expressly told of the love relationship between the Father and the Son. But what of the Spirit? Augustine argued that, of the Three, the Holy Spirit is preeminently to be called Love. For He is the Spirit of both the Father and the Son, and as such He is the divine Bond between the two.¹ He is the living Breath, exhaled from Father to Son and from Son to Father. He is the Love that is of God and is God (*1 Jn. 4:7-16*).² Given this, we don’t have to wonder that He doesn’t remind us of His own love for the other two Persons.

Glory

Third, from eternity and in time each Person of the Trinity acts to glorify the others. The Father committed power and responsibility to the Son. He made Him the

central, visible Actor in the drama of earth's redemption, and upon the completion of His work on earth, He exalted Him to His own right hand (*Eph. 1:20-23; Phil. 2:5-11; Ac. 2:33ff.*). The Son wholly submitted Himself to the Father and took on His work. The Holy Spirit waited upon the Son's finished obedience (cf. *Jn. 7:39*), submitted Himself to the Father and the Son, and came, not to speak of or about Himself, but to testify of the Son.

Sacrifice

Fourth, each Person of the Trinity glorifies the other two at a cost to Himself. The Son humbled Himself to death on the cross. There, having become "sin for us" (*2 Cor. 5:21*), He suffered isolation from His Father and bore the wrath of God against sinners (*Mt. 27:46; Ps. 22:1-21; Is. 53:5, 10-12*).³ The Father gave up His beloved Son to death on the cross (*Jn. 3:16*). The Holy Spirit, too, gave up the Son as He withdrew His comforts from the crucified Christ.⁴ Remember the two-fold cry: "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" There are mysteries here, for God's passions are not the passions of men. But we will err into Stoicism if we do not confess that God felt grief in His heart when Jesus was made sin in our place (cf. *Gen. 6:5-7; Isa. 63:10; Eph. 4:30*).

Fifth, the love within the Trinity is the ground of God's love for us. That love is first foundational, and archetypal. He loves us because They first of all love one another. His love is full and overflows. He does not need, yet He gives. He rejoices in the fulness of His love and reaches beyond Himself to share it with creatures who can profit Him nothing.

Action

Sixth, divine love did not remain a matter of good intentions or hypothetical possibilities. The Persons of the Trinity did not merely tell stories to one another about what could be.⁵ God acted into history. Divine love overflowed beyond the heart of God into the acts of God, and God created a world outside Himself in which that love could be manifest.

Truth

Seventh, love functions in terms of truth. The Persons of the Godhead communicated their intentions and promises in a clear and faithful manner, and what each covenanted in eternity is precisely what He did on earth and in history. Jesus could speak in normal, propositional language about the Father's love and the Father's promises (*Jn. 17*). Written covenants, confessions, and creeds are the necessary corollary of Biblical love.

Reality

Eighth, love is not an abstraction. In the love of the Trinity we have a living model of love and virtue at work. Within the Trinity each Person moves in love to seek the good of the other two. Each communicates honestly and openly with the others. Each operates with complete

confidence (trust) in the others, and each is Himself absolutely faithful. Each humbles Himself, giving of Himself even to the point of grief and loss, so that the others may be glorified. Each rejoices and delights in the others (cf. *Pr. 8:30; Mt. 3:17*). The love of God and the glory of God are thus inextricably interwoven in God Himself.

Consider a practical application in connection with this last thought. What happens, say, if we cling to the idea of self-sacrifice, but forget its end, the love of God and our neighbor? Giving up something replaces giving of self, and unselfishness takes the place of charity. C. S. Lewis gives us this example:

Something quite trivial, like having tea in the garden, is proposed. One member takes care to make it quite clear (though not in so many words) that he would rather not but is, of course, prepared to do so out of "Unselfishness." The others instantly withdraw their proposal, ostensibly through their "Unselfishness," but really because they don't want to be used as a sort of lay figure on which the first speaker practises petty altruism. But he is not going to be done out of his debauch of Unselfishness either. He insists on doing "what the others want." They insist on doing what he wants. Passions are roused. Soon someone is saying, "Very well, then, I won't have any tea at all!" and a real quarrel ensues with bitter resentment on both sides.⁶

Let's return to the test question and the common answers.

If we say simply that God is love, and leave it at that, we leave love without an object. Love is no more than a state of mind or heart. It is theoretical or sentimental. It neither speaks nor gives. It is a "love" that gets along very well without ever loving anyone or anything. As Linus yells at Lucy, "I love mankind . . . It's people I can't stand!"

What if we say that God's love is potential? He is ready and willing to love; He only lacks an object for His love. This brings us to that second response, "God loves us eternally."

While it is certainly true that God loves His people from eternity, this doctrine still does not untie the knot. Did God's love wait on us before it could be complete? See what happens. God is love. He must be love to be God. By our existence, then, we enable God to love and so enable God to be God. We bestow upon God His divinity by letting Him love us and by loving Him in return. God needs us in order to be truly God. This is not Christianity, though it has sometime passed for it, particularly in the nineteenth century.

Practical Arians

The bottom line is this: if we are content to root love anywhere but in the eternal fellowship of the Trinity, we will be functioning as practical Arians. The implications

of such Unitarian theology are profound and practical. The Arian god is lonely at best, impersonal at worst. If "it" has placed us here, it is because "it" needs us to complete itself. Imagine the human family shaped in the image of such a god! Or better, read the political history of Unitarianism in this country.⁷ It is no wonder that so many Caesars favored Arian theology.⁸ But such theology has its more homely implications as well. Lewis again is helpful:

Even in human life we have seen the passion to dominate, almost to digest, one's fellow; to make his whole intellectual and emotional life merely an extension of one's own—to hate one's hatreds and resent one's grievances and indulge one's egoism through him as well as through oneself. His own little store of passion must of course be suppressed to make room for ours. If he resists this suppression he is being very selfish.⁹

We are loved. We are needed. We will be embraced, included, assimilated. Resistance is futile. Whether the threat comes from a would-be "friend" who knows what's best for us or from some Orwellian collective, we should not be impressed that it masquerades behind the banner of love. But we should recognize it for the Unitarian slavery that it is.

The Biblical metaphor for love in action, for covenantal community, is neither the hive nor the machine. It is the body (*1 Cor. 12*):¹⁰

There is one body, and one Spirit, even as ye are called in one hope of your calling; one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all. But unto every one of us is given grace according to the measure of the gift of Christ. Wherefore he saith, When he ascended up on high, he led captivity captive, and gave gifts to men ... And he gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers; for the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ: till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ: that we henceforth be no more children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, and cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive; but speaking the truth in love, may grow

up into him in all things, which is the head, even Christ: from whom the whole body fitly joined together and compacted by that which every joint supplieth, according to the effectual working in the measure of every part, maketh increase of the body unto the edifying of itself in love (*Eph. 4:4-8, 11-16*).

The love and community of the Triune God is modeled, revealed, and—best of all—enjoyed in the fellowship and worship of the believing and loving church. This is our greatest privilege and our greatest apology.¹¹ The world will know our Lord and us by our love. And so Jesus prayed:

That they all may be one; as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us: that the world may believe that thou hast sent me. And the glory which thou gavest me I have given them; that they may be one, even as we are one: I in them, and thou in me that they may be made perfect in one; and that the world may know that thou hast sent me, and hast loved them, as thou hast loved me (*Jn. 17:21-23*).

¹ St. Augustine, *On the Trinity*, XV: xix.

² *ibid.*, XV: viii.

³ It is true that Jesus suffered in His human nature; it is also true that He suffered as a divine Person.

⁴ See Klaas Schilder, *Christ Crucified* (St. Catherines, Canada, 1940 [1979]), 402-403.

⁵ On the other hand, storytelling also has its origins in the eternal communications of the Godhead. But that's a discussion for another time.

⁶ C. S. Lewis, *The Screwtape Letters* (New York, revised 1982 ed.), 123.

⁷ See, for example, Otto Scott, *The Secret Six, John Brown and the Abolitionist Movement* (New York, 1979); see also "The Religion of Humanity" in R. J. Rushdoony's *The Nature of the American System* (Nutley, NJ, 1965).

⁸ See R. J. Rushdoony, *The Foundations of Social Order, Studies in the Creeds and Councils of the Early Church* (n. p., 1972).

⁹ Preface to *The Screwtape Letters*, xi.

¹⁰ C. S. Lewis, "Membership" in *The Weight of Glory and Other Essays* (New York, 1980).

¹¹ Francis Schaeffer, "The Mark of the Christian" in *The Church at the End of the 20th Century* (Downers Grove, IL, 1970).

Greg Uttinger teaches theology, history, and literature at Cornerstone Christian School in Roseville, California. He resides in nearby Citrus Heights with his wife, Kate, and their new baby.

ATTENTION COVENANT YOUTH!

We intend to begin a new feature in the *Chalcedon Report*. Every month we would like to publish a brief article by young Christians (no older than 20) either home schooled or in a Christian day school. The article should be 500-1500 words and be on a topic in line with Chalcedon's Vision Statement.

Chalcedon will pay \$50.00 for any article published.

Please send submissions to Susan Burns c/o Chalcedon, P. O. Box 369, Vallecito, CA 95251.

E-mail address sburns@goldrush.com

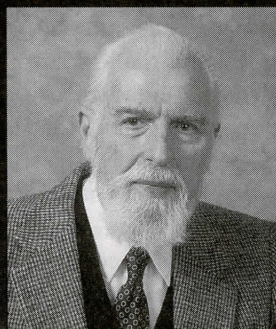
Annual West Coast Reformation Bible Conference

Creation to the Glory of God!

October 2-3, 1999*
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“In the Beginning God Created...”

Speakers:



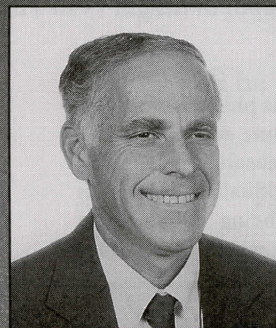
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Rushdoony



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Andrew
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Rev.
Dennis
Roe



Rev.
Jim
West

Topics:

- The Creature-Creator Distinction
- The Framework Hypothesis and the Sell-Out of Six-Day Creation
- The Biblical Doctrine of Creation
- The Mythology of Science
- The Mandate of Creation Evangelism
- Christ: The Mediator of Creation
- Christ: The Mediator of Redemption

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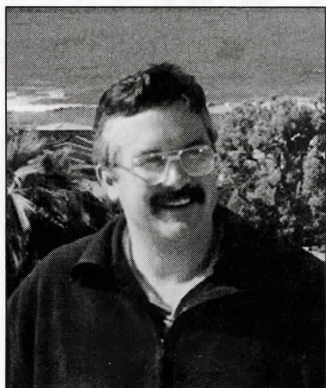
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The Trinitarian Basis of Modern Science

By John King



Science is grounded in a Christian theory of knowledge which springs from God's purposeful activity in creation. Science is ultimately dependent upon the properties of God. It is precisely His nature, as expressed through His properties, which makes His purposeful activity possible. However, since

God's properties are interdependent, they are mutually conditioning and thus impinge as a unit on His creational activity. Accordingly, the negation of any divine property necessarily implies the denial of all remaining properties and with them the possibility of an ordered creation. Given this fact, this article will show that a denial of God's Triune nature renders His creational activity impossible by negating His properties. To see the significance of the Trinity for human knowledge, it will first be necessary to examine the role of the divine properties in creation.

The Role of Divine Properties

It must be noted, first of all, that God's creational activity is dependent upon His ability both to conceive and to affect an ordered design. This ability depends upon God's transcendence, a property which comes to expression in all of His other properties. God's transcendence means that He is distinct from and thus exalted above His creation. In particular, God and His creation have differing essences. Whereas creation is temporal, finite, and therefore externally determined, God is eternal, infinite, and internally self-determined. Accordingly, God's transcendence over His creation refers to His infinite, self-determined status, which is both necessary to an ordered creation, and is dependent upon His triune nature. God's self-determination, or aseity, forms a theological link relating His triune nature to His creational activity. Consequently, the implications of God's self-determination are key to assessing the scientific import of the Trinity.

God is said to be *a se*, a Latin term which literally means "of Himself." Thus, the aseity of God simply describes God's self-determined and therefore self-contained nature. In particular, because God is *a se*, He is the sole ground of His own existence, the sole source of His own knowledge, and the sole determinant of His

own action. Accordingly, God's aseity implies a total absence of external conditioning and thus a self-contained nature.

However, since all finite reality is externally conditioned, God's aseity implies the infinitude of His properties. Accordingly, with respect to knowledge and power, God is said to be omniscient (all knowing) and omnipotent (all-powerful). Because God's properties are infinite, they exhaustively interpenetrate one another with the result that they are coextensive or coterminous (literally having the same boundaries). Thus, as part of His infinitude, God's aseity further implies what is known as His simplicity, namely the indivisible, noncomposite nature of His essence. Given this simplicity, then, God's knowledge and power are coterminous—precisely aligned—with God's being and hence with one another. Being omniscient, God is exhaustively conscious of His being and actions. Being omnipotent, He is in control of His being and knowledge. Thus, God's actions are exhaustively purposeful—they are exactly what He intends—even as His purposes are exhaustively actual—what He determines to do, He does.

Since God infallibly knows and controls His own being and actions, and since all external reality is solely dependent upon Him, there is nothing either within God or about Him which escapes His exhaustive knowledge or control. As a result, God is capable of both formulating and transmitting an intelligent design to His creation, thus establishing a basis for human knowledge. Science is possible precisely because God's aseity establishes both the infinite number and thus the coterminosity of His properties. To the extent, therefore, that a denial of the Trinity undercuts God's aseity, the possibility of an ordered creation and, hence, human science falls to the ground.

Trinitarian Implications

Having discussed the role of the divine properties in creation, it is now possible to set forth the epistemological significance of the Trinity. To this end, Van Til's formulation of the doctrine will be used due to its succinctness and its tremendous depth of insight (Van Til 2, pp. 25, 26):

We may express this thought philosophically by saying that for us the eternal one and many form a self-complete unity. God is absolute personality and therefore absolute individuality. He exists necessarily. He has no non-being over against himself in comparison with which he defines himself; he is internally self-defined.

Using the language of the One-and-Many question we conclude that in God the one and the many are equally ultimate. Unity in God is no more fundamental than diversity in God, and diversity is no more fundamental than unity. The persons of the Trinity are mutually exhaustive of one another. The Son and the Spirit are ontologically on a par with the Father.... In God's being there are no particulars not related to the universal and there is nothing universal that is not fully expressed in the particulars.

From this description two major relationships are evident. First, since the "universal is fully expressed in the particulars," the transcendent properties of God extend to each Person with the result that the three Persons are "mutually exhaustive of one another" and thus "ontologically on a par." On the other hand, since "unity in God is no more fundamental than diversity," the three Persons, though fully divine, nevertheless remain distinct from one another and from the Godhead as a whole. Accordingly, due to the plurality of distinct, ontologically equivalent Persons, God can compare and contrast within His own being and is therefore internally benchmarked. Thus, in contrast to the gods of Gnosticism and Neoplatonism who defined their being (spiritual unity) in contrast to the nonbeing (material plurality) of the physical universe, God "has no non-being over against himself in comparison with which he defines himself" but rather "is internally self-defined." Consequently, in God's being the plurality of Persons prevents God from becoming relativized and therefore reduced through a defining contrast with the finite creation. Just as God's unity was seen to guard the transcendence of each Person, so God's plurality guards the transcendence of His one being by preventing a relativizing erosion of His infinitude. Each of these relations will now be considered in terms of its effect upon human knowledge.

The Role of the Universal

As mentioned above, the significance of the universal relates to the extension of full divinity to each of the Persons. The reason that such extension is important is that Scripture represents the involvement of all three Persons in creation (Bavink, p. 256):

Elohim creates by means of Word and Spirit. The Word spoken by God is not a mere sound but a power so great that the universe is thereby created and upheld; Jehovah utters his voice and it comes to pass, *Gen. 1:3; Ps. 33:6, 9; 147:18; 148:8; Joel 2:11*. That Word, which is spoken by God, proceeds from him, and is therefore distinct from him, is later on personified as Wisdom, *Job 28:23-27; Prov. 8:22 ff.; cf. Prov. 3:19; Jer. 10:12; 51:15*. From everlasting Jehovah possessed, set up, and searched this wisdom. It was God's master workman, through whom he created and still maintains everything.

But the work of creation and providence is established not only through the agency of the

Word and of Wisdom, but also by means of the Spirit of God, *Gen. 1:2; Ps. 33:6; 104:33; 139:7; Job 26:13; 27:3; 32:8; 33:4; Is. 40:7, 13; 59:19*. Whereas God calls everything into being by means of the Word as mediator, he is immanent in all creation through the Spirit, who gives life and adornment to all things. Hence, a threefold cause of the origin and preservation of all things is already evident in the O.T. doctrine of creation. Elohim (God) and the cosmos (the universe) do not stand over against one another in dualistic fashion; but the world, created by God has his Word for its objective, and his Spirit for its subjective principle. God first thought the universe; hence, the latter is called into being by means of God's omnipotent Word; once realized, it does not have a separate existence, *i.e.*, apart from God or opposed to him, but rests in his Spirit.

As can be seen from Bavink's formulation, each of the Persons is involved in creation. Consequently, God's ability to effect an ordered design hinges upon the ability and hence the transcendent properties of each one. In other words, within the divine economy, the chain of distinct and synchronous operations can be no stronger than its weakest link. To the extent that the divinity of any Person is discounted, therefore, He becomes a weak partner in the process, negating the basis for an ordered design. However, due to God's Trinitarian nature, the universal is "fully expressed in the particulars," causing full divinity to extend to each Person. As a consequence, weak links in the divine economy are eliminated by the universal, thus safeguarding the basis for knowledge.

The Role of the Particulars

However, since unity and particularity are equally ultimate in God, the particulars also establish the universal. The reason for this effect, as stated earlier, is that the plurality of Persons preserves God's internal self-definition, thus guarding His self-contained, infinite status (aseity). To see the full significance of this point, it is necessary to consider another statement of Van Til (Van Til 1, p. 229):

It is sometimes asserted that we can prove to man that we are not asserting anything that they ought to consider irrational, inasmuch as we say that God is one in essence and three in person. We therefore claim that we have not asserted unity and trinity of exactly the same thing.

Yet this is not the whole truth of the matter. We do assert that God, that is, the whole Godhead, is one person. We have noted how each attribute is coextensive with the being of God. We are compelled to maintain this in order to avoid the notion of an uninterpreted being of some sort. In other words, we are bound to maintain the identity of the attributes of God with the being of God in order to avoid the specter of brute fact. In a similar manner we have noted how theologians insist that each of the persons of the Godhead is co-terminous with the being of the Godhead. But all

this is not to say that the distinctions of the attributes are merely nominal. Nor is it to say that the distinctions of the persons are merely nominal. We need both the coterminicity of each attribute and each person with the whole being of God, and the genuine significance of the distinctions of the attributes and the persons. "Each person," says Bavinck, "is equal to the whole essence of God and coterminous with both other persons and with all three." (Vol II, p. 311) ... Over against all other beings, that is, over against created beings, we must therefore hold that God's being presents an absolute numerical identity. And even within the ontological Trinity we must maintain that God is numerically one. He is one person. When we say we believe in a personal God, we do not merely mean that we believe in a God to whom the adjective "personality" may be attached. God is not an essence that has personality; he is absolute personality. (emphasis added)

The significant point of this citation is that the Persons serve to define not only one another, but also the Godhead as a whole, establishing personality for the universal. When this statement is combined with the one cited earlier, therefore, several significant points emerge.

First, the Persons are seen to be both distinct and yet on an ontological par with one another and with the Godhead as a whole. God is able to compare and contrast within His own being and is therefore internally self-defined. As a result, God is not defined by contrast to a finite creation and thus is not reduced to the level of a creation-dependent, finite god. Rather, being internally self defined, God is totally self-determined and therefore *a se*. God is the ground of His own existence, the source of His own knowledge, and the determinant of His own action. As such, God is infinite in knowledge and power and, therefore, capable of conceiving and transmitting an intelligent design. Thus, by guarding God's self-contained status, the plurality of Persons protects God's transcendence and with it a basis for human knowledge.

Second, since knowledge is a personal concept, God's particularity guards human knowledge by preserving God's personality. After all, since the three Persons are exhaustive of both one another and the Godhead as a whole, God's one being must also be personal. In this regard, traditional formulations of the Trinitarian doctrine state that God is one in essence and three in person. Yet, as noted by John Frame (North, pp. 306, 307), the traditional formulation leaves open the possibility of God's tripersonality being derived from an abstract, impersonal essence. However, in stating that the Godhead is also a person, Van Til closes this loophole by maintaining an equal ultimacy of unity and particularity. In other words, according to Van Til's formulation, God is not merely three in person and one in essence; He is both three and one in person! If He were not, God's

personality would dissolve into the ground of an impersonal essence with the result that knowledge, as a personal concept, would vanish.¹

Finally, the equal ultimacy of unity and particularity is itself a necessary condition for God's personality and thus for human knowledge. After all, in the absence of either quality, God's being would reduce to chaos or a unitary blank, both of which are impersonal. As a consequence, personality would not be ultimate in the universe, and knowledge, as a personal concept, would vanish. Thus, God's plurality further guards human knowledge by preventing the reduction of God to an empty, impersonal form.

The Scientific Import of the Trinity

From the preceding discussion, the scientific import of the Trinity should be clearly seen. On the one hand, the unity of God ensures the full divinity of each Person and, hence, the transcendence needed to effect an ordered creation. On the other hand, God's equally basic plurality, secures the aseity, infinitude, and personality of God's one being. Thus, just as God's unity secures the transcendence of each Person, so God's plurality secures the transcendent personality of God's one essence. In other words, His unity guards His transcendent plurality even as His plurality guards His transcendent unity. Given this fact, science is possible precisely because God is triune. If He were not, the transcendence needed for an ordered creation could not be maintained.

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1. Herman Bavinck, *The Doctrine of God* (Carlisle, PA, 1991).
 2. John M. Frame, "The Problem of Theological Paradox," Gary North, ed., *Foundations of Christian Scholarship* (Vallecito, CA, 1979).
 3. Cornelius Van Til, *An Introduction to Systematic Theology* (Phillipsburg, NJ, 1978).
 4. Cornelius Van Til, *The Defense of the Faith* (Phillipsburg, NJ, 1967).
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¹ Moreover, since personality would then be a quality external to God's being, God would have to define Himself in comparison to personality as an external quality with the result that God would lose His internal self-definition. Accordingly, since God would thereby lose His aseity and infinitude, the transcendence needed for an ordered creation would vanish. Thus, God's plurality guards human knowledge by maintaining the transcendent personality of His one being.

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Two Epistles on Eschatology

January 25, 1999

Dear Rev. Sandlin,

TIME for some confrontational theology!

I have been receiving the *Chalcedon Report* since 1988, and as a Bible-believing Christian I can honestly say that I agree with much of what I read in it. One thing I strongly disagree with is Chalcedon's postmillennial eschatology. I was a premillennialist before I began receiving the *Chalcedon Report*, and I remain a premillennialist. Let me tell you why I am persuaded that postmillennialism is a false doctrine.

Contrary to "the great Puritan vision of a Godly Golden Age before Christ's Second Advent," the Bible clearly teaches that the last days will be characterized by lack of righteousness, deception, war, famine, pestilence and earthquakes in various places. Christ said that the period of time just prior to His return would be as it was in the days of Noah (*Mt. 24: 37-39*). As we all know, the earth was filled with violence and corruption in the days of Noah. Christ also said that the end would come, not after the whole world had been converted to Christianity and been brought under the discipline of God's law-word, but after the gospel had been "PREACHED IN ALL THE WORLD FOR A WITNESS UNTO ALL NATIONS" (*Mt. 24:14*). "Today, for the first time in history, we are witnessing the preaching of the gospel on a global scale such as the world has never known—using radio, the printed page, television. It's one of the signs that we are to look for as we approach the end of history" (Billy Graham in *Approaching Hoofbeats: The Four Horsemen of the Apocalypse*, pp. 218-219).

Are we living in the last days? Most Christians, including myself, certainly think so. We are living in a time in which immorality and lawlessness are rampant (*2 Tim. 3:1-5*). We are seeing a resurgence of paganism and a proliferation of false Christs and false prophets (*Mt. 24:5, 11, 24*). The twentieth century has been the bloodiest in all of human history (*Mt. 24:6*). "One hundred twenty million people have been killed in 130 wars in this century—more than all those killed in war before 1900" (Richard Nixon in *1999: Victory Without War*, p. 13). Famine and incurable disease have taken the lives of many millions more (*Mt. 24:7*). Earthquakes are occurring worldwide and with greater frequency and intensity (*Mt. 24:7*). Lastly, God's restoration of the national existence of Israel is a sure sign that we are living in the last days. "When the Lord shall build up Zion, He shall appear in His glory" (*Ps. 102:16*).

Chalcedon claims that the church is now Israel. In spiritual terms, that's true. But it is not true that the

church has replaced physical Israel. John Hagee, pastor of Cornerstone Church in San Antonio, Texas, and author of *Final Dawn Over Jerusalem*, writes:

On May 15, 1948, a theological earthquake leveled replacement theology when the State of Israel was reborn after 2,000 years of wandering. From the four corners of the earth, the Seed of Abraham returned to the land of their fathers. They arose from their Gentile "graves" (*Ezek. 37:12*) speaking sixty different languages, and they founded a nation that has become a superpower in forty years. Far from passing away, the State of Israel is building, growing, inventing, and developing. The desert is indeed blooming like a rose, just as Isaiah the prophet promised (*3:15*).

The rebirth of the nation of Israel is proof that God has not cast off His people. He will fulfill His word concerning them, not because they have deserved it, but because God says so in His word.

God's promise to restore the nation of Israel and bring the Jews back into the land of their forefathers is abundantly proclaimed in the Old Testament (*De. 30:3-6; Is. 11:11-12; 43:5-6; Jer. 16:14-14; 23:3; 30:3; Ezek. 11:17; 39:25-29; Hos. 3:4-5; 6:2; etc.*). Again and again we can read in the prophetic Scriptures of the Old Testament that God will gather His people out of all the countries where He has driven them. He will also bring them "out of the land of the north" (*Jer. 3:18*), and the days are coming when the children of Israel will no longer speak of the exodus out of Egypt (*Jer. 23:7-8*). A second and greater exodus is taking place in our time. Many of the Jews now living in Israel have come from Russia (the "north country"), and there are many more yet to come out of that land. It is also interesting to note that God, in the last days, will "make Jerusalem a burdensome stone for all people" (*Zec. 12:3*). No one can deny that Jerusalem is increasingly becoming a "burdensome stone" for all concerned, but it shall remain in the hands of the Jewish people. God will see to that.

In 2 Peter 3:3-4 we read, "Knowing this first, that there shall come in the last days scoffers, walking after their own lusts, And saying, Where is the promise of His coming? For since the fathers fell asleep, all things continue as they were from the beginning of the creation." In the days prior to Christ's return, says the Apostle Peter, there will be people who contemptuously dismiss the Second Coming. Such scoffers abound today. But the important question is this: If there is going to be a "Godly Golden Age before Christ's Second Advent," why would anyone in the last days be saying that everything has remained the same since the beginning of human history?

Let us be obedient to God and do all that He has

commanded, but let us not think that we will be so victorious that we will establish the kingdom of God before Christ returns. Let us continue to advance the kingdom of our Lord and Savior, but let us not put our hope in an earthly theocracy that God has not promised for this age. Let us preach the gospel to every creature, but let us remember that “narrow is the way, which leadeth unto life, and FEW there be that find it” (*Mt. 7:14*).

Christ, when He returns, will establish God’s kingdom in its fulness, and we will reign with Him a thousand years (*Rev. 20:6*). At the end of that time, the lost will be resurrected and judged according to their works. They and hell will then be cast into the lake of fire, where “the smoke of their torment ascendeth up for ever and ever” (*Rev. 14:11*). The rest of us will live eternally with our God, who will make all things new (*Rev. 21:5*). Praise be to God forevermore!

Yours in Christ,

P. S. Although you are under no obligation to do so, I wish that you would publish my letter. There should be a “letter box” in the *Chalcedon Report* where readers may communicate their thoughts concerning important theological issues, provided they do so in an intelligent and respectful manner.

February 17, 1999

Dear _____ :

Thanks for your letter of January 25. While I strongly disagree with your position and its implications, I appreciate your willingness to address important eschatological issues, as well as your suggestion that we include letters like yours in the *Chalcedon Report*. Our editorial committee had already decided to do this, and your letter and my response will be included in an upcoming issue. While my answer must be relatively brief, I am having the office send you copies of Rushdoony’s *God’s Plan for Victory* as well as my *Postmillennial Primer*. These works will address most of your assertions. In addition, I recommend the postmillennial works of Loraine Boettner, John Jefferson Davis, Kenneth Gentry, and Marcellus Kik. These works and others present a persuasive case for postmillennialism.

In my view, the texts which you adduce to support premillennialism fail to support it, and certain texts that you did not mention *do* quite clearly support postmillennialism.

You suggest that most Christians believe we are presently living in the “last days.” I certainly hope this is the case, since this is precisely what the Bible teaches—

in fact, we know that the last days began as early as the first post-ascension Pentecost in Acts 2 (*vv. 14-21*). Notice that Hebrews 1:2 patently implies that the last days were a present reality at the time of the author’s writing (see also *1 Pet. 1:20*; *1 Jn. 2:18*). It is true that the expression “the last day” refers to the day of final judgment and the accompanying resurrection (*Jn. 6:29-40*), but there can be little doubt that “the last days” (and “latter times”) refers generally to virtually the entire interadvental era—the period between Christ’s incarnation (or at least His resurrection, ascension, and session), and His visible Second Coming which signals the conclusion of human history. “Last days,” therefore, denotes the last epoch of human history—the period immediately after which human history ends.

I believe you have greatly misunderstood Matthew 24:37-39. This passage says nothing about sinfulness’s being a marked characteristic of Noah’s contemporaries, and verses 40-44 indicates the sense in which verses 36-39 should be understood. The characteristic of Noah’s contemporaries to which this passage points is not depravity, but insouciance—a lack of any sense of awareness of Christ’s Second Advent. There is nothing Biblically objectionable in “eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage” (*v. 38*), any more than there is in grinding at a mill (*v. 41*) or guarding a house (*v. 43*). Verses 45-51 reveal the proper Christian response to the knowledge of Christ’s Second Advent—faithfulness. Christians must never presume that history is to be interpreted by some uniformitarian scheme—that the future will preserve the divinely uninterrupted continuity of the present and of the recent past (*2 Pet. 3:1-4*).

Further, Matthew 24:14 is a part of our Lord’s extended monologue in answer to His disciples’ question about the sign of His coming and the end of the world (or age). While postmillennialists differ among themselves in interpreting much of this chapter (some hold, for example, that much of it was fulfilled in the destruction of Jerusalem in A. D. 70), I hold that it, like the book of Revelation, constitutes a description of events occurring through much of the interadvental era, until the millennium blooms in all of its fullness. Postmillennialism asserts that Christ’s kingdom will gradually overspread the earth, not that the interadvental era will be characterized by unvarnished bliss and harmony.

You cite 2 Timothy 3:1-5, Matthew 24:7, and Psalm 102:16 to support the notion that the world is growing more depraved, that Christianity is becoming a less dominant force, and that the Second Coming of Christ is imminent. These verses teach nothing of the kind. In the first place, while it is true that wicked men will grow increasingly wicked (possibly because they observe and deplore the advance of the gospel), there is no indication that the wicked will become more numerous and powerful. Second, you have not taken into account the unquestioned victories of Christianity in the world over the last 2000 years. While we today are far, far from the fullness of the

earthly millennium prophesied in the Old Testament and confirmed in the New Testament, we can see about us the fruits of the extension of Christ's kingdom. There are unquestionably many more Christians today per the entire population than there were 2000 years ago when a small band of believers met in an upper room and received the gifts of the Holy Spirit (*Ac. 2*). Today the message of Christianity has gone around the world, though it is true that some nations and tribes have still not heard the gospel. The blessings of covenant obedience pledged in Deuteronomy 28 and elsewhere are quite evident; they are the fruits of an imperfect, though genuine, Christian civilization from the fourth century and preserved largely intact in European society until the eighteenth century, and in the United States until well into the nineteenth century. These include social dominance (*Dt. 28:1-3*), economic prosperity (*vv. 4-5, 8, 11-12*), military might (*v. 7*), worldly acclaim (*v. 10*), and world leadership (*v. 13*). These blessings are all the direct result of obedience to God's written law (*v. 9, 13*). The Western world today is living on the borrowed capital of the covenant faithfulness of its Christian forefathers. No postmillennialist—certainly none at Chalcedon—denies the great evils of the modern world. Nor does postmillennialism assert that the extension and the advancement of Christ's kingdom is an historically even escalation. History has meaning. Men, families, churches, and nations sin; when they sin, they are judged by God. Nonetheless, despite man's sin, Christ sovereignly advances His kingdom in time and history; the growth is not always even, but it is genuine. This, in addition, distinguishes Christian postmillennialism from liberal postmillennialism, which holds that Christ's kingdom advances because of the inherent goodness of man. Christian postmillennialism holds that Christ's kingdom advances *in spite of* the inherent *sinfulness* of man. One essential aspect of Christ's kingly office is to wield the sword of the gospel against unbelieving hearts, bringing them into submission to His royal grace, gospel, and law (*Eph. 6:17; Phil. 3:20, 21; 1 Cor. 15:25; Rev. 19:11-21*). In other words, Christ's advancing kingdom is a result of the evident power of God, not the spurious goodness of man.

You claim that the church has not replaced physical Israel in God's plan and that the "rebirth of the nation of Israel is proof that God has not cast off His people." You define this rebirth as God's "bring[ing] the Jews back into the land of their forefathers." I believe your understanding of this situation is partly correct, and that the part that is correct supports the postmillennial viewpoint. While it is perhaps misleading to assert that the church has *replaced* ethnic Israel, it certainly is correct to say that the Old Testament church has *expanded* to include the Gentiles as converted Gentiles, and not as ethnic Jews. This, by the way, is the only *substantive* difference between God's covenant plan as revealed in the Old Testament and that revealed in the New Testament. In the Old Testament era—or for most of it, at least—one had to become an ethnic Jew in order to become a

member of the covenant people of God; this is certainly not true in the New Testament era, as the New Testament teaches (*Ac. 15:1-29; Gal. 2:1-16; Eph. 2:11-22*), and as the Old Testament had prophesied (*Is. 19:24-25*). St. Paul makes clear that the true Jews are those united to Christ by faith (*Rom. 2:24-29; 9:6-29; 10:11-13; 11:11-24; Gal. 3:16-29*). As the last verse of Galatians 3 (as well as *Eph. 2:11-16*) makes clear, all Christians of whatever race are the seed of Abraham and are entitled to all of the promises of Abraham to which any converted Jews are entitled. *There is no difference* in God's dealings. I do not dispute the interpretation of the many Old Testament passages which sees them as securing Canaan for the Jews; but I hold that the intended recipients of this promise are no less the converted Gentiles than the converted Jews, and that, further, this promise of the inheritance of Canaan has been expanded to include the entire earth (*Rom. 4:13*). God's pledge of earthly inheritance for His covenant people has not changed; it has only been extended from a narrow tract in the Middle East to the entire earth. We see from the Old Testament to the New Testament no substantive change in God's covenant, but an extension of His soteriological, ecclesiological, and eschatological purposes. True worship is no longer limited to a specific location (*Jn. 4:19-24*). The priesthood is no longer a localized familial priesthood, but includes all Christians (*Rev. 1:5, 6*). This de-localization and universalization of God's covenant plan is expressed powerfully in Hebrews 12:18-29. Today, the most important Jerusalem is not the Jerusalem in modern Israel, but the heavenly Jerusalem in which the King sits reigning over the entire earth (*Gal. 4:26; Heb. 12:22; Rev. 21:2; cf. Ac. 2:30-36; 1 Cor. 15:27; Eph. 1:20-23; Heb. 2:8*).

In light of 2 Peter 3:3-4, you ask "if there is going to be a 'Godly Golden Age before Christ's Second Advent' why would anyone in the last days be saying that everything has remained the same since the beginning of human history?" The answer to this question is simple: we hold that the kingdom of God advances gradually and incrementally; unlike the premillennialists, we do not hold that the kingdom of God is a cataclysmically induced kingdom at Jesus Christ's return from heaven riding on a large horse. Rather, we hold that it advances slowly, almost imperceptibly (*Mt. 13:31-33*). Because the miraculous, supernatural advancement of the kingdom is such a gradual, continuous affair, sinners will conclude that history itself is uniformitarian. In other words, they will take for granted the blessings of God. This is quite similar to the pagan Westerner who challenges God to kill him on the spot if there is indeed a God, and concludes that there is no God because God does not oblige his wish. He is surrounded by the miraculous blessings of the sovereign God, but he refuses to acknowledge them. These scoffers want immediate, cataclysmic, miraculous proof of the existence of God. God does not oblige them.

It always surprises me when premillennialists cite

Matthew 7:14 as proof of the predestined defeat of the gospel. Virtually all of these premillennialists hold that one day, *after* Christ returns to establish a millennium on the earth, there will be many, many conversions (or even many before that event in the so-called “seven-year tribulation”). For some reason Matthew 7:14 will not apply to this changed situation of gospel prosperity. The difference between the postmillennialists and premillennialists in the interpretation of this verse, therefore, is not whether there will one day be many converted—both agree on this—but over *when* this plethora of conversions will occur. We postmillennialists believe it will occur before Christ’s Second Advent, and we hold that Matthew 7:14 describes a period near the beginning of the establishment of Christ’s kingdom and that it will not characterize that kingdom when it extends in its fullness.

You claim that Revelation 20:6 teaches that Christ will establish God’s kingdom when He returns, yet Revelation 20 says nothing of the kind. Neither Revelation 20 nor chapter 19 describes an earthly physical presence of Jesus Christ, but rather a *heavenly* physical reign of Jesus Christ over the earth, the inception of which Daniel prophesies in 7:13, 14, and Peter describes in Acts 2:22-36. Christ received His mediatorial kingdom at His ascension and

session; He will not receive it at His Second Advent, which will usher in the eternal state. 1 Corinthians 15:22-26 describes the sequence surrounding the Second Advent and the end of human history. Christ is the firstfruits of the resurrection, and believers (as well as unbelievers [*Jn. 5:28-29*]), will be resurrected at Christ’s Second Coming. “Then cometh the end . . .” (*1 Cor. 15:24*). The “end” occurs at Christ’s coming, “when he shall have put down all rule and all authority and power. For he must reign, till he hath put all enemies under his feet” (*vv. 24, 25*). The “end” of human history occurs when Christ returns, at which time Christ will have subordinated all of His enemies, and finally the enemy of death.

There is much, much more that I could say. I will not discuss the extensive positive evidence for postmillennialism, because you can examine that in the works that I mentioned in my first paragraph. Let it suffice that the Scriptures you have set forth do not support premillennialism. Thank you again for your writing and for your interest in the *Chalcedon Report*.

Yours for Christ’s Kingdom
 Andrew Sandlin
 Executive Director

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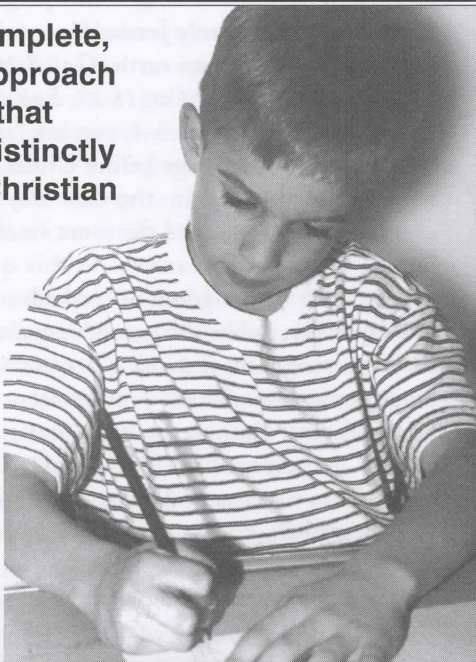
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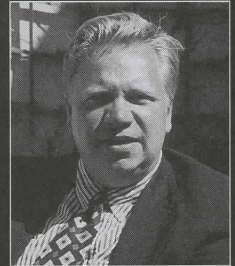
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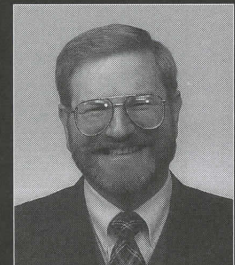
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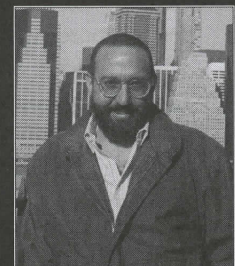
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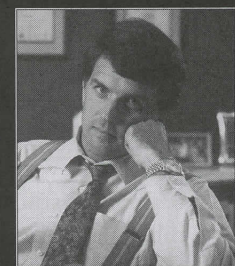
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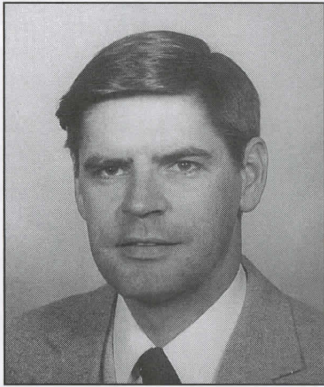


Monte Wilson
Editor of Classical Christianity

Welcome to the Counterculture

By Larry E. Ball

The 60s Counterculture Grows Up



Fellow Christian reconstructionists, welcome to the counterculture! This may sound a little strange to your ears, but if we adopt the sociological language of the past forty years, "counterculture" may be the most appropriate nomenclature for describing the modern Christian reconstruct-

ionist. Yes, as we approach the new millennium, we are part of the new counterculture!

Having been a young college student in the 60s, it almost appears as if the counterculture of the 60s has become the culture of the 90s, and the culture of the 60s has become the counterculture of the 90s. Today, we see the attitudes and values of the 60s counterculture—indeed, even the same people—dominating politics, media, and education. In a real sense, they set the agenda of the culture of the 90s. Those of us in the 90s who still hold to many of the values and morals against which the counterculture of the 60s rebelled are considered fringe and dangerously extremist, in other words, a modern counterculture movement itself. There undoubtedly is some truth in this concept, but discernment here is especially important.

The decade of the 60s witnessed the rise of what we generally think of as the counterculture movement. From the utopian Flower Children to the more militant Black Panthers, it was a decade of radicalism, usually among the young, challenging the prevailing beliefs of an older generation.

The Age of "Left Over" Christianity

This change of cultures over such a short period of time is not difficult to understand. The culture of the 60s was a period of "left-over Christianity." It was therefore very vulnerable. Liberalism (including neo-orthodoxy), prevalent in the church for decades, had destroyed the Christian foundation of previous generations. The authority of the Bible had been destroyed, yet the morals associated with the Scriptures, while detached from Scriptures, still underpinned the culture of the day. The Bible may have been seen as untrustworthy, but the morals of the Bible still defined acceptable ethics. Even though

God was considered irrelevant outside the walls of the local church building (the essence of modernity), divorce was still bad, adultery was still shameful, homosexuality was still abominable, and abortion was still murder.

The sit-coms of the 50s and 60s, like "Ozzie and Harriet," created an imaginary world where Americans could be happy with leftover morals from a Christian heritage, without any need for the God of that Christian heritage. It is not just accidental that Ozzie and Harriet never went to church, or even sought the counsel of the elders in trying times with their two sons. The church and the God of the church had become irrelevant, even though the morals of a lost Christianity still regulated society. Eventually this deception presented on the television screen was exposed by the counterculture of the 60s.

As a college student in the 60s, I once asked a respected mentor why pre-marital sex was wrong. The answer he gave, which was common to his generation was, "I don't know why, I just know that it is." This was typical of the culture of the 60s. It was a period trying to hold to the moral values of a lost Christianity without the foundation of that lost Christianity. As Van Til would say, they were not epistemologically self-conscious. They lived off the fruits without knowing their roots. It reminds me today of what we try to pass off as "traditional family values." It won't work. It failed in the 60s and it will fail in the 90s. "Christian family values" is the only option to humanism, not "traditional family values." Take Christ out of the phrase, and you have already given victory to the opposition. Our cultural alternatives are then no better than our opponents. We need not duplicate the errors of the 60s.

The 60s counterculture countered the prevailing values of the day. New values would replace the values of the previous generation. Since the Christian foundations of the World War II generation had been destroyed, the toppling of the superstructure would soon prove successful. A paradigm shift in values would occur over the next thirty to forty years rooted in the revolutionary period of the 60s.

In the decades of the 70s and 80s, the Moral Majority arose as a political organization seeking to restrain the drifting tide of America into immorality. In the 90s, it appears as if the Moral Majority is no more a majority. The Moral Majority has become the Moral Minority. After listening to the positive response in the polls to Bill Clinton in his impeachment trial, I was awakened to the fact that my views did not coincide with the mainstream of America. I became more convinced that I was part of a new counterculture.

Christian Countercultural Revolutionaries

Today, at the end of the 90s, we have a new culture. It is a culture without either the foundations of Christianity or the Christian superstructure of morals which carried the culture of the 60s. This new culture is rooted in a new religion floundering in the sea of relativism. In the 90s the modern culture through civil government, statist educational institutions, and an ungodly media, tells us what values are acceptable in modern society. The values coming from them are anti-Christian values. We are told (with little resistance from the church) that divorce is normal, adultery is fun, homosexuality is love, and abortion is a matter left for the god of personal choice. A revolution has been accomplished, and it would appear that we have lost!

However, there is a new generation of Christian reconstructionists arising who take issue with the accepted values of our modern culture and the salvific hope of modern humanistic institutions. Our values and allegiance are contrary to that of our culture. We are viewed as revolutionaries. We are misrepresented and we are feared as radicals. We make others uncomfortable, even our fellow Christians in the evangelical church. However, by

our firm beliefs inherited from Christian generations long ago, we will continue to challenge the prevailing beliefs and sacred institutions of our own day. We know that a Christian culture is the only hope for America. Our convictions are as dear as life itself. As such, we are the new counterculture. Welcome, my fellow Christian reconstructionists, to the counterculture!

As we become more "epistemologically self-conscious," and as we become more faithful to the God of Scripture, unlike the fruits of the old counterculture of the 60s, the long-term future belongs to us. While the modern generation loses her own soul and the souls of her children, Christian reconstructionists are quietly retaking their homes, their children, and their churches. A new paradigm shift may come in the next thirty to forty years. If it does, it will be the product of a new counterculture. This time, it will begin with us, a people seeking to take every thought captive to the Lord Jesus Christ through His gracious gospel, a people who seek to lay a more sure foundation.

Larry Ball is pastor of Bridwell Heights Presbyterian Church, Kingsport, Tennessee. He may be contacted at wppca@preferred.com.

MACEDONIAN CALL FROM PETER HAMMOND

I desperately need more staff. We definitely do not have enough qualified people to be able to handle the tremendous opportunities and invitations of ministry before us. I need someone with experience in book ministry, to run our "Christian Liberty Books" ministry; and we need an office manager who can juggle the many demands, matching available resources, vehicles, and personnel to the tasks at hand according to the priorities (this would free me up to do the writing, pioneering, and other ministry that I need to concentrate on). We always need more field staff, and administrative staff, but there is a wide-open opportunity for expanding our tape ministry, pastoral training, leadership training, Bible teaching, etc. The opportunities before us are so unprecedented, and I fear that we may be missing many windows of opportunity by not having sufficient resources and personnel to respond to them adequately.

This is a Macedonian Call: come over and help us!

Yours for Reformation and Revival,
Peter Hammond

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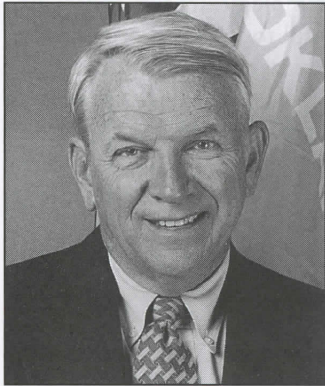
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A History of the American People, By Paul Johnson

Reviewed by William D. (Bill) Graves



Paul Johnson, author of *Modern Times*, *Intellectuals*, and other books, has written a masterpiece about America and its people. His *A History of the American People* (Harper Collins Pub., 1997) has been accurately described by the *Conservative Book Club* as “a single, sweeping volume so

awesome in scope, so rich in fascinating detail, and so pulsing with sheer dramatic intensity that it instantly takes its place as the finest one-volume history of our country ever written.”

Johnson, who is English, is obviously not a “hate America-first” historian, but, as Michael Medved said, has an “undisguised love” for America. Eschewing “political correctness” throughout, he does not acknowledge the existence of hyphenated Americans, but writes of merely Americans. Johnson begins his work by stating: “The creation of the United States of America is the greatest of all human adventures. No other national story holds such tremendous lessons, for the American people themselves and for the rest of mankind.”

Blessings and Curses

One such lesson is found in America’s Christian foundations and the early adherence to God’s laws and the blessings flowing therefrom, followed by the erosion of those foundations and rejection of God’s laws and the curses flowing therefrom (a fulfillment of *Dt. 28?*). The former resulted from the efforts of the Calvinists on the *Mayflower* who pursued religious freedom and Puritans like John Winthrop, whom Johnson calls “the first great American.” Winthrop, a Christian first, implanted “firmly in American soil” (not democracy, but) representative government which was to be cultivated in conformity with Christ’s teachings. Winthrop believed and taught that man had liberty to do—not what he liked—but to distinguish between good and evil by studying God’s commands.

The first structure to be built in every early American township, Johnson says, was a church. He notes that the enlightened French visitor (1830s), Alexis de Tocqueville, in whose nation freedom and religion pursued opposite courses, was amazed to find that, in America, they were “intimately united.” Tocqueville saw “Christianity

presented not as a totalitarian society but as an unlimited society.” Rather than separating religion and state, Americans regarded Christianity as “indispensable to the maintenance of republican institutions.”

Nevertheless, Johnson observes that from the 1960s, the historic role of religion in America was obscured and downplayed. As in Europe, religion in America was increasingly viewed as an enemy of progress. Authorities, particularly the Supreme Court, worked mightily to reduce the role of religion in the affairs of state. At the same time, from 1960-90, while the U.S. population rose only by 41%, there was a 560% increase in violent crime, 200% in teenage suicide, 200% in divorce, over a 400% rise in illegitimate births, and a 300% rise in children living in single-parent homes.

Bringing Luxury to the Masses

Another lesson and much nostalgia is found not just in the blessings resulting from faith in and obedience to God, but in the great material progress resulting from a nation that coveted liberty under law and looked not to civil government for sustenance, but to God. Johnson states that “exactly 300 years after John Winthrop’s fleet anchored” (1630), America was producing, with only 6% of the world’s population and land area, 70% of its oil, nearly 50% of its copper, 38% of its lead, 42% each of its zinc and coal, 46% of its iron, 54% of its cotton and 62% of it corn—all with only minimal government regulation.

In a section entitled “Did the Robber Barons Really Exist?,” Johnson acknowledges that in the nineteenth century some of these men sometimes ran afoul of the law, particularly when they saw it as monopolistic, but because of them and their “unimaginable freedom to build and serve the public,” Americans enjoyed the largest and most modern railroad system in the world. Their innovations brought to railways comfort, modernization, safety, speed and drastically cut freight rates—a vital factor in the nation’s huge industrial expansion.

One business giant was Andrew Carnegie, who cut the price of steel rails from \$160 a ton to \$17. This produced enormous savings in every aspect of the economy “with consequential benefit to the public.” He sold his steel company for the unprecedented sum of \$447 million at a time when most forms of taxing wealth, like the capital gains and income taxes, did not exist. Carnegie, who has been unjustly called greedy, generously used his enormous wealth to support education, science, and the humanities, as well as for 2,811 free public libraries, 7,689 church organs, etc. By the time he died at 84, he had disposed of virtually everything he possessed. Thus, Johnson saw

Carnegie as “a more important man than any President from Lincoln to Theodore Roosevelt.”

The famed financial tycoon, J. Pierpont Morgan, is described by Johnson as in “no sense a robber baron,” but was, in fact, a devout Christian, who became an unofficial arbiter of behavior and standards in his day. Morgan also saved the country from several financial catastrophies by preventing a significant financial downturn from developing into a disastrous depression and intervened to enable the army’s payrolls to be met. At President Grover Cleveland’s request, he single-handedly stemmed the gold outflow from the United States.

Another creative man who took advantage of the great opportunities offered by nineteenth century America was Richard W. Sears (of Sears, Roebuck fame), who, through his mail order business, was, by relentless pressure on manufacturers, selling sewing machines in 1897 for less than \$15.56, or three to six times lower than they could be bought in retail shops. He caused pandemonium by reducing the price to \$3.05 in the same year. Sears extended the same principle to bicycles, baby-carriages, buggies, harnesses, wagons, stoves, cream-separators, and many other items.

These and other men, unshackled by government, literally brought luxury to the masses. Thus, Johnson asserts that “America had been founded by adventurers and preachers, and transformed into a republic by gentleman-politicians, but it was businessmen who made it, and its people rich.” Americans were, he said, in the latter 1870s, conscious that they were “the proud inhabitants of the world’s wealthiest country, enjoying living standards unprecedented in the history of humanity.”

Liberty, Property, Coca-Cola, and Jazz

A third vital lesson that modern America has forgotten is the vital relationship between liberty and property. Reflecting a consensus of the Founding Fathers, who required possession of real property as a pre-requisite to voting, John Adams said: “Property must be secured, or liberty cannot exist.” Property ownership was considered so vital to the development of the country that the government (unlike today’s land-grabbing bureaucrats) was doing its best to insure that everyone (that is, *humans*) had some and virtually gave land away.

For example, under the 1862 Homestead Act, a farmer could buy 160 acres of surveyed land for \$1.50 per acre after six months’ use, or for nothing after 5 years’ residence. By 1909, this was raised to 640 acres and the time reduced to 3 years. Johnson writes: “Never in human history, before or since, has authority gone to such lengths to help the common people to become landowners.”

Johnson includes many little known facts and anecdotes about America. For example, to combat hard liquor’s evils, *Coca-Cola*, with a Calvinistic sales approach, became “The Great National Temperance Drink.” Its

creator sold his interest for \$283.29—“the biggest steal since the Dutch bought Manhattan.” “Jazz,” “eagle-rocking,” and “boogie-woogie” were black terms for sexual intercourse. The famed architect Frank Lloyd Wright testified in a trial that he was “the greatest architect in the world.” When his wife told him modesty would have been more effective, Wright replied: “You forget, Olgivanna, that I was under oath.”

Exposing Other Liberal Myths

Johnson exposes decades of other liberal myth-making. For example:

- The Founding Fathers, who established a republic, hated democracy.
- To the Founding Fathers the Indians were not “noble savages” as they are to so many modern liberals. George Washington disliked the Indians and regarded them as volatile, untrustworthy, cruel, improvident, stalkless, and in every way undependable. He shared with every Founding Father a conviction that the interest of the Indians must not be allowed to stand in the way of America’s development or its citizens’ safety. They did both, and murdered many whites including children “who were seized by the legs and killed by battering their heads.” Women were scalped and those who were pregnant were opened while alive and the embryo infants let out of the womb.
- The Founding Fathers would have been opposed to the virtual unlimited immigration we now have. Emphasizing the special Anglo-American relationship, Benjamin Franklin was opposed to the “prospect of the Englishness of America being watered down by new, non-English and non-white arrivals.” He feared a future world in which the white races, and especially the English, would be swamped. Neither Washington or Jefferson wanted unlimited or even large-scale immigration.
- A secular saint of the liberals, the poet Walt Whitman, a homosexual, was the first American poet to make a virtue of obscenity.
- Harriet Beecher Stowe’s pre-Civil War novel, *Uncle Tom’s Cabin*, has become in the 20th century the foundation stone of anti-Americanism.
- For 40 years, during which movie-making became a hugely successful industry, Hollywood had a “moral code,” now ridiculed by liberals and called “censorship,” prohibiting justification of adultery and fornication, nudity, denigration of clergy, and putting crime in a favorable light.
- Woodrow Wilson “first introduced

America to big, benevolent government” and statism.

- The European land that FDR turned over to Stalin at the end of World War II (resulting in the Soviet occupation of much of Europe and the enslavement of millions) was not FDR’s to give.

- The shameless coverup and promotion of John F. Kennedy was “one of the biggest frauds in American political history.” The “laws of God and the republic, admirable in themselves, did not apply to the Kennedys.” JFK’s continuing health problems and repeated sexual dalliances were constantly covered up by a knowing liberal press. He shared a mistress with a notorious gangster. Both his college thesis, *Why England Slept*, for which he graduated *cum laude*, and *Profies in Courage*, for which he won a Pulitzer Prize, were in fact written by others.

- False Consumer Price Index calculations were responsible for a large percentage of the budget deficit for which President Ronald Reagan was wrongly blamed. Corrections show that solid growth in national wealth, wage rates, and family incomes, was achieved under Reagan.

Great Character Studies

Despite his overall great work, Johnson erroneously assumes the Enlightenment greatly influenced America’s founding¹ and that Washington and Franklin were probably and possibly Deists respectively.² Washington is, however, praised as a great leader and Johnson underscores the timeless vision of his *Farewell Address* in which, *inter alia*, Washington stressed the necessity of maintaining the integrity of oaths in courts of justice—a matter of too little concern to President Bill Clinton.

The account of Andrew Jackson’s military and political careers is fascinating reading. Johnson describes Jackson as one of those self-confident, strong-willed people who are not in the least disturbed if the overwhelming majority of “expert opinion” is opposed to their own deep-felt, instinctive convictions. Johnson is critical of Thomas Jefferson’s “ambivalent rule and character,” pointing out that Jefferson, a strict Constitutionalist, in the purchase of Louisiana, dismissed the Constitution’s provisions as “metaphysical subtleties.”

Abraham Lincoln, whom Johnson describes as “a kind of moral genius,” is praised (while overlooking his abuses of power) for his strong Civil War leadership and for ultimately seeking God’s guidance in his war decisions. Calvin Coolidge, whom Johnson describes as “like the great Queen Elizabeth I . . . (he) was a supreme exponent of masterly inactivity,” is given high marks. So too was Harry Truman whose principles, Johnson says, were based on the Bible.

Economic Disaster and the New Deal

Johnson contends that, had the U.S. government adhered to the non-interventionist policies of Presidents Warren Harding and Coolidge, the Great Depression might well have been averted. In July, 1921, one of the sharpest recessions in American history was over and the economy was again booming. The Harding Administration had done nothing except cut government expenditures by 40% to bring under control the spending of the monster state that had emerged under Wilson. Wages were allowed to fall to their natural level.

Johnson says the Great Depression occurred because bankers, Wall Street experts, and academic economists did not understand the system they had been so confidently manipulating. They had tried to substitute their own well-meaning policies for what Adam Smith called “the invisible hand” of the market and it had wrought disaster. “By allowing the Depression to let rip,” Johnson says, “unsound businesses would quickly have been bankrupted and the sound would have survived.” The federal intervention of Presidents Herbert Hoover and Franklin Roosevelt prolonged the Depression, which Johnson shows did not end until World War II started.

A member of FDR’s brain trust said “the whole New Deal was extrapolated from programs that Hoover started.” H. L. Mencken, a New Deal opponent, said it was a “political racket,” a “series of stupendous bogus miracles,” with “constant appeals to class envy and hatred,” treating government as “a milch-cow with 125 million teats.” The War rescued the New Deal from oblivion.

McCarthy and Communism

It is one of the cruel absurdities of American history that Senator Joseph R. McCarthy, who fought courageously to expose the Communist menace in American government, has been slandered by liberals as much more of a traitor to America than the Communists he helped expose. Regrettably, Johnson uncharacteristically joins in by asserting that “the only consequence of [McCarthy’s] activities was to cause trouble and distress for a lot of innocent people. . . .” On the contrary, James J. Drummey has shown that this is not true.³

For example, of the 110 names McCarthy gave to the Tydings Committee, 62 were State Department employees. Proceedings were started against 49. Eventually 81 left government due to dismissal or resignation. Actually, McCarthy only scratched the surface. In 1953, the Senate Internal Security Subcommittee reported that Communist penetration of the U. S. Government extended from the lower ranks to the top levels. Nearly 4,000 government employees were dismissed in 1953-54. Drummey says “there were no innocent victims of McCarthyism.”

Nevertheless, McCarthy’s enemies continued their assault on him until the Soviet Union’s collapse brought the unsealing of secret Soviet records which revealed the full extent of the U. S. Communist infiltration. As a

result, the *London Observer* reported a few years ago that "Historians are now facing the unpleasant truth that [McCarthy] was right." Moreover, even liberal *Washington Post* columnist Nicholas von Hoffman acknowledged that McCarthy was "closer to the truth than those who ridiculed him."

The Liberal Elite and Judicial Activism

A surprising contribution is Johnson's discussion of courts wherein he asserts that the Framers adhered to the Blackstonian admonitions that equity was to be used as a corrective only where the law is deficient and that equity without law makes "every judge a legislator." This changed as a result of the "sinister legacy of Gunnar Myrdal," a disciple of Nietzsche. Myrdal wrote *An American Dilemma*, which had a profound impact on the liberal intelligentsia. He advanced the notion that "the masses are impervious to rational argument" and that the enlightened elite must make equitable decisions on their behalf for their own good. Supreme Court Justices became enamored with Myrdal's approach, which hastened *Brown v. Board of Education* and the advent of judicial activism.

A History of the American People is one of those books the reader will wish did not end. It is a feast for those who love America and an educational exposé for those brainwashed by liberal myth-making. It could have been entitled, "*The America We Lost, But Must Regain.*"

¹ R. J. Rushdoony has shown that an American Enlightenment is a myth and that America's "essential waywardness must be

read in terms of Arminianism, not in terms of the Enlightenment or its subsequent developments," Rushdoony, "The Myth of An American Enlightenment," *The Journal of Christian Reconstruction*, Vol. III, Summer, 1976, No. 1, 69, 71.

² In claiming that Washington "was probably a Deist," Johnson fails to point out that Washington had referred to Jesus Christ as the "Divine Author of our Blessed religion," John Eidsmoe, *Christianity and the Constitution: The Faith of Our Founding Fathers*, (Grand Rapids, MI [1987]), 138. Washington told the Delaware Indian Chiefs: "You do well to wish to learn about our arts and ways of life, and above all the religion of Jesus Christ," Washington, "Address to Delaware Chiefs," *The Writings of George Washington from the Original Manuscript Sources: 1749-1799*, ed. John C. Fitzpatrick (Washington DC, 1936), 15:55. Harvard historian Perry Miller, an atheist, said "Deism is an exotic plant that never struck roots in American soil." Miller, *Nature's Nation*, (Cambridge, MA, 1967), 110. Franklin, while possibly a Deist when young, very undeistically told the Constitutional Convention that "God governs in the affairs of men."

³ James J. Drummey, "The Real McCarthy Record," *The New American*, May 11, 1987; See also William F. Buckley and Brent Bozell, *McCarthy and His Enemies* (Chicago, IL, 1995).

Bill Graves is married and has six children. He is a lawyer and a member of the Oklahoma Legislature. He is in the general practice of law in Oklahoma City and also handles constitutional cases. He is the author of Oklahoma's voluntary school prayer law which he successfully defended as a lawyer in federal court.

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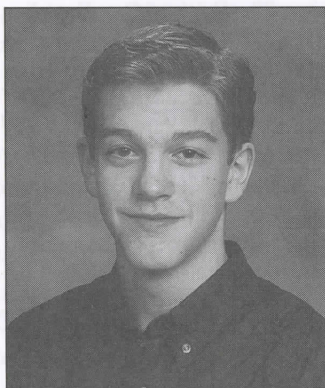
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The Imps of Sin

By Ben Casbon



Everything reacts. Only some things *act*. In the modern day world, as a whole, Christians react. We never seem to be the first to do anything. We are cudgeled by the state to stay within our homes, and discouraged from practicing our beliefs in public. We remain small and in partial control of

our own homes, churches, and lives, but nothing more. We pay rent on our land and interest on our wages. So, what good is the church doing? Not much. It can do marvelous things, though.

Picture a sleeping giant, if you will. His eyes have long been shut, his heart beats rhythmically, and his chest heaves with every breath. A race of evil imps have tied him with several thousand strings to the ground. Every now and then, when they prick him accidentally with their sewing needles, they cause him to stir ever so slightly, ruining hours of past work. After he settles, they bind him again. Suddenly out of the clear blue skies, a pin appears and jabs itself into the giant's lower regions. The giant sits bolt upright flinging little imps high into the atmosphere. He roars in pain. He rises, snapping all threads and crushing legions of imps underfoot. Once freed, the giant continues to hunt the devious imps until he has completely eliminated them, while building a magnificent fortress out of solid stone from which he rules the imp-less land.

Such is the duty of the church. God has made it a giant. A cruise missile in the stone age. Yet, after it accomplishes great things, it lies down for a nap. This isn't the first nap it's taken, and it probably won't be the last. Nevertheless, it needs to wake up and crush the imps. The imps represent the cunning crafty midgets such as the corrupt state and the immoral majority. As the church slumbers, the imps attempt to tie it down with foul lies, deceptions, and sin. Every now and then there is a major tie-down such as *Roe vs. Wade*. But statistics say that fewer and fewer women think that it is acceptable to destroy unborn children. The giant stirreth.

It's quite easy to say "wake up!" to the church. I just did it. But how does it work?

The pin from heaven. God wakes the church with His thundering Word. When He determines that the giant

shall wake; it shall wake. Does this then mean that we should sleep also? Certainly not. Wake! God tells us. Work! God tells us. Live! God tells us. If it is a command from God, who are we to disobey? Do we continue in our slumber, or do we pray for the divine pin?

After he is awakened, the giant gets to work exterminating the imps. In the past it has achieved great feats of extermination: for instance, the rapid spread of the gospel in the early church, or the Reformation of the church in the sixteenth century. We don't have the power in and of ourselves to crush the little imps. God gave it to us. He commissioned the church, "Go ye therefore and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and lo, I am with you always even unto the end of the world. Amen" (*Mt. 28:19,20*). So, in truth, we are endowed with the power of God.

We must build also. The crushing will stop. But the building will continue. The church has been endowed with the power of God to build; to make great towers of faith that will bring people from far and wide. To fulfill the dominion calling, we must build upon the castle of God, which is the church. A castle is not simply for defensive purposes. In Europe, tours are given of the castles of the past because their architecture, tapestries, and furnishings are spectacular. Let us furnish the house of God with the wonderful decoration of believers.

Christ had words for the luke-warm, sleeping church. They are found in Revelation 3:14-19. He is not in favor of simply holding on to the past works of the church; He wants to conquer the world. By our lives, by our actions, by our praise and worship to God, we are to evangelize and proclaim the word of the gospel even unto the ends of the earth. Wake the giant, ignite the lukewarm church, and crush the imps of sin!

Ben Casbon is a 14-year-old home schooled student. He lives with his parents and three siblings in beautiful Benton City, Washington. At the age of 16 he plans to attend Columbia Basin College as a stepping stone to his yet undecided career. He attends the Orthodox Christian Reformed Church of Sunnyside, Washington. He enjoys arguing points of doctrine with other believers on the internet and playing acoustic guitar. He participates in Kempo Karate where he has reached the rank of 3rd degree brown belt. His e-mail address is Ben_Skywalker@yahoo.com.

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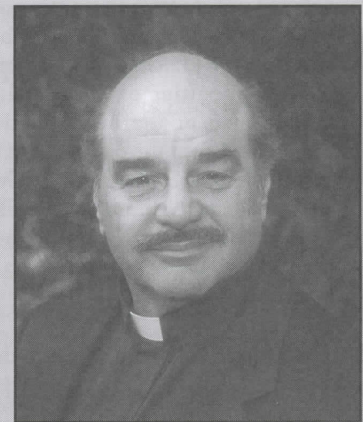
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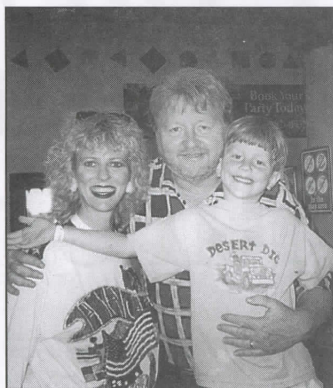
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Pass the Salt, Please!

By Mrs. Colonel (Miriam) Doner

“... in her tongue is the law of kindness.”

(Pr. 31:26)



Scripture says we are to be as “salt.” Salt is something that lends seasoning, tang, or piquancy (pleasantly sharp, stimulating, provocative or biting); salt is a preservative and if salt has lost its savor, what good is it?

Let’s consider a few Scriptures and see if we might find some salt:

Proverbs 31:26: “She openeth her mouth with wisdom; and in her tongue is the law of kindness.”

1 Peter 3:4: “Likewise, Ye wives, be in subjection to your own husbands; that, if any obey not the word, they also may without the word be won by the conversation of the wives; *While they behold your chaste conversation coupled with fear.* Whose adorning let it not be that outward adorning of plaiting of hair, and of wearing of gold, or of putting on of apparel; But let it be the hidden man of the heart, in that which is not corruptible, even the ornament of a meek and quiet spirit, which is in the sight of God of great price. For after this manner in the old time the holy women also, who trusted in God, adorned themselves, being in subjection unto their own husbands.”

I have always been fascinated that the word “law” is inserted in this particular verse in Proverbs 31. In verses 10-31 of this great chapter of Proverbs given to Lemuel by his queenly mother, we find descriptions of an incredible (almost unbelievable) super-woman. I appreciate the powerful emphasis on “kindness.” This woman rises early, but not according to the “law of early rising.” “Her lamp does not go out at night,” but not according to the “law of working into the night.” When we read that her speech is controlled by “the law of kindness,” the great distinction of rules of conduct appears, emphasizing how important this attribute and character quality is in a virtuous woman. Of all her godly duties and responsibilities, she is enjoined by “law” to have kindness upon her tongue. God’s law-word has so captivated her that she is legally bound to have kindness present in all her words, gulp.

But, how on earth can she do this? We know that no amount of *human* will power can “relieve” our fallen state. Try going on a diet; the statistics show that you might lose a few pounds, only to gain back those pounds and more! Only God can help us; only dwelling in His Word richly can restore and renew our minds. To keep this law, we must abide in Him; otherwise it is humanly impossible.

A few years ago, before I had met Sharon Sandlin (Rev. Andrew Sandlin’s wife), I had the occasion to take the Sandlin’s five children and a few other children up to the snow to play for the day. Simply for the fun of it, I asked the Sandlin kids what their mother was like. It was memorable to me that Glory and Peace (their daughters) spoke up immediately, without any hesitation, and said, “She is very kind.” Now that’s a recommendation I want on my “spiritual” resume. You may be able to fool some of the people some of the time, but you can’t fool your family. Coming from those who know you best, those are incredible, powerful, outstanding credentials! Would my family say the *law* of kindness is on my tongue? Would your family say you definitely keep the *law* of kindness faithfully?

So, how on earth can we possibly maintain this supernatural law in our fallen state?

Matthew 12:33-37: “Either make the tree good, and his fruit good; or else make the tree corrupt, and his fruit corrupt: for the tree is known by his fruit. O generation of vipers, how can ye, being evil, speak good things? *For out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh.* A good man out of the good treasure of the heart bringeth forth good things: and an evil man out of the evil treasure bringeth forth evil things. But I say unto you, That every idle word that men shall speak, they shall give account thereof in the day of judgment. For by thy words thou shalt be justified, and by thy words thou shalt be condemned.”

We must have the Word of God dwelling in us richly, daily, often! Then, out of His Word hidden in our hearts, our mouths may speak kindly.

Why is it so important that a woman’s tongue be controlled by the “law of kindness”? More than anyone else, the woman “sets the tone” in the home. She is the “keeper at home” and she is vice-regent with the delegated responsibility for home management. Have you ever gone into a store at the mall, only to be so appalled at the horrible music and environment that you walked out? I have! *Proverbs 17:1* tells us what sort of an

environment is good to have in our homes: "Better is a dry morsel with quietness, than a house full of feasting with strife." *Proverbs 16:21-22* says: "The wise in heart shall be called prudent: and the sweetness of the lips increaseth learning. Understanding is a wellspring of life unto him that hath it: but the instruction of fools is folly. The heart of the wise teacheth his mouth, and addeth learning to his lips. Pleasant words are as an honeycomb sweet to the soul, and health to the bones." *Proverbs 21:19* teaches: "It is better to dwell in the wilderness, than with a contentious [always ready to argue, quarrelsome] and an angry woman." Yikes, that verse has always scared me with its directness. If you want to find God's guidelines for a successful woman, read *Proverbs 11:16*: "A gracious woman retaineth honour."

For today, let me write God's law upon my heart and upon my lips, and may my tongue be absolutely controlled by God's liberating Word, which encourages me to open my mouth only with kindness—which is not just a suggestion according to *Proverbs 31*, *it's the law*. "I" will

watch over my heart with all diligence, meditating, and focusing on God's Word, so that He can cleanse me from all unrighteousness. This is a super-human feat to speak only with the "law of kindness. I need to be the first listener, listening objectively to my own words, asking myself, "is my conversation chaste (virtuous, pure, decent, restrained, modest), coupled with the absolute fear of God?"

Miriam N. Doner is the wife of Colonel V. Doner and the mother of C.J. Doner. Her goal, priority, joy, and mission in life come from serving in these two capacities. She graduated from the University of South Alabama with a Bachelor of Science in Sociology/Anthropology. She has served in Christian ministries for more than twenty years. Colonel Doner is the chairman of Children's Hunger Relief Fund and Miriam helps him as he provides for the needs of hundreds and thousands of orphans and needy worldwide. She invites you to reach her at samaritan-group@mindspring.com.

Letter to the Editor

I wanted to personally thank you for the wonderful article about Nicaragua in the January, 1999, *Chalcedon Report*. Wow! It was a real blessing to me to see pictures of our ministry in your magazine. Every month I read your magazine and enjoy it greatly. We are so proud to be featured this past year.

The article has really been a blessing to encourage people to continue to give and support the continuing relief efforts that are going on. Your writings really explained the situation here and what happened. The woman in the photo on page 22, bottom left, will soon

receive a home that was built by donations. Many of the refugees in our center have become Christians and are now walking with God!

I know God loves Nicaragua and your ministry and prayers have been a part of His love over us. Thank you so much for your support and I encourage all of you to press onward to the high calling of God, which is in Jesus Christ!

*Mario Aviles, Director
Funad*

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Random Notes, 85

By R. J. Rushdoony

1. Yesterday, Mark got a new book, which I promptly borrowed, John McCabe's *Laurel and Hardy* (1975, 1996). It is hard at this late date to appreciate how much Laurel and Hardy meant to people during the depression years. Economically, times were very hard. I remember my cousins and I picking Malaga grapes for my uncle in the early 1930s. Ten years earlier, they sold at \$100 a ton, fresh; now only the winery would buy them, at \$1 a ton. For most, it was a time of shattered economic hopes.

Laurel's and Hardy's humor touched a very responsive chord. They poked fun at themselves, their hopes, and their unrealistic dreams, and audiences laughed at themselves when they laughed at Laurel and Hardy. I remember farmers who rarely attended a movie, *i.e.*, once in a few years, who saw Laurel and Hardy films with delight.

Humor has changed since then. It has become ugly; it means putting down others, often viciously. Don Rickles is clear evidence of this. The kindly innocence of Laurel's and Hardy's humor does not command our time. I missed most of the Laurel and Hardy films, but I recall with pleasure those I saw.

2. I am sorry to see in recent years the decline in *dining*, which has been replaced by eating. It was once common for breakfast, lunch, or at least dinner to be marked by Bible reading and prayer, and, at times, a discussion of the text and of a Christian and world and life view. In some cases, a particular Bible was always near the table for these. In some families, the children were asked at times to do the reading; they might then be quizzed on the meaning of the text (to prevent daydreaming during the reading).

3. We think of bull-fighting as a part of the Hispanic world, but about 50 miles from here, in the valley, at Escalon, there is a bull ring, which is legal if the bull is not hurt or killed. It is a game of skill, of taunting a bull without getting hurt or killed, but the bull cannot be hurt without breaking the law. It is not illegal if the matador is injured! He risks death each time. We are more protective of the bull than of the matador!

4. When we began the *Chalcedon Report*, we were

resolved that it would be theological, Biblical, and concerned with serious subjects. We deliberately excluded reports on church meetings, men's and women's groups, births, deaths, etc. Lately, minor exceptions have occurred, but our basic premise remains the same.

5. One of the saddest things of our day is the decline in daily Bible reading. Nothing contributes more to our strength than the knowledge of God's Word.

6. At 83, I think much of the past and of the future, of the changes and challenges of the years. I began life in a rural, horse-and-buggy context. In my early grades, there was always a boy with a broken arm, either from a horse kicking when being harnessed, or from a crank on the Model T Ford kicking when trying to start the car. This reminds me of the difference between boys now and then. In high school, one classmate had run the family farm since age ten and his father's death. Another not only did the same but put his three younger brothers through school before going to the university to become a dentist.

When I reached the fourth grade, we moved to Detroit, Michigan, where my father took a pastorate. It was a very strange world. The most frequent question asked of me in school was whether or not in California we had ever suffered an Indian attack!

I was about five when my cousin Ed and I first went fishing in the Kings River. How many parents would allow a five-year old to fish in a river without supervision? We were then far older at five and seven than boys are now. Maturity then came much earlier than now. In an urban context, I became more a child than I had been on the farm.

Now maturity is deferred even by older and married people, because perpetual youth seems to be the goal. Too many adults lack only diapers to match their childishness. Early in the 1970s, I wrote of the absurdity of a woman in her early 80s wearing a bikini, and I was strongly rebuked by several readers. In the late 70s, I referred again to that incident and received a rebuke from a man of some note! He held that it was both a virtue and a right to try to remain young.

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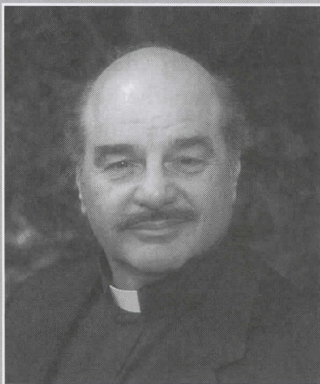
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Reverend Ellsworth McIntyre describes this ministry in detail in his book *How to Become a Millionaire in Christian Education*. You may order this paperback book for only \$10.00 plus \$2.00 (USA) shipping from Nicene Press, 4405 Outer Dr., Naples, FL 34112. Please contact Grace Community School for more information on Rev. McIntyre's apprenticeship program.



Ellsworth McIntyre

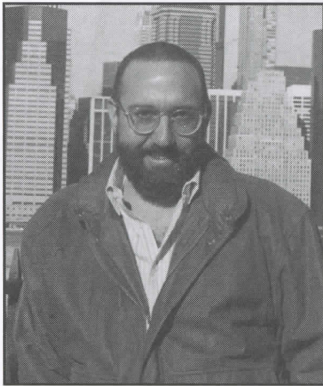
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All I Really Need to Know About Worship . . . I Don't Learn from the Regulative Principle

(Part VI)

By Rev. Steve M. Schlissel

Architecture Mirrors Doctrine



For good or ill, for about the last 14 years, Messiah's Congregation has been worshipping in facilities rented from an Episcopal church.¹ Like virtually all "high" churches, its doctrine is immediately evident in its architecture. About half of the sanctuary is taken up by an "altar" area where the

critical drama for high-Episcopalians occurs. A notice is hung at the entrance that the body of Christ (so they say) is in the bread at the altar, therefore "the faithful" ought to genuflect upon entering.² There are Stations of the Cross, candles, crosses, and kneeling benches in the pews. The pulpit is stage-right.

The problem, though, is *not* the church's architecture. Rather, it's the church's erroneous *set of beliefs* which compels it to build church facilities this way. The architecture of the church is merely following its belief system. The form of their building is informed by their form of worship which is informed by their doctrine. The buck stops there.

Our high church friends fail to comprehend the full implications of Christ's work. Specifically, high-churchers fail to see, first, our Savior's work as the terminus of the Tabernacle/Temple system. They seek to maintain, *mutatis mutandis*, the offering system of the Old administration.³ They believe they need to offer Christ again and again on an altar. To this they add a second error: that for this to happen efficaciously they need a priestly caste.

These two errors replace 1) the Biblical teaching of Christ's once-for-all, sufficient work, and 2) the Biblical treasure which tells us of our right to full, unfettered access to this Christ by faith, apart from earthly mediation.

The *architecture* of high churches, then, is not the problem. It is their *doctrine*. To realize my dream of tearing down their "altar" (thus accommodating more

living altars, AKA worshippers) requires only the tearing down of their erroneous doctrine. Like night follows day, church architecture follows church doctrine. They'll change their architecture when they change their doctrine.

So, too, will many worship errors evaporate as people are instructed in the sound, 200-proof truth of the Reformed Faith. Our response to high church excesses should less often be, "You're not allowed to!" than, "Why would you *want* to? After all, 'Jesus Christ the same yesterday, and today, and forever. Be not carried about with divers and strange doctrines. For it is a good thing that the heart be established with grace; not with meats, which have not profited them that have been occupied therein. We have an altar, whereof they have no right to eat which serve the tabernacle.'"

Similarly, our response to the silly "worship" of evangelicaldom must avoid treating it as an abstraction, as a thing in itself. Rather, it is the result of theology gone awry—or simply left undone.⁴ What should bother us is the modern indifference to the fear of the Lord, which is the beginning of worship as well as of wisdom. What these churches need so desperately is not the RPW, but a proper vision (so to speak) of God, and of what He has accomplished—yes, accomplished—in Christ!

Worship Mirrors Doctrine

That doctrine is the principal thing in the foundation of worship ought not to surprise us. You will recall that Tabernacle/Temple worship was strictly regulated because Christ was therein being revealed. When our Lord had completed His earthly work, that strictness was immediately, without a beat skipped, transferred to the guardianship of the gospel. New Testament anathemas are pronounced on deviant *teachers*, not errant worshippers. The relationship between doctrine and life is revealed in the "architecture" of several Pauline letters: First, what God has done in Christ; then, what we should be and do in response. Christians, above all peoples on earth, must be aware that ideas and beliefs have consequences. Trusting you already hold this as a presupposition, I'll not labor to prove it. I'll only remind you that the weeds of errant doctrines will inevitably appear in worship. Therefore, those concerned with reforming worship must first concern themselves with reforming doctrine.

Errant doctrines of God, of Scripture, of the Spirit's

work, of the *ordo salutis*, of *worship*⁵— errors concerning these and many doctrines beside will leave a deeper impact on worship than the presence or absence of the RPW.

*Like night follows day,
church architecture follows
church doctrine. They'll
change their architecture
when they change their
doctrine.*

Thus, the best way to help God's people worship Him acceptably is to help them see more clearly just who He is!⁶ Knowing God and His *grace* will have a profounder influence on the texture and details of worship than perhaps any other single factor. As St. Paul said, "*Therefore, since we are receiving a kingdom which cannot be shaken, let us have grace, by which we may serve God acceptably with reverence and godly fear. For our God is a consuming fire.*"

The Synagogue

Informed worship is doctrinally driven, and it is . . . Word centered. This, as you might have guessed, is a pretty big chunk of the IPW, for it is here that much of it comes together. Therefore we'll have to divide the subject.

A) To begin, informed worship is Word-centered because it self-consciously follows the synagogue pattern endorsed by our Lord and His apostles.⁷ As to the place of the Word in this venerable institution, J. Julius Scott, Jr. says succinctly and well:

The synagogue was first and foremost a place for reading of Scripture and for prayer . . . Intertestamental Judaism expected everyone to be thoroughly familiar with [God's Law] as a basis for life. It was the synagogue, with its regular reading and interpretation of the Law and the Prophets, and with its schools for the young, that wove the Scriptures into the fabric of life and experience of the people. There were no altars nor sacrifices in the synagogue; instead only the sacred books (scrolls) were absolutely necessary.⁸

Just as Moses had been "preached in every city from the earliest times" and was made known by being "read in the synagogues on every Sabbath,"⁹ so Christ was to be made known in the very same way: decentralized synagogues of Christ would be planted around the earth, connected to one another *and the heavenly Temple* by the Spirit.

Whatever the relation between Temple and synagogue—and we certainly recognize a relationship—they remained quite distinct institutions. And it was the synagogue which became the model for New Order worship. Some seek to argue against the normativity of the synagogue model for the church¹⁰ by asserting that "the temple rather than the synagogue is the ultimate source of a number of the most important aspects of Christian worship."¹¹ I'm from Missouri. Show me *any* element of early *Biblical* Christian (or current Reformed!) worship which can *ultimately* be traced to the Temple alone—or which came to the church in any way other than *via the synagogue*.

Sermons? Nope. Benedictions? They predate the Temple by at least half a millennium (*Gen. 14*). Corporate prayer? Uh-uh (*Gen. 4*). Singing? Don't be silly (*Ex. 15*). Circumcision was not Temple-dependent. Nor could baptism, as practiced by the Jews, by John, or by Jesus be *ultimately* traced to the Temple.

No, my friends, the above assertion is mere legerdemain. The Temple was not the liturgical mother of the church. Wandering down that avenue will lead you to an Italian address. The distinction of the Temple was this: God there demonstrated that He was to be found among the people who had the atoning blood which He alone could provide. In that sense we agree, all covenant communities are little Temples.

The New Testament Synagogue

But the post-Pentecost churches as organized by the apostles were instructed to do nothing uniquely or exclusively related to Temple worship, except if we include *believing in the Lord Jesus Christ* who had been prefigured there in a thousand ways. Now, however, the knowledge of what He has done is propagated in *none* of those ways. Now it is by preaching and teaching, the very strengths of the synagogue service.

A pre-A.D. 70 inscription found on the Ophel hill in Jerusalem reads in part: "Theodotus . . . built the synagogue for the reading of the law and for the teaching of the commandments. . . ." ¹² Please note that "*Scripture reading was not part of the services in the Temple before the Babylonian exile,*"¹³ while "[T]he primary and seminal element in the synagogue was . . . Scripture reading."¹⁴ It was the elements of the synagogue service, not the Temple, which were appropriated by the early, Biblical Christian church.

A look at Acts 2 and subsequent passages lends zero support to any contention to the contrary. There we read how, "They devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and to the fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer." If we take "[t]he breaking of bread" to be communion, we find its antecedent source not in the Temple but in the Passover, a covenant meal celebrated in covenant homes.¹⁵ The other elements are manifestly synagogal.

Interestingly, though they "continued to meet together

in the temple courts every day," they there engaged in practices which marked synagogue, not Temple, worship. In fact: "It is thought that there was a synagogue *even within the precincts of the Temple.*" Thus, alongside the sacrificial rites of the Temple, "there were arrangements for divine service along the lines of what was done in the synagogue, with prayers and Scripture reading."¹⁶ The apostolic church in Jerusalem, even when gathered in the Temple precincts, also is described as engaged in synagogal and familial rites, not Temple rites.

This is why we might find the Apostle liberally employing Temple terminology as *metaphor*, but never enjoining the practices of the Temple on the church. What we find him *doing* in the churches is straight out of the synagogue: reading Scripture, explaining Scripture, teaching how to apply Scripture, and praying. Consider what Paul does at the gathering of the church in Troas: he teaches until midnight. After Eutychus falls out the window to his death, Paul revives him, brings him back into the gathered assembly, has communion, then teaches until daylight. The Word is central.

Read through the Pastoral Epistles and see how Paul emphasizes *teaching*. The church, like the synagogue, exists as a teaching center. Teaching God's Word is both an act of worship and a demand for worship. Teaching is what *distinguished* the early Christian church (*Ac. 4:18; 5:28; 5:42; 11:26*). Teaching is what *established* each early Christian church (*Ac. 15:35; 20:20; 1 Cor. 4:17; Eph. 4:21-22; Col. 2:7; 1 Tim. 3:2; 4:11; 6:2; 2 Tim. 2:2; Tit. 1:9; etc.*). Teaching is what continues to *identify* each Christian church as Christian!¹⁷ Rushdoony has noted that:

The Old Testament clergy was divided into two classes, priests and Levites. The work of the priests was hieratic, sacrifice and offerings being its essential function. For Christians, this aspect of Old Testament ministry ended with Christ....The function of the Levitical ministry was instruction (*Dt. 33:10*). As a result, education was basic to the life of the synagogue and the Levitical ministry.... Many critical scholars ... assume a rootless church, *i.e.*, a church without the fact of the synagogue and the Levite in the background as its origin... The point is that the church itself in the New Testament was more a school than a temple. The Reformation, and later the Puritans, restored this instructional emphasis to church meetings.¹⁸

And in so doing they were being true to their synagogue roots. The Informed Principle of Worship insists that New Order worship be heavy on instruction.

The Word Comes to Worship

B) By Word-centered, however, we mean more. It is not merely a matter of the church "replacing" the synagogue,¹⁹ but of the clear Word replacing an entire system of approach to God. It is vitally important for us to grasp the way the Word comes to the fore in the New Order.

In the beginning was the Word. The coming of the Word into the world was anticipated in type and shadow. The Word finally became flesh in history. The shadows and types are taken up in Him and their *meaning* is now communicated by the Word. Even the sacraments of baptism and the Lord's Supper are dependent upon the Word of explication, and their efficacy is tied, in all Reformed confessions, to faith in that Word.

In the Scriptures of the New Testament we find the glorious Word *saving* (*Jas. 1:18; 1 Pet. 1:23-25*), *sanctifying* (*Jn. 17:17*), *encouraging* (*Rom. 15:4*), and *establishing* (*Rom. 16:25-26*) the Christian churches, made up of Jew and Gentile.

Since Christ has fulfilled the pre-incarnational Sinaitic order, it is *impossible* to return to that order. Any attempt to return to that hieratic order will necessarily involve pagan or semi-pagan practices. God put an exclamation point after this truth when He allowed the destruction of the earthly Temple.

From Passover (under Moses) until Pentecost (under Christ) God's instructions to Israel about Himself and His covenant included bold graphics, bright colors, and large letters. Since then all eyes are pointed to Christ enthroned, whom we behold by faith.²⁰ This Christ is presented to the conscience by Word, not image!

We declare in the Christian gospel that Christ has accomplished in reality/history what had been before anticipated in type. He has entered the *one perfect place*, wherein are found all *the perfect particulars*, He Himself being both *the perfect offering* and *the perfect priest* (see *Heb. 9:11, 12, 15a; 7:23; 24-28*).

Therefore we are no longer anticipating, no longer waiting: the perfect has come. "He sets aside the first to establish the second" (*Heb. 10:9*). Thus the difference in administration is like that between counting blocks and calculus, between plastic kiddie tools and the tools that built the World Trade Center, between a box of stuffed animals and a Kenyan wildlife preserve. The real thing is here!²¹

This reality is conveyed and appropriated by *words*. This is what distinguishes the mature man from the infant. In teaching children we rely heavily on symbol.²² In teaching adults we rely heavily on words. Words are the things which penetrate the conscience and the heart. Words are what we use to make a direct appeal to a mature man's reason. Words are the true democratizing force behind the gospel, in God's providence. For non-verbal symbols are indirect and not equally accessible by all, while virtually all people rely on verbal communication for nitty-gritty understanding. This is why the apostles urged, appealed, pleaded, reasoned, and explained, and why they didn't dance the message.

The Word vs. Symbol

Rome is looking for God in all the wrong places. In the Romish/High church approach to things, *symbol* remains paramount in their liturgy. Accordingly, their

message is essentially authoritarian (the priest is the real actor while the “audience” is made up of rankless observers), is directed at child-like vassals (not free men), and encourages implicit faith (faith in the clergy rather than faith in Christ). The drama of the Mass, for most of its existence, need not have been in the vernacular because its supposed efficacy was/is not dependent upon any self-conscious understanding on the part of the worshipper. The Word withers where emblems abound. High church worship begins with alleged *mystery* and continues along a path of *allusion* wherein the true God is not directly encountered. Informed worship, on the other hand, begins with a *direct* encounter between God and His people through His own Word, and brings God and His people closer throughout worship by the very same means. It begins and ends with covenant clarity: “I am your God, you are my people.” Amen.

High church worship, by depending upon symbol, mystery and allusion, *hides God* and His Word behind incense, altars, confessionals, pantheons of saints, robes, colors, candles, and magic formulas. It is pure show business, keeping the true God apart from the people. High church worshippers are taught in one thousand gross and subtle ways that the God who created the world *cannot be approached directly*.

Informed worship, following and employing *the Word*, teaches, by its very elements, the very opposite: that “In him and through faith in him we may approach God with freedom and confidence” (*Eph. 3:12*).

Do you see how much the sort of worship the IPW calls for is beginning to resemble RPW-style worship? Yet we’ve gotten here cleanly and straightway without it.

There’s more, but it will have to await the next installment. Perhaps you’ll stay tuned if we whet your appetite by telling you now that among the remaining things we hope to demonstrate is that Scripture, and therefore the IPW, requires worship to be male-led. There are no female pastors any more than there are female fathers. Females might play—or usurp—the role, but that’s a different matter, isn’t it?

(Part VII next month)

¹ It’s a small (about 120 maximum capacity), 110-year-old, very worn, *very* uncomfortable, so-hot-you-faint-in-the-summer, facility. But Teddy Roosevelt worshipped there on occasion, and if it’s good enough for Teddy. . . .

² By that standard, none of us at Messiah’s is faithful.

³ Just as regulativists—rather arbitrarily, I might add—seek to maintain a single, distinguishing feature which governed that system.

⁴ “Church growth principles have intentionally been kept as atheological as possible,” C. Peter Wagner, cited by Martin Murphy in his perceptively titled booklet, “The God of the Church Growth Movement,” probably still available from Greenville Theological Seminary. Call them at (864)322-2717. They’re good folks.

⁵ Sadly, many Christians could not offer a coherent definition

of what worship is or what should take place in a worship service. We would say that worship is the fitting response of God’s people to His self-revelation in the written and incarnate Word.

⁶ In the same booklet cited above, Mr. Murphy notes, “The *more* room we give modernity, the *less* room we give the true and living God. The church growth movement openly admits to embrac[ing] the children of modernity” while “remov[ing] themselves from doctrine and theology” (29).

⁷ Forgive this very lengthy endnote, but I thought some might find it helpful to review this material which first appeared in our series on church government: It is strange to be in a position of having to prove to Presbyterians the proposition that the church in the New Testament is built upon the synagogue model, seeing that this fact is ordinarily employed by them as a justification for their system of government! In 1873, Dr. Marcus Dods wrote a book entitled, *Presbyterianism Older than Christianity*, by which he meant that the synagogue system (which he regarded as identical to Presbyterianism) predated the New Testament. Rev. John MacPherson, in his excellent handbook, *Presbyterianism*, writes, “In general, the Christian forms of worship were modeled on those of the Jewish synagogue, and so where any customs in worship or office in the Christian church are spoken of without explanation, we may reasonably look to the arrangements of the synagogue for enlightenment.” And Dr. D. Douglas Bannerman, in the book most commonly received by Presbyterians as the standard work on the subject, *The Scripture Doctrine of the Church*, devotes considerable space to the establishment of the fact that New Testament church organization and worship is predicated upon the synagogue model. He, too, equates Presbyterianism with the synagogue form, and acclaims the latter as the providentially ordained mechanism by which the true religion was sustained in the world: “It was by this Presbyterian organization, on a broad and popular basis, which united strength with elasticity and capability for adaptation to varied circumstances, that the Diaspora were enabled to hold their ground everywhere throughout the Empire in the face of general dislike and frequent persecution. But in its worship and polity the Hebrew Christian Church [read: New Testament Church] was conformed in all essential respects to the model of the Hebrew synagogue.” This holds true, insists Bannerman, in regard to its worship, and “unmistakably with regard to its organization. The form of polity which had been universally established for centuries in the Jewish Church . . . was ‘simply accepted and perpetuated by the apostles.’” In this last clause the writer is quoting Dr. Marcus Dods, from the book noted above. We will conclude this section (explaining why we feel so strange in defending the synagogue model of church government to self-described Presbyterians) with the Dods quote in its original context: “This, then, is the reason you do not find distinct traces in the New Testament of the creation of the Presbyterian form of Church government. The apostles could not create what had been in use some hundreds of years before they were born. They themselves were all of them Presbyterians before they were Christians. And these are the two facts, the knowledge of which makes us intelligent Presbyterians: First, that the form of government in the Church before Christ came was Presbyterian; and secondly, that this form of government was not abolished or altered, but simply accepted and perpetuated by the apostles. It was extended to all groups of people who received Christ.” (Extended, I must add, with the same features extolled by Bannerman: a solid core with a flexible, elastic, and adaptable exterior.)

⁸ *Customs and Controversies: Intertestamental Jewish Backgrounds of the New Testament* (Baker, 1995).

⁹ Ac. 15:21.

¹⁰ One can't help wonder if their difficulty might not be traced to the fact that, "While the Temple was controlled by the priests, the synagogue was basically a lay institution." Julius, 142.

¹¹ Bushell in his, *The Songs of Zion*.

¹² Julius, 140. Also mentioned in the inscription was hospitality as a primary synagogue function: it was to serve as a "guest house [with] rooms and supplies of water as an inn for those who are in need when coming from abroad." See *3 Jn. 5-8*, also *Rom. 12:13; 16:23; 1 Pet. 4:9*. These passages are more significant when it is kept in mind that the early churches met in homes.

¹³ *The Jewish People in the First Century, Volume Two*, ed. S. Safari and M. Stern (Amsterdam, 1976).

¹⁴ *ibid.*

¹⁵ I am not suggesting that its relation to the Passover exhausts the meaning of the Supper.

¹⁶ *ibid.*

¹⁷ "Nevertheless we believe that it is important to discern with care and prudence which is the true Church, for this title has been much abused. We say, then, according to the Word of

God, that it is the company of the faithful who agree to follow his Word, and the pure religion which it teaches." French Confession, XXVII. Cf. Heidelberg Q&A 22-23.

¹⁸ Chalcedon Position Paper #1.

¹⁹ Rev. 2:9; 3:9.

²⁰ Thus the beautiful instruction from our Form for the Lord's Supper: "That we, then, may be nourished with Christ, the true heavenly bread, let us not cling with our hearts unto the external bread and wine but lift them up on high in heaven, where Christ Jesus is, our Advocate, at the right hand of His heavenly Father, whither also the articles of our Christian faith direct us."

²¹ As it was, by faith, for the Old Order saints!

²² Does this suggest that the Lord's Supper, far from being unfit for covenant children, might be *especially for covenant children*? Don't read too much into this. I'm only asking!

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 25 years, Jeanne, and their five children.

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- September 12 Brian Abshire and Andrew Sandlin lecture, 10:00 a.m. Reformed Heritage Mini-Conference, **Salida, CA**. For more information, contact Brian Abshire (209)544-1572.
- September 17 Andrew Sandlin lectures, Comfort Suites, Denver International Airport, 7:00 p.m., 6210 Tower Road, **Denver, CO**. Direct dial (303)371-9300.
- September 23-25 Andrew Sandlin lectures, **Grand Ledge, MI**. The conference will be held at the Grand Ledge Christian Center. For more information contact Craig Dumont at (800)290-5711 or (517)627-1080.
- October 2 West Coast Reformation Conference, Covenant Reformed Church, **Sacramento, CA**. For more information, call (916)451-1190.
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- October 29-
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- November 5-7 Steve Schlissel lectures, **Texarkana, AR**. For more information, contact Randy Booth (870)775-1170.
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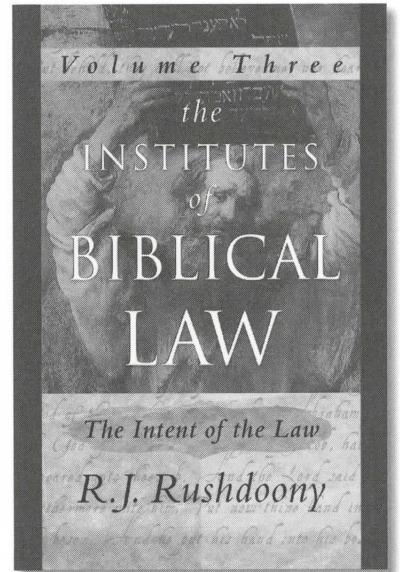
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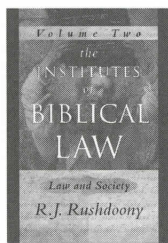
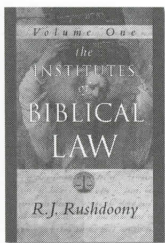
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