

Faith for All of Life
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FAITH FOR ALL OF LIFE

PROCLAIMING THE AUTHORITY OF GOD'S WORD OVER EVERY AREA OF LIFE AND THOUGHT

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How Liberty is a Result of the Gospel

By Mark R. Rushdoony



Despite the multitude of differences in the body of Christ there seems to be a universal agreement that a liberating forgiveness is an essential part of the gospel. The nature of that freedom in contemporary Christianity has tended to emphasize the inward, psychological freedom we have in Christ, but this inward reality is never without an outward manifestation. Forgiveness changes the believer, and his inward regeneration produces an outward dynamic that cannot be limited to the individual.

God's forgiveness is not a change of sentiment or attitude. It is a judicial, a legal, act. It means that God's indictment of man, His judgment of death on him, has been dropped. Man is no longer liable for this death penalty because it was paid in full by Christ on the cross.

Forgiveness by God does not change man's nature, but his relationship to God's justice. He is no longer a condemned man, living on death row. Forgiveness gives man a future orientation, because he is freed from sin and death to a new life.

The unregenerate have no such freedom, because they seek not freedom from sin but in sin. They desire freedom from the consequences of their sin, but not from sin itself. Throughout history, paganism has had little to do with changing the individual or even worshipping a superior being, but rather with satiating the anger of the gods. Sacrifices were typically a bargaining

chip: "I have given you this, please let me go my way unmolested!"

This was the attraction of Baalism to the Hebrews, and why, once they were immersed in it, they could not give it up. The baalim were a multitude of baals, lords or powers that supposedly provided fertility, which was inclusive of all progress, health, prosperity, and success. They were afraid to offend any of the baalim lest they suffer. They also treated Jehovah as one of their baalim, so they went through the motions of the temple rituals and prescribed sacrifices on the assumption that such nominal faithfulness would cause God also to keep them in good favor. Instead of freedom, such superstition kept the Hebrews in bondage to their fears and a multitude of mythological deities whose anger they felt had to be constantly assuaged. Their apostasy caused them to be dominated by fear of these baalim and the demands of their priests.

Forgiveness and Empowerment

God's forgiveness is more than a technical legal status because it always involves regeneration. God displays His power over sin and guilt by empowering our growth in grace. We are thus told to be bold in approaching God (Heb. 10:16–25) because we have been freed from an "evil conscience" (v. 22).

Unresolved guilt is the most debilitating problem of man. Though science after Darwin tried to ignore it, Sigmund Freud addressed it (much to the displeasure of many of his contemporaries). He could not remove it, but at least saw it as so powerful a

reality that he had to try to give it an explanation in terms of an elaborate evolutionary construct.

A man forgiven by God's justice, however, can be bold to approach Him. Such a man can then be bold before men. Boldness before men thus marked the early Christians. They were bold in denying the religious and philosophical traditions of the time and bold in challenging the demands of men and mobs that they keep quiet. The man who knows the justice of God in his own life will not fear the injustice of men.

The Bible, in fact, calls those who are redeemed the just, or the righteous. The two terms are synonymous, as are justice and righteousness. The believer is justified, or declared righteous, by God. Those who know God's justice in their lives, who are in fact called the just of God, will be bold in declaring its freeing power and in opposing any human justice which seeks to replace it with a counterfeit. A man who is bold before God will be bold before men.

Restoration and Liberty

The forgiveness of God is *restorative*. It restores men to communion with their Creator. It restores man to dominion, to the pursuit of his calling in terms of obedience rather than rebellion. He is restored to a life of meaning, purpose, and hope in the Kingdom of God.

The forgiveness of God is also *empowering*. Man finds his true liberty not in the license of sin, but in terms of his created purpose. The internal

spiritual liberty that God's forgiveness provides then creates its manifestation elsewhere. A man liberated by God's regeneration is called a "new creature in Christ" by Paul (2 Cor. 5:17; Gal. 6:15). He is liberated from God's curse into a life of God's grace and joy; he becomes a child of God and a joint heir with Christ. The liberation provided by the blood of Jesus cannot be limited to the inner man. A man freed from prison will not be content to sit on the steps of the jailhouse. He will with joy explore the implications of his freedom.

When man himself is changed by God's power and seeks to exercise this liberty, he must do so within the context of God's moral law. His multitude of activities then creates in every realm the blessings of which the material increase enabled by private property and liberty are but one example. Not only man's wealth then increases, but also justice. This is why the just, or righteous, are called on to not only be righteous themselves, but to *do* righteousness. Material blessings pale before the potential for justice that liberty in the context of God's law can produce.

A Social Order Without Forgiveness

The absence of forgiveness thus has tremendous social implications. If man is not freed from sin and guilt, they can be used against him on the personal, social, and political level. Blackmail is usually only possible where there is guilt and a liability to exposure. Guilt is often used as a tool of manipulation by the state. It invokes what is "good," "fair," and "right" so that all who differ are made to defend what is presumably sinister, unjust, and hateful. Political correctness is a new moral code, one which conveys a pre-determined ethic devoid of Biblical justice.

By speaking in moralistic terms,

men seek to confer sanctity on themselves, one which gives them a higher moral ground. There is nothing more fruitless than talking to a man who assumes he alone thinks and speaks in terms of a high moral ethic because his assumption is you cannot share the high ground without agreeing with him.

Man was created as a moral being, so he has to think in ethical terms. If he rejects God's morality, he may distort it or redefine it entirely, but he must justify some behavior and condemn others. It is built into his being to "justify" some things and condemn others as wrong. Controlled by their guilt, guilty men try to manipulate others by a false guilt. "Conscience does make cowards of us all," said Shakespeare's *Hamlet*, so guilty men are easy victims of what was called "guilt-tripping" in the '60s.

Guilt as a Tool of Control

Ascription of guilt is so easy, many will often accept a judgment of guilt against others without a specific offense. White people can be defined as racist and prejudiced, capitalists as thieves, miners and loggers as abusers of nature, and the morally upright as repressed.

The use of guilt as a means of manipulation ought to be seen as particularly offensive, because Christ came to free men from guilt. The use of false guilt to manipulate Christians works directly contrary to the liberating power of the gospel. The motivation that is to be preached in the church is obedience following repentance and faith, restoration and empowerment, not guilt. Any other behavior done to counter guilt is a form of self-atonement.

The state often does more than just use the language of ethics for its purpose, however. It often promotes immorality in the name of freedom

to distract people from their own enslavement. It encourages a definition of liberty as freedom *from* morality, and classifies sins as human rights. License to sin is defined as the essence of freedom. Such a people then fail to see their enslavement through high taxes, intrusive government, a lower standard of living because of the lower purchasing power of the government's fiat money, and the abridgment of their historic liberties.

A sinful people want sin redefined to their advantage. They want their own inclination called justice and contrary views condemned. A guilty people are also less inclined to judge others, so standards generally decline. "The times we live in" are blamed, but not an immoral people. In such a society criminals will be treated with kid gloves and penalties will be lessened. The result is not only increased lawlessness, but institutionalized injustice.

An immoral people have no moral fortitude to stand for anything except the right to be immoral. They cannot stand up for righteousness because that is a Christian concept. They cannot stand up for a justice for which they have no standard. Sin and guilt create a moral bondage which produces civil and social manifestations. Why act as free men when it only leads to more sin and guilt? The sinner cannot change the nature of his own culture because he cannot change himself. The sinner can complain about tyranny, but he has few answers to it.

The only way to change a culture is by changing men, and this is only possible through the transforming power of the gospel of Jesus Christ. 🏰

The Ultimate Meme

Martin G. Selbrede



The word “meme” (pronounced *meem*) denotes a concept that contemporary Christians need to fully grasp. Just as the word *blog* is short for *weblog*, so *meme* is short for *mimeme*, reflecting something that undergoes imitation (*mimesis*). The term was coined by evolutionary biologist Richard Dawkins nearly forty years ago and was theorized to be the cultural counterpart or analogue of a gene. And just as genes replicate and mutate, so do memes: they are vehicles by which ideas (philosophical, political, social, visual, even architectural) are passed on. Ironically, the modern concept of a meme differs from the original Dawkins version, but given his view that memes mutate, it’s hard to understand his frustration with the subverted meaning of the term.

The study of memes, memetics, has become one of the more popular methods for classifying ideas, predicting their social trajectory, and tracing their impact on a culture. From what I observe, there *is* no such thing as a Christian memetics ... yet. We only find a humanistic, secular, rationalistic, evolutionary memetics that seeks to explain how certain undesirable cultural constructs (e.g., Biblical Christianity) somehow seem to thrive. In this enterprise, the theorists have set out to psychoanalyze Christians and pinpoint exactly how to cut the nerve cord of this irrational, self-perpetuating delusion. Naturalistic presuppositions therefore guide this entire field of study.

Christians need to understand the purpose of memes respecting the ongoing *war of the memes* raging in our society. In a secular society widely governed by prevailing memes hostile to any memes of Christian heritage, we would find ourselves in a most perilous situation if there weren’t something extraordinary on the horizon: the ultimate meme.

Controlling the Narrative

Many memes in the socio-political and socio-economic arenas are specifically crafted to control the narrative. The memes that social architects wish to see replicating unchallenged throughout the populace are the ones that secure the architects’ designs. Memes don’t have to represent true ideas: lies can be effective memes. A false meme can control the narrative as easily (perhaps even more easily) than a true one. Such memes have social utility and lend themselves quite readily to agenda-driven purposes in the hands of elitist thinkers. Public opinion is important, even in totalitarian countries. This makes the shaping of public opinion an important function, and memes are an integral part of the toolkit required to do so.

Let us consider one such meme of recent vintage: “Only social lepers send their kids to private school.” Let’s unpack this heavily loaded meme to see what this strand of cultural DNA tells us about the men who knowingly released it into the public marketplace of ideas.

The key to this meme is the term “social lepers,” and the force of the meme is in leveraging our expected re-

vulsion to social leprosy to score political and social points favoring the public school system. The message boils down to this: don’t be a leper. The imagination provides the rest: lepers *belong* on the outskirts of society *because they’re lepers*, and they might infect others with this socially disfiguring condition. They’re marginalized because nobody wants to catch what they have, and by implication the quarantine should be compulsory for the social health of society. The imagination embraces this vivid, fearful imagery before the mind ever dissects the faulty *ad hominem* logic at its root. These factors therefore make this a potent meme to wield against homeschoolers and Christian schooling in general: we certainly aren’t going to listen to *lepers* when it comes to setting policy for *healthy people*.

But why do our social architects direct their zeal against homeschooling? One possible reason was alluded to by Dr. R. J. Rushdoony when discussing an event that occurred a third of a century ago. The then-head of California’s public schools, Bill Honig, had reportedly visited the major homeschooling convention held in the state (CHEA). He supposedly uttered words to the effect that he was “keeping an eye on this movement; once it grows into something significant (read: threatening to our fiefdom), we will intervene.” In other words, once the homeschooling meme becomes too successful in replicating itself and spreading further across his state, he would move to resist it. The homeschooling meme challenges the elitists’ control of the narrative with a counter-narrative, a competing meme.

The elitists have no interest in seeing any true competition between memes: they covet control over the narrative.

The opposition to the symbols of Christianity (such as crosses being displayed in public places) is due to resistance against seeing such visual memes replicate through a culture. Perhaps the secularists are aware of something that Christians are missing: that although these symbols have become watered-down and their meaning diluted, the risk remains that they might one day reacquire their full, culture-challenging force. Consider the fictional dialogue in Cecil B. DeMille's 1956 film, *The Ten Commandments*, between Pharaoh and his advisors as they assess the risk of demoralized Hebrew slaves rising up in rebellion against all-powerful Egypt:

Pharaoh: "I number my enemies by their swords, not their chains."

Advisor: "Chains have been forged into swords before, Great One."

If there is one thing that secularists have come to realize, it is that memes propagating through culture with Christian content have proven difficult to exterminate, even when using false memes to counter them. Isaac Asimov's depiction of fundamentalist "armies of the night" overthrowing the sciences with a supposedly mythical Biblical account of creation failed to turn the perceived juggernaut aside. Despite tight control of the scientific narrative, the contrary Biblical views continue to gain cultural ground.

Enter here the science of memetics to "explain" how Christian memes "inoculate" their proponents against the rational results of scientific research. (This inoculation is supposedly bad, but the rationalists' attempts to inoculate citizens against the Bible are supposedly good. It all depends whose ox is gored. The need to control the narrative super-

sedes matters of academic freedom and scientific inquiry.)

On the day this was written, the United States government was nearly two weeks into a shutdown. The major protagonists acted as their own spin-doctors, weaving conflicting memes: it was a Republican shutdown, it was a Democratic shutdown, it was caused by the Cruz-led Republicans, by a veritable American Taliban. You can't properly demonize the other side without attributing extremism to them (as moderate demons have fallen out of fashion).

For memes to be effective in controlling the narrative (and in turn controlling public opinion and thereby the populace itself), it is necessary to render a nation's citizens pliable enough to be manipulated by memes. The dumbing down of the American populace has made memes much easier to accept. Memes can serve as a cogent substitute or shorthand for careful deliberation and actual thinking. It is easier to rattle off a slur like "only social lepers send their children to private schools" than to engage in a serious discussion of the matter with *all* the ugly details on the table. (One can't help but wonder whether modern church leaders have gained some similar advantage by effectively dumbing down their flocks over the last century.)

How then *do* secularists fight Christian memes? If they can't attack them head-on, it is in their best interest to co-opt a meme and then dilute its meaning. Meaning can be diluted several different ways: something can be commercialized (think Christmas or Easter), it can be ridiculed, or it can be omitted from discourse except under controlled circumstances (e.g., courses teaching the Bible "as literature" in public schools). Whatever weakens a meme will block it from replicating either *extensively* (to other people), *protensively* (down

through time to the next generation) or *intensively* (by compromising fidelity to the original meme).

Understanding Memes

Many secular memes are self-serving and agenda-driven. They're valued by the central planners because they replicate quickly, spreading through the culture and possessing the will of the people, further validating the ideologies steering the ship of state. Such memes influence the electorate.

Memes come in all flavors and truth values: some vilify, some extol, some entertain, some instruct. Old wives' tales, bromides, stereotypes, clever graphics, and dance moves are included. All cultural expressions can turn into memes under the proper conditions.

In 1984, John Willinsky noted with surprise how rapidly the term "wilding" had been adopted by the populace in the wake of a brutal Central Park attack. He considered this a "rare instance" of a "cultural shortcutting of the normal channels of lexicographical legitimation." The newly-coined word "wilding" became a meme in itself because the mass media accelerated its public acceptance.¹

But with the Internet, such cultural shortcutting of normal channels has become commonplace *because the cultural shortcuts have now become the normal channels*. Social media easily competes with the mass media in propagating memes (perhaps one more reason why pretexts are being sought to slap controls on the Internet).

Consider an example of a "conventional narrative" (string of false memes) concerning America's Great Depression as disclosed by Steve Horwitz on his blog:

What we want to avoid, I would argue, is a repeat of what is now the conventional narrative of the Great Depression: It was capitalism that caused the

crash, it was Hoover's inaction that turned it into a Great Depression, and it was FDR's interventions that saved us. As we now know, that's wrong on all three counts, particularly on the issue of Hoover's inaction. He was quite the interventionist and those programs, picked up later by FDR, made matters much worse. The analogy to the current situation is pretty striking.²

Note the problem: an eighty-year-old meme that by rights should have long ago been thoroughly discredited still lives, thanks to faithful replication in self-serving academic and political channels. This meme threatens to shape the discourse about our current economic crisis. It's unclear that the countervailing truths will ever be more than a voice crying in the wilderness by the time the economic day of reckoning is at hand. In other words, false memes can have considerable longevity, even in the face of facts. A meme's success does not depend on being accurate (while for some theorists a successful meme is by definition true—socially true, which is the only truth worth pursuing).

Memes have other things in common with their biological counterparts. Replication being the defining feature of a meme, it is no surprise that memes *can* act as a virus. It is for good reason that we speak of a meme that *goes viral*. To foster the milieu of scientism, the pollsters of yesteryear have been forced to compete with Internet metrics, which measure success by how many hits a web page gets (regardless whether it features sensational topics, funny videos, or simply cute animals). It must be distressing for people who make their living doing search engine optimization (SEO) to realize that their clients might get better results just by lacing their websites with the well-known power phrases ("use this one weird trick," "shocking video," "electric companies and dermatologists hate this," "watch this video before

FEMA bans it," etc.).

But there is one apparent difference between a meme and a gene, and the example that illustrates this difference is Ludwig van Beethoven's old warhorse, his Fifth Symphony. Scholars have declared that not only is the opening four-note motif a meme, but the symphony in its entirety is also a meme. In other words, the notion of a meme being a discrete unit that is transmitted through a culture can involve both the opening two bars of the symphony (as a discrete unit) and the entire symphony (also conceived as a *discrete unit*, albeit a much larger one). We will return to this important idea when we discuss how memes relate to worldviews (which are inherently totalistic in scope) and the Word of God itself.

Memetics as a Tool in the Evolutionists' Arsenal

Were you to read through the Wikipedia entry for the word "meme," you will quickly discern that the argumentation concerning religious thought *presupposes the falsehood of religion*. Memetics, the science of memes, purports to account for cultural manifestations and their transmission, of which religion is regarded as but one of many. Therefore, a purely naturalistic perspective governs the discussion (which the Wikipedia editors³ are certain to enforce).

This is, of course, the weak underbelly of science in general: the problem of inferring a specific cause from an effect. This form of logical argument, called *affirming the consequent*, is a logical fallacy because it forms an invalid argument. Here is an example of such an invalid argument: "If it rains, the grass will be wet. The grass is wet, therefore it rained." This is not valid because the sprinklers may have come on, causing the grass to be wet. This kind of statement is only valid if we adjust the original argument in this way: "If and only

if it rains will the grass be wet. The grass is wet, therefore it rained." This is now a *valid* argument, and if the premises are true, it is also considered to be what logicians call a *sound* argument.

The problem with all the purported tracing of the origins and propagation (replication) of the Christian faith is that memetics rests on the logical fallacy described above. The naturalistic conclusions don't follow from the stated premises: they follow because of another premise (whether suppressed or not is irrelevant here): namely, that the Bible is a collection of myths, and is itself a cultural construct built out of generally false, self-serving memes.

The shaping of discourse concerning memes is ideologically driven. The sooner you recognize this, the sooner you'll be able to equip yourself to confront the winds of change blowing through our culture today.

Thought Contagion

Central planners, power brokers, and social engineers have a basic message for Christians: our memes are good, yours are bad. Remember our friend, the social leper? Apparently, social leprosy can metastasize into thought contagion (which, incidentally, is the name of a book by Aaron Lynch further subtitled *How Belief Spreads Through Society*).

The term *thought contagion*, while technically neutral in orientation, nonetheless carries a pejorative connotation: we tend to conceive more readily of a spreading sickness than a multitude of people "paying it forward." When F. F. Bruce entitled one of his books *The Spreading Flame*, he saw the advance of the gospel as a blessing described quite beautifully by the chosen symbolic imagery. But James H. Billington's examination of revolutionary thought, *Fire in the Minds of Men*, takes an obviously different tack with the same symbol.

So we have here the question of

whether the symbol of fire connotes a good or a bad sense, whether the referenced contagion is a good or a bad one, and whether inoculation is a good or bad thing (is a given worldview inoculating against dangerous heresies or rallying its adherents to irrationally oppose scientific truth?).

One thing is certain: worldviews inoculate against opposing worldviews because they are totalistic in scope and govern all things within their respective matrix. We have here, then, a battle of the worldviews. Humanism and Christianity each regard the other as toxic, and each seeks to inoculate as many as possible against the other, starting with the children (who belong to the state in the humanist worldview, but who belong to God and their parents in the Christian worldview).

Of course, when we speak of a thought contagion in the pejorative sense, there can be no question that the true thought contagion is described in Genesis 3:5—the tempter’s claim that man can realize himself by acting autonomously and defining his own morality and ethics outside of God. This moral infection inverts right and wrong, so that men call good evil and evil good, and like a snelled fishing hook this affectation digs its way deeper into its victims to ensnare them even further. The contagion that began in Genesis 3:5 is still with us today. It is a contagion that can only be cured supernaturally by the Christ of the Scriptures.

Are You Governed by Memes?

Are you governed by memes or by the law-word of God? You can’t serve two masters.

Most Christians today are blown about by every wind of doctrine and every meme of culture. Fearfulness, especially when driven by perceived “conspiracies” and thus loaded with sensationalism, drives today’s cultural memes.

We accept memes with a knowing nod (after all, we don’t want to be social lepers), so we arrive at a point where every fear is finally realized. “Everything you eat or drink is toxic. And, by the way, there is a Bolshevik under every bed.”

What are the factors that lead Christians to be so unduly influenced by cultural memes (which surely pleases the architects of those memes no end)? Let’s consider a few.

Anxiousness about tomorrow is a primary driving force that compels us to rely upon memes because they represent the current state of affairs. If you buy into the idea that man’s problem is inadequate, inaccurate information, then you will seek out a source for intravenous injection of the latest news on all things worrisome. At the root of this is distrust of God, which becomes manifest in our refusal to obey our Lord’s injunction about being anxious for tomorrow.

As a consequence, you might attempt to throw yourself into the maelstrom of rapidly-changing cultural forces. Because things seem to change so quickly, you will end up avoiding such time-wasters as *deliberation and contemplation*, turning instead to sound bites and Twitter-length, short-attention-span thinking just to avoid falling behind the power curve of our “Future Shock”-style culture. It then becomes tempting to adopt the mental shortcut of leveraging memes in lieu of thinking.

As William James pointed out, “People think they are thinking when they are merely rearranging their prejudices.” But today, James’s aphorism actually gives modern man too much credit: he isn’t even rearranging his prejudices, he’s rolling with the latest memes, memes tailored from without to maximize their impact upon him (and render him even more susceptible to memes). Thus, man truly becomes driven by every meme of doctrine. If

man won’t be governed by God, he will be tyrannized by the deluge of memes blasting at him from all corners. The memes of humanism invariably enslave while pretending to liberate man.

The Biblical Truth about Memes

The first thing we must all recognize is that there IS a controlled narrative: it’s God’s providential governing of His world that has been spanning the millennia. Because the entire universe down to the last atom situated at its farthest reaches is governed by a single overarching decree, that divine decree constitutes a discrete unit in itself—just like a meme.

There also is a *standard* by which memes are judged: God’s law. Losing sight of this divine ethical arraignment of all human utterance and thoughts (which are all to be brought captive to the obedience of Christ, 2 Cor. 10:4–5) is no benign blindness: it is invariably harmful to those who won’t frame reality using the Lawgiver’s lens. We live in a world where we must account for every idle word; how much more will we give account for memes that we float into this world? And how much more will we be judged for following a multitude to do evil? (Exod. 23:2)

Moreover, all memes “not planted by God will be uprooted” (Matt. 15:13), which is true with *any other thing* satisfying that Biblical criterion that marks it for destruction. All such memes will be shaken “so that only the unshakeable things will remain” (Heb. 12:27).

Memes broadcast light or darkness based on Isaiah 8:20. Don’t follow a multitude to accept or propagate an evil meme: our calling is to reprove the works of darkness.

We can start to appreciate the Biblical emphasis by loosely paraphrasing Zechariah 4:6: “Not by might nor by power nor by popular acceptance, but

by My Spirit. Who art thou, O great mountain of opposing memes? Before God's people thou shalt be leveled into a plain!"

The Problem with Christian Memes

If memes are so effective, why shouldn't we use them like the other side does? This is a complex question. There are times when this is proper, and times when it is not. One area where this approach is problematic is in the field of Christian apologetics.

The first rule of apologetics is this: we do not defend Christianity piecemeal. The Christian faith comprises a totalistic worldview. We are totalists. Worldviews cannot be discretized into smaller units. The truths of Scripture mutually support one another, and they cannot be taken (or properly understood) in isolation. The old maxim that "a text out of context becomes a pretext" assuredly holds. (That maxim is a meme that is worth sharing with others: it embodies an important truth!)

The other problem with at least some use of Christian memes and slogans is the substitution of shortcuts for comprehension. Our calling in Christ does not commend the use of shortcuts: "in understanding be men" (1 Cor. 14:20). This means we cannot be "slothful in hearing" (Heb. 5:11) *because slothfulness is the reason our understanding is compromised*. The term the author of Hebrews⁴ uses here is *dyshermeneuto*, roughly a dysfunctional hermeneutic (faulty understanding or interpretation), and he pins the cause of it on slothfulness, which Holy Writ treats as a moral sin (e.g., "thou wicked and slothful servant," Matt. 25:26).

Another problem with memes, even supposedly Christian memes, is the issue of *confirmation bias*. We adopt memes that validate our existing opinions—especially theological opinions. In the matter of religion we know that there

are those who "accumulate for themselves teachers to suit their own liking" (2 Tim. 4:3). Why then would we think this doesn't hold true across the cultural board for man, Christian man no less than man unmoored from God?

In his 1965 book, *The Mythology of Science*, Dr. Rushdoony was able to illustrate how scientists suffer from confirmation bias, a bias belying their alleged intellectual neutrality. Rushdoony cites multiple cases where scientists were "disappointed" by experimental results that failed to validate their metaphysical and ideological hopes (e.g., of extraterrestrial life). One can only imagine how Rushdoony would react to today's conflict over *global warming* (I mean, *climate change*—the current meme of choice until its proponents are forced to cook up another one).

In Hebrews 5:11–6:3 we read about the *rudiments* or *first principles*, the building blocks, of the faith. *Rudiments* is the English term used to translate the Greek word *stoichiea*. We should consider that memes are, in themselves, cultural *stoichiea*. At best, they are the milk, not the meat, of a culture. By becoming skilled in the *meat* of the Word, in grasping things systematically and presuppositionally, you become immune to manipulation by memes, by controlled narratives, and by *the fashion of this world* (which passeth away) as expressed by all such memes.

So we again return to our initial question: is it appropriate for Christians to use memes? We'll address this more directly in the next section. Let us say for now that memes that embody Biblical truth, and lead to the whole counsel of God, that can serve as a gateway from the world of sound bites and Tweets and emoticons to the depths of the riches of God, may be the tool of choice for our present condition. Anything short of this probably would lead the serious

Christian to conclude that *the end doesn't justify the memes*.

The propagation of memes from parents to children is among the strongest mechanisms by which a cultural idea extends across time and grows. The secularists see this, and have fully documented this truth, but Christians by and large do not grasp its importance. Far too many Christians tragically put their children under the power of our secular culture's meme machine to reshape their minds to build the kingdom of man. Although the secularists concede the power of the family to replicate and propel a religious meme into future generations with inexorable force, Christians can't be bothered.

But secularists don't mind bothering with the future of your children *on their terms*.

And if you think you can just wait until the media has been reformed and is once again safe, consider Dr. Paul Jehle's clever twist on St. Paul's assertion that the last enemy to be destroyed is death: "The last thing to be reconstructed is the media." If this is true (and Dr. Jehle is a shrewd observer of the conflict between light and darkness), we Christians need to get out in front of this problem and take ownership of our generational obligations *now*. Don't let your children drink poison in the dubious hope that the antidote might arrive at any moment.

Of a truth, the Kingdom of God in this world has suffered self-inflicted decay that, from what I can see, is only being remedied through the Christian homeschool movement. For that movement to have a truly multi-generational impact (as opposed to sprouting quickly and again wilting away), we will need to more firmly ground this work than we have hitherto done. The 2009 DVD film by the Botkin siblings, *Homeschool Dropouts*, pinpoints the problem and

the underlying weaknesses that need to be addressed to properly resolve it.

The Ultimate Meme

The texts of Isaiah 59:19 and 59:21 are not in themselves a meme, but they perfectly describe a *supernaturally propagated* unit of culture-transforming power that fully immerses the entire world. In verse 19, we can infer that the meme described in verse 21 that fully covers the world is driven like a flood throughout a culture by nothing less than the Spirit of God Himself. Here is the text of these two verses in Isaiah as adapted from the *Complete Jewish Bible*:

In the West they will fear the Name of the Lord, and likewise, in the East, His glory. For He will come like a pent-up stream, impelled by the Spirit of the Lord.

...

“And as for me,” says the Lord, “this is my covenant with them: My Spirit, who rests on you, and My words which I have put in your mouth will not depart from your mouth or from the mouth of your children, or from the mouth of your children’s children, now or ever,” says the Lord.

Do you see the meme, the unit that replicates from one generation to the other? It is *My words which I have put in your mouth*. The ultimate meme is a large one, comprising sixty-six books, but because God Himself supervises the preservation of the meme, it remains intact among the faithful covenant community, to whom that preservation alone is vouchsafed.


The architects of modern secular memetics did get one thing right: the family has a major part to play in the propagation of memes, for Isaiah 59:21 clearly sees a multi-generational promise of God concerning the preservation of the ultimate meme. The Word of God

is carried from generation to generation *with supernatural accuracy*. The same Spirit that rests upon those in whose mouth His Word is found is said to impel the process of the pent-up stream bursting through the dam to cover the world both eastward and westward. Benjamin B. Warfield and the Douay-Rheims translation render the last part of verse 19, “which the Spirit of the Lord driveth on.” The ultimate meme is being propelled by nothing less than the Spirit of God and is not subject to government control of the Internet, Wikipedia editors, or opinion-makers in the media.

Of course, the meme being supernaturally replicated generation-to-generation by the power of God as Isaiah describes is ultimate in more than one way. That meme, the Word of God, is ultimate not only because there is no more perfectly replicated cultural unit (without distortion or mutation or barriers to propagation), it is ultimate *because that Word is the engine of Christian self-government*.

God says that He magnifies His Word above His Own Name (Psalm 138:2), so this is a fairly important meme⁵ that the memetics experts have given short shrift. Consequently, the concept of Christian self-government is alien to them (no surprise given how alien it has become among the last two centuries of Christians). But what meme could be more ultimate than one that is God’s chosen way to implement His promise to His Son that “the government shall be upon His shoulders, and of the increase of that government and of peace there shall be no end” (Isa. 9:6b–7a)?

And what force could possibly drive this world-conquering meme, the *only* meme that frames Christian self-government under God’s law, to complete and total victory? Isaiah 9:7 rings out with

complacency-shattering power: “The zeal of the Lord of Hosts shall perform this.” 

1. John Willinsky, “Cutting English on the Bias: Five Lexicographers in Pursuit of the New.” *American Speech* 63.1 (1984), 54.
2. <http://austrianeconomists.typepad.com/weblog/2008/10/what-now-contro.html>
3. Consider the partial citation from page 159 of R. J. Rushdoony’s *Foundations of Social Order* used on Wikipedia to put the N-word into Dr. Rushdoony’s mouth. Every time I’ve added the entire citation to show that Rushdoony was criticizing a quotation from elsewhere (the circle of Erich Fromm’s associates), the editors yanked out the correction and reverted back to the version that demonized Rushdoony by hiding the quote marks and context. This vilification is willful. If Wikipedia is willing to remove the exonerating sentences around the cited material, they’re not likely to tolerate exposure of other false witnesses. Talk of a Christian alternative to Wikipedia needs to grow into actual resolve to undertake that task.
4. Every few years I have occasion to reassert the view I first published in the early 1980s, that Jude composed the book of Hebrews. This follows from the analogy of scripture: Jude asserts in the third verse of his epistle that he was working on a larger treatise “concerning our common salvation” which he felt obligated to lay aside temporarily to write a brief letter of exhortation to the people. In Hebrews 13:22, the writer says he had also written a brief letter of exhortation to the recipients. The two epistles are essentially pointing at each other. Ironically, scholars assert that nobody knows where Jude’s big doctrinal letter went, and nobody knows what became of the Hebrews’ writer’s short exhortation: they’ve both gone missing. Or have they? Not surprisingly, the examples of Old Testament events alluded to by Jude follow the ones mentioned in Hebrews. On this hypothesis, the reason for that is because these examples were fresh in Jude’s mind when he set aside writing Hebrews to take up the brief 25-verse epistle bearing his name. Then he went back to work to complete the book of Hebrews.

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Economics, Law and Liberty

Rev. Paul Michael Raymond



The vacillation of the Christian community, as it concerns the law of God, especially in the area of economics, money and wealth, is very much like the vacillation of Israel in the days of Elijah (1 Kings 18:21). Too many Christians are not quite sure which God to serve, the God of Scripture or the god of the state. Those who are sure, still fail in the knowledge of exactly how to serve Him, and what the ultimate goal of that service is.

The majority of Christians are extremely diligent to pay tyrannical Caesar without hesitation for fear of the state, but when it comes to paying God, supporting and investing in His work, hesitation, coupled with excuses, seem to be the order of the day. This truth is fleshed out by their stewardship practices and the prioritization of their wealth.

You can tell a lot about an individual by the way he spends his money. Individuals and institutions will invest their money according to whatsoever their hearts desire. They will invest Godward, or self-ward, depending on their belief structure, which includes their eschatological presuppositions. They will either be present-oriented or future-oriented. Either they will be motivated for self-satisfying ends, or they will be motivated generationally for the glory of God and the building of His Kingdom.

Your Money and Your Faith

When Jesus told the disciples that He had given them comprehensive power¹ to tread down serpents and scorpions (Luke 10:19) He was referring

to the legitimate sovereign authority of God conferred upon Christians as His ambassadors to overcome the temporal power of natural man's attempt to subvert the Kingdom's dominion effort. David Hall, in his book *Calvin and Commerce*, points out that economics, money, and wealth, flow from certain theological presuppositions.² Monetary stewardship is therefore based upon a certain value judgments.

This means that if you hold to an economic theory which is not Biblically accurate, doctrinally and eschatologically, your stewardship will be both wrong and unproductive.

It may even be destructive and in the worst case, damnable. The principle is simple. Economic stewardship is based upon theological assumptions. In other words, the way you use money is directly proportionate to your religious beliefs. If you believe that God is the owner of all things, even and especially your personal wealth and riches, then a proper stewardship practice will be evident.

John Jefferson Davis comments about this:

The Bible makes it clear that God is the ultimate and original owner of all that exists. "The earth is the Lord's and the fullness thereof; the world, and they that dwell therein" (Psalm 24:1). This is fundamental for any proper understanding of Christian stewardship.³

Rev. John Otis notes:

A steward is one who is responsible to manage the property of another. God is the owner of every square inch on earth ... What we have is by God's

gracious hand ... God watches how we use wealth. Do we view it as something that belongs to us to use however we want (lover of money), or do we view wealth as something we have been given to carefully manage for God? It is God's wealth. That is the point. It really doesn't belong to us. We must be good stewards of God's wealth; we must be faithful in having that right attitude about it and how we are to use His money for His glory. This is an area where many people terribly fail.⁴

In his most excellent book *Tithing and Dominion* R. J. Rushdoony affirms, "The failure of 'Christians' to tithe, their dereliction from the faith and from God's law, leaves us today with cities in which not only the slum-dwellers but the rich are a menace with their lawlessness."⁵

Economics is all about trade-offs and the Scriptures have much to say about it. Everything in life ultimately is an economic decision. Men trade one thing that they deem less important for another that they consider of greater importance. When it comes to investing in the Kingdom, self-denial and self-government is essential. As Rev. Otis has rightly observed, if there is any discipline where the Christian community has failed, it is in the area of economic stewardship. It is in this discipline where the battle for the advancement of the Kingdom really is won or lost.

Rushdoony again comments:

In any advanced social order, social financing is a major public necessity. The social order cannot exist without a vast network of social institutions which require financing and support. If a

Christian concept of social financing is lacking, then the state moves in quickly to supply the lack and gain the social control which results. Social financing means social power.⁶

And so, these religious and theological assumptions will reap certain consequences—either good or evil, either productive or unproductive. They will be pleasing to God or they will be judged by God, as were the actions of the unprofitable servant in Matthew 25. Moses gives us clear direction as to how Christians are to steward their where-withal.

We read in Deuteronomy 8:

But thou shalt remember the LORD thy God: for it is he that giveth thee power to get wealth, that he may establish his covenant which he sware unto thy fathers, as it is this day. And it shall be, if thou do at all forget the LORD thy God, and walk after other gods, and serve them, and worship them, I testify against you this day that ye shall surely perish. As the nations which the LORD destroyeth before your face, so shall ye perish; because ye would not be obedient unto the voice of the LORD your God. (Deut. 8:18–20)

Notice the first part of this commandment: “But thou shalt remember the LORD thy God.” Israel was always susceptible to forgetfulness, especially when it came to remembering God and His commandments. Moses is telling them that they are to remember Him. What are they to remember about Him? First, that He owns them. They belong to Him by virtue of His conquest over them in the face of their enemies. He owns them because He has liberated them. Because He is King, Lord and Redeemer, they are His possession. This means that He is also their legitimate Lawgiver, and He requires universal and

comprehensive obedience to His stated law.

Moreover, as was already established, God owns everything that exists. Mankind is given *permission* to use God’s creation, and it is for this reason that God claims His tithe as a tax for that use. God’s tithe is actually a tax for the use of His earth and it is to be used for the development of a godly social order by prohibiting the state’s encroachment upon the liberty of God’s people. Since the state seeks to usurp the sovereignty of God, it violates its jurisdictional sphere-authority by expanding into a totalitarian messianic state. The tithe is to be used as a safeguard so that the state is forced to be limited in power and influence.

The Tithe

Tithing is the acknowledgement that the earth belongs to God and not to the state. It is the admission that property taxation in particular, by human government, is illegitimate since it is a claim that the state owns the land as creator and sovereign, and not God. The tithe belongs to the Lord and was commanded to be used in support of Biblical institutions, thus prohibiting the state from funding things which were out of its Biblical jurisdiction. Rushdoony explains:

The tithe was used for a variety of purposes. It supported the religious and educational institutions of Israel, and also of colonial and early America. In fact, in the United States the tithe was for many years legally binding on all men, and failure to pay it was a civil offense. The tithe supported churches, Christian schools, and colleges.⁷

Rushdoony goes on to explain, “State laws began to require tithes from the 4th century on, because it was believed that a country could only deny God His tax at its peril, and therefore the various civil governments required

all their citizens to pay tithes, not to the state but to the church.”⁸

In the verses of Deuteronomy 8, God commands Israel in the area of economic stewardship. He warns them to maintain their liberty, under God, by adhering to the law of the tithe. Moses says remember God “... for it is he that giveth thee power to get wealth ...” (Deut. 8:18). Therefore, if an individual has any wealth, even if it is the simple widow’s mite, it comes directly from God, and is placed in the individual’s control, as a stewardship commission and a test of fidelity and trust.

But there is a caveat to this verse. God gives wealth for a very specific reason: “[T]hat he may establish his covenant which he sware unto thy fathers, as it is this day” (Deut. 8:18). Our money—and everything that we own, including intelligence, skill and knowledge—is to be stewarded for the express purpose of establishing and maintaining God’s covenant Kingdom. The covenant in this case refers to land holdings so that God’s people might take dominion possession over the earth for the glory of God, in conformity to the law of God.

The next verses are of particular importance.

19 And it shall be, if thou do at all forget the LORD thy God, and walk after other gods, and serve them, and worship them, I testify against you this day that ye shall surely perish.

20 As the nations which the LORD destroyeth before your face, so shall ye perish; because ye would not be obedient unto the voice of the LORD your God.

Once the law of the tithe is neglected, destruction is forthcoming. In fact, it is promised. When we consider the principles concerning the tithe, we can divide them into three categories.

1. In Leviticus 27 God claims a tenth of all production as His and it is to be set apart for His use. This is sometimes called the Levitical Tithe. Rushdoony warns, "This tithe belongs to God, not to the church, nor to the producer. It cannot be given to an apostate church without being given thereby against God ... It must be given therefore to godly causes."⁹ This is important since we are held responsible as to *how* our money is used. We cannot simply give our money to a church or a ministry and think that we have done our part. We must be careful that our money is used properly by that institution in actually advancing the Kingdom.

2. The second tithe was called the "Festival Tithe" which was to be used in celebration for the goodness of God upon the people of Israel. We read of this tithe in Deuteronomy 14 and 16. The modern equivalent may be likened to yearly church conferences, or periodic celebrations of fellowship in thanksgiving to God. It was actually a ministry to the family.

3. The third tithe we might call a "carefully regulated social welfare tithe." It was not welfare as we see today in the United States. It was for the genuinely poor and needy. Funds for the poor and needy were monitored by the priests to protect God's money from being used improperly by giving aid to able-bodied individuals. Family welfare was the primary agency of welfare unless those who were poor and needy had no family affiliation. If there was no family to care for them, and they were a part of the congregation, the church would step in. As with tithes in general, this tithe in particular stripped the state of any involvement in relieving poverty, and kept a close watch on who was really needy and who simply wanted a handout as a result of laziness.

So why is the tithe so important

and how does it relate to liberty? First, the tithe is an essential part of God's economic law structure. All law is covenant law, in that it has a certain structure to it. God's covenant model states that He alone is supreme, sovereign, and personally involved in His creation. It establishes His ownership and Lordship. It declares the Lord as transcending everything. The covenant model also shows that there is a hierarchy which places man under God and makes him directly responsible to God as his Lord. All covenant models have a law standard identifying good and evil, right and wrong, ethically acceptable or ethically unacceptable. Since God is the supreme King over all nations, these are the ethical values whereby men and nations must abide. God also attaches sanctions to His law stipulations. This is vital for us to understand. Whenever the covenant law structure is obeyed, there are blessings and benefits, but whenever the law structure is violated there are penalties. Blessing and cursing are all a part of God's covenant structure.

What Happens When Christians Tithe?

The law of the tithe is important because whenever it is neglected it essentially is negating God's claim of sovereignty. The result is God's curse which brings economic bondage and political tyranny upon society. We are facing a time where we have been sold into bondage as a result of Christendom's tithe violations. Whenever God's people fail to financially support the Kingdom's advancement, by way of faithful institutions, God sells them into bondage, and strips them of their wealth through oppressive statist taxation. Faithful tithing liberates a society. Rushdoony concurs.

If every true Christian tithed today, we could build vast numbers of new and truly Christian churches, Christian schools, and colleges, and we could

counteract socialism by Christian reconstruction, by creating Christian institutions and a growing area of Christian independence.¹⁰

Christian reconstruction requires a substantial financial foundation. Rushdoony is correct when he states that if the Christian community fails to finance the work of God, the state will finance the work of humanism, at the expense of Christendom. On the other hand, proper giving of the tithe restores the necessary economic and spiritual basis for the social order to prosper. Proper giving is not, however, emotional giving. There are too many well meaning Christians who give emotionally or unknowingly to causes that are not Kingdom focused. To be Kingdom focused not only means having a faithful focus but also a generational focus. Kingdom focus is a targeted vision for something that is going to grow and strengthen throughout the next 100, 200, or even 500 years.

Rushdoony sets forth a very practical strategy: "What we must do is, *first*, to tithe, and, *second*, to allocate our tithe to godly agencies."¹¹

I am often asked, "Should I give the entirety of my tithe to my church?" The answer to that is simple. If your church is faithfully teaching for the Kingdom's advance *and if* she is also establishing Kingdom-centered agencies with a generational impact then, yes, tithe to the church. In fact give over and above the commanded tithe by giving offerings and gifts. But if your church has failed in her commission, then you need to reconsider where you place your tithe and offerings. You never want to fund a godless agency no matter what it calls itself outwardly. Rushdoony warns, "Tithing in itself is not to the Lord if the tithe goes to ungodly, wasteful, or indifferently effective agencies. Thus, the Lord holds us accountable for our

use of His money, just as He holds the receiver thereof fully accountable also.”¹²

In order to prioritize our giving, Rushdoony gives one other very important piece of advice. He says that we must first care for our own families, and for our aged parents. If we are remiss in these things, then we are no better than the unbeliever:

The family is the world's greatest welfare agency, and the most successful. What the federal government has done in welfare is small and trifling compared to what families of America do daily, caring for their own, relieving family distresses, providing medical care and education for one another, and so on.¹³

One careful note here. We must never make the excuse that we cannot give what is due the Lord because we are caring for our families. This smacks of theft and the idolization of the family.

Perhaps these questions will assist in recalibrating Christians to become more diligent in funding the Kingdom Biblically.

1. Do you want to live under God's law or man's tyrannical law?

2. Do you want to live in a society that is every day becoming more and more wicked and more and more intolerant of anything holy, good, and just?

3. Do you want to live in a culture which forces its immorality on you and your children to the point where it becomes illegal—not only to worship God—but even to think His thoughts after Him?

All of this is guaranteed if the Christian community fails to take action in financing the Kingdom in order to usurp the usurper.

What Shall We Do?

So what are we to do? How can we change the *is* to what *ought* to be? What we as Christians need is a total commitment, and a total dedication, to a totally comprehensive and systematic, Bibli-

cally-based economic plan to finance the Kingdom's work. That plan finds its teeth in the law of the tithe. This means (dare I say it?) a practice of self-sacrifice, self-resignation, and consistent selflessness for a cause that is greater than any individual Christian. We all must relinquish ourselves to doing without some of the finer things in life for a greater godly good that we may never see or experience in our own lives since it will be for a generation beyond us. Perhaps you may wish to forfeit one year's vacation and put that money to a godly use. Or perhaps you can dine out fewer times in the year and put that money toward a godly purpose in support of a godly institution. There are a thousand ways to reallocate your finances.

The Lord condemned the selfish Israelites through Haggai:

Is it time for you, O ye, to dwell in your cieled houses, and this house lie waste?

Now therefore thus saith the LORD of hosts; Consider your ways. Ye have sown much, and bring in little; ye eat, but ye have not enough; ye drink, but ye are not filled with drink; ye clothe you, but there is none warm; and he that earneth wages earneth wages to put it into a bag with holes. Thus saith the LORD of hosts; Consider your ways. Go up to the mountain, and bring wood, and build the house; and I will take pleasure in it, and I will be glorified, saith the LORD. (Haggai 1:4–8)

If you are not resolved to this commission of self-sacrifice (please forgive me) then you are not for real. Your Christianity is self-focused and idolatrous. What Christendom needs is a committed few, a committed remnant, a minority. John Knox put it this way, “One man with God is the majority.”

Rushdoony expounds on this in one of my favorite quotes, “History has *never* been dominated by majorities, but only by dedicated minorities who stand unconditionally on their faith.”¹⁴

Finally, here are some practical recommendations concerning the law of economics, money, liberty, and hope.

1. You must embrace the reality of God's supreme, universal, and comprehensive sovereignty over all things especially over all of your things. Once that reality is embraced, you will be able to consider more clearly what you are to do concerning the tithe and your free will offerings over and above the tithe. When the first fruits were commanded to be given to God it was understood that they represented the totality of all things. It was a declaration that God owned it all, but was only taking a portion, leaving the rest to Israel's stewardship. This was their test to see if they were truly committed to the cause of the dominion mandate of the covenant.

2. The principle of sovereignty is important for many reasons but in the realm of private personal property it is extremely important since the property is owned by God and not the state. Property ownership under God protects your liberty, giving you and your family security against statist encroachment. All taxation, especially property taxation, is a claim of ownership. Every tax levied is a claim by the state that they have legitimate possession of that thing taxed. As Rushdoony observes:

“Taxation is always a claim of ownership. Every tax levied is a claim that the property that has been taxed is owned by the State ... [every claim of taxation] is a claim to sovereignty ... The voice of the taxing authority within a society claims to be the voice of God.”¹⁵

If you can get that message across

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Biblical Spirituality vs. Gnostic Spirituality

by Bojidar Marinov



A few weeks ago my wife listened to a preacher on the radio who was criticizing his listeners for their motives for coming to church. “I know why most of you are here,” he said. “Some are here to find a spouse. Others are here to find business partners or investors. Or reliable employees. Or a job. Some are hoping to get some financial help. Few are here for the right reason.”

This statement is important, for it is characteristic of the attitude of many pastors in this nation. And since attitudes are always created by deeply held beliefs, it gives some very important insight into the theology of the modern church.

We need to start with the observation that, indeed, the motives of many modern church-goers are far from deep devotion to Christ and His gospel. Selfishness reigns in the modern churches, and most church members do expect the church to cater to their personal needs, problems, and desires, without any sacrifice on their part, any service to others, any greater vision or value scale than their own well-being and self-fulfillment. It is not something new, and not something unknown or unusual. That pastor’s church is not an exception to the rule. And yes, if his target is really the obvious selfishness of his listeners, he does have a point.

Small Theology Equals Small Faith

But not a complete point. For the rule that the roots determine the fruits is valid here, and therefore a preacher

needs to understand that he always gets what he preaches. If selfishness reigns in his church, it is because selfishness reigns in his preaching, and in the theology that preaching conveys to his listeners. Those who are selfish must be quite comfortable with his preaching if they are still in his church. And their selfishness is most probably encouraged by the fact that most of our modern preaching is based on the theology of individual salvation as the ultimate good. The gospel is stripped of its Kingdom message and reduced to a gospel of individual salvation. Thus, God is reduced to a small deity concerned only with the salvation—and the well-being—of its followers. God doesn’t have a greater objective on earth than the salvation of individual souls, which makes Him entirely subservient to man and man’s needs and objectives.

How would such theology purge selfishness from the hearts of that pastor’s listeners, if it’s actually making God subservient to their needs? If God is ultimately concerned with man and man’s needs, then why shouldn’t men be concerned with man and man’s needs? The difference between a focus on man’s eternal well-being and man’s temporal well-being is a difference in emphasis, not in principle, therefore the excuse that it’s about salvation, not about prosperity, is irrelevant here. Man is still the center. Only a focus on the sovereignty of God and on Christ’s Kingdom can give a difference in principle; but such focus is lacking in the preaching of modern churches. If the pastor presents a God who is focused on man, it’s

only natural that he’ll get men who are focused on themselves.

All this being said, we need to acknowledge that despite the truncated gospel he is delivering to his listeners, a gospel focused on man and not on God and His Kingdom, this pastor’s church is still achieving a certain success. That success is obvious in the fact that the church still has some “power of attraction,” to use J. H. Bavinck’s phrase from his *An Introduction to the Science of Missions*.¹ Even in its most truncated form, when all references to the Kingdom and the comprehensive authority of Jesus Christ over all life (1 Cor. 15:25–28) are removed from the preaching, the name of Jesus Christ still produces some cultural change in the life of the church, even if it’s not complete. Those who are baptized and members of the church have a better practical and work ethic than those in the world; they are more reliable as partners and employees; they are more faithful as spouses and friends. They are also more likely, compared to the rest of the population, to spend less of their income and therefore have more savings to invest. And as investors, they are less likely to be driven by greed and more likely to respect the needs of their debtors.

Faith has consequences, and even the least informed faith in Christ produces a culture superior to the surrounding pagan culture. This has been the reason why in predominantly Muslim nations like Syria, Egypt, or Lebanon, Christian minorities are disproportionately represented in the business and intellectual leadership of their countries.

It is this superior culture that drives those outside the church to join the church. Jesus said in John 13:35 that the world would know that we are His disciples by the fact that we love each other. However, such love is not hidden, immaterial, invisible. It does produce visible fruit, for from John 15:8 we *prove* to be His disciples by bearing fruit, that is, by the visible manifestation of God's love in us.

What is the visible manifestation of that love? It is the fulfillment of the law (Rom. 13:10). That is, our fulfillment of the law in every area of our lives, from our personal conduct to our economic and political endeavors, will show the world that we are Christ's disciples, and thus will draw the unbelievers to Him. Deuteronomy 4:5–8 confirms this conclusion: it is the law of God with its justice and righteousness that brings the nations to God. A culture built on the precepts of the law, a culture exhibiting God's love and justice, will always attract people, even when they dislike its religious foundations.

A Theology of Covenant

It is, of course, normal and understandable if people come to Christ and His church because they have certain needs that they believe Christ and the church can meet. The Sovereign God shows His grace to His elect by choosing His relationship with them to be formed not as a slaveholder's power over them—the way the Gentiles form their relationships with socially or physically inferior people—but as a *covenant*, that is, a set of obligations *and promises*. He doesn't have to give any promises, for He is God; but He still promises blessings for obedience, and the blessings He promises are that man's legitimate needs will be met abundantly.

This is why the Biblical covenants are defined as “the covenants of promise” (Eph. 2:12). Deuteronomy 28:1–15

exhorts Israel to obey God, and a number of cultural, economic, material, health, and other blessings are promised. This is why Jesus could call the weary and the burdened to come to Him and receive His rest (Matt. 11:28). And He also promises those who have left their earthly possessions to follow Him, that they will receive back a hundredfold in this world (cultural blessings), plus eternal life in the world to come. God takes us back as sons, not as slaves, even when we deserve nothing more than being slaves without any promise for any blessings.

The legitimacy of seeking cultural blessings when coming to Christ is then established by Biblical teaching. It is part of the covenantal and comprehensive nature of God's salvation. These blessings are not unconditional, of course. But they are real: material, relational, economic, political, judicial. God's covenant is not a spiritualized gnostic reality where the rubber never meets the road, and where spiritual truths never produce visible fruit. A church with even a little knowledge or understanding, faithful only to a certain extent to the requirements of the gospel according to the measure of its knowledge, will still exhibit a small measure of those blessings. And thus it will become a center of attraction for the local community. This is true evangelism, as opposed to the gnostic evangelism of only words and no visible transformation of lives and culture.

The above-mentioned pastor's church, then, is on the right track, at least marginally, if it has become such a center of attraction. If a person comes to the church to find a spouse, business partners, or employees or employers, such person is acknowledging that the spiritual principles of the gospel taught at that church have produced some cultural fruit. That should be

an encouragement to a pastor who understands the covenant of God and its operation through ethical rules and judicial sanctions in history. “The Word become flesh” is the operational paradigm of Christ's redemption; “obedience produces cultural fruit” is the application of that paradigm in the life of the individual, of the church, and of a Christian society in general. Our faith is spiritual, but it only proves itself to be true faith by the fruit it produces (James 2:14–26).

Faith Without Body

The pastor's criticism to his listeners, therefore, is not Biblical, as far as their motives to join the church are concerned. He is driven in his criticism by a Gnostic view of the gospel. He wants his listeners to come to church driven by some Gnostic, naked, body-less faith that is either unable to recognize the fruit of the gospel in the flesh or unwilling to recognize it and give glory to God for it. He wants the members of his flock to strip themselves of all material and cultural concerns and goals—even those that are Biblically legitimate—and become some kind of fleshless beings.

Even if he doesn't say it openly, he has adopted the heretical dualistic view of reality where the spiritual aspect of man is good by default and the material aspect of man is bad by default, and therefore material concerns necessarily follow from an evil heart. (The Biblical doctrine is that man is depraved in both his body and spirit, and therefore redeemed in both his body and spirit.) Criticizing his people for coming to church because they were attracted by the superior culture in the church is denigrating the effect and the fruit of the gospel, because it is “too materialistic.” But the gospel does have material effects, it leads to “all things being subject to Christ” (1 Cor. 15:1–28). And therefore, this pastor is driven by a

theology that bars him from seeing that comprehensive nature of the gospel in the life of his church; he wants mystical spirituality to replace the legitimate needs and wants of man as creature.

Now, granted, if the people who come to Christ in his church stay in their selfishness and always keep their material concerns above their commitment to Jesus Christ and His Kingdom, this admittedly is a problem. But then again, that problem is at least partially, if not completely, created by the same Gnostic worldview of that same pastor. When the comprehensive nature of Christ's gospel is not preached, the focus remains entirely on man and his needs. If his listeners have nothing more than their personal salvation in view, if they are not recruited to build the civilization of the Kingdom of God, they will never have a cause more worthy than themselves.

Toward a Kingdom Theology

The solution to his problem, then, and to the problems of the church in general, must be found in abandoning the Gnostic worldview that plagues our pulpits today, and in adopting the comprehensive, Kingdom-oriented, culture-changing worldview of the gospel. The problem of our churches is not that people come to Christ driven by material concerns: this is not a problem, this is a blessing, and a sign of our success, however small it is.

The problem of our churches today is a theology, and preaching that follows from it, that is not strong enough on building the culture of the Kingdom of God to draw even more people to Christ. Those who are drawn, and remain, are made idle by the simple expectation to be taken to heaven, for there is nothing more that they can do on earth besides attending church every Sunday. We want to make our churches to be even better centers of attrac-

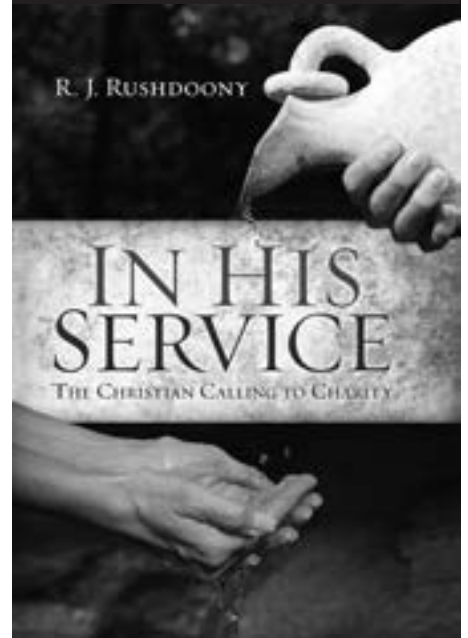
tion, exhibiting an even more superior civilization than the world, offering Biblical solutions to all the problems the modern world faces, and outperforming the non-Christian cultures in everything, as a testimony of the superiority of our faith. When our theology and our preaching is changed to Christian Reconstruction, we'll see more people coming to the church, and we'll see more of those remaining change from self-fulfillment to service to God, for now they will have a cause bigger than themselves. This is where that pastor's problems can find their solutions.

In other words, *faith has consequences*. And changing our faith from Gnosticism to Biblical covenantalism and Christian Reconstruction will inevitably have consequences. 🏰

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1. J.H. Bavinck, *An Introduction to the Science of Missions* (Philadelphia, PA: The Presbyterian and Reformed Publishing Co., 1960), 28.

IT IS IN HIS SERVICE THAT WE UNDERSTAND OUR CALLING TO CHARITY



In this book, Rushdoony elucidates the Christian's calling to charity and its implications for godly dominion. In an age when Christian action is viewed in political terms, a return to Christian works of compassion and godly service will help usher in a return of the reign of God as no piece of legislation ever could.

Hardback, 232 pages,
\$23.00 \$16.10

Learn It; Live It; Teach It

by Andrea Schwartz



Many people act as though the laws of physics are more reliable and predictive than the law of God. I used to tell my children that ignoring the law of gravity (saying you didn't believe in it) wouldn't stop you from falling on your face if you tried to fly off the roof. A physical law would continue to operate in spite of one's ignorance of or disbelief in it. On the other hand, understanding the law of gravity allows benefits such as air travel or safely cutting down a tree. Understanding how a physical law operates allows people to take dominion. Likewise the laws in the Bible are tools of dominion if they are properly understood and applied.

Think of a scenario in which residents of an apartment building race to the roof to escape a fire below. If they are knowledgeable about the laws of gravity they can rule out certain options as being untenable or ineffective. But if they understand that jumping across to a lower building will utilize the law of gravity to help them successfully escape being burned to death, they benefit by that knowledge.

In the same way, a working knowledge of God's law gives righteous options when we face a dilemma or problem. When our thought processes are Biblically based and when we have knowledge of God's Word, we can avoid sinful solutions even in dire predicaments. Thus it is not enough to have children learn the Ten Commandments by heart. They must do more than

that. They must learn the implications of God's commands and become well versed and practiced in solving the problems of life using Biblical reasoning to sort them out. In fact, parents should spend a good bit of time discussing various situations their children are likely to encounter and prepare them to think through sticky or sensitive situations Biblically. The book of Proverbs is an excellent backdrop to this process and should be studied with children from an early age. Rushdoony notes,

The book of Proverbs is essentially a book about the law as the direction and guide of life ... [A]ll *direction* rests and must rest on God's fundamental *torah* law, or direction. A parent's law, a teacher's or employer's law, must be an application of God's law. God's law when so applied becomes the fabric of life and the direction of society.¹

When studying literature, history, mathematics, or any other subject, the law of God is the lens which identifies the good guys and the bad guys, and which shows the correct course of action as well as the sinful one. Without the glasses of Scripture, we can forget the reality that there is no such thing as brute factuality.

For a consistent and Biblically governed faith, all the facts of nature and history are the creation of the triune God. The facts of nature and history are totally governed by the God who ordained them and created them and who, by His eternal decree and comprehensive counsel, absolutely undergirds their every detail. All facts are thus God-given facts. As Van Til stated it, "All that may be known by man is already known by

God. And it is already known by God because it is controlled by God" All knowledge therefore is of God-created and God-interpreted facts.²

Meditation Day and Night

Psalm 119 powerfully shows the reality of the law of God as the fabric of life and the means of sanctification in the life of the believer. The psalmist demonstrates repeatedly his reliance on God's law to bolster and sustain him. Rushdoony comments,

[I]t is not enough that there be conformity to the law in any formal sense. God must be served "with joyfulness, and with gladness of heart," or else there is not true obedience at all. Formal obedience is merely the prelude to actual disobedience. This stress on true obedience, on a joyful and heartfelt pursuit of the law's purpose and order, is basic to an understanding of Psalm 119. The psalmist by faith obeys, and his delight is in the law of the Lord. His only liberty is under law. The law is his mainstay against evil, and his guide and light on his daily path. Life for the psalmist means God's law.³

This psalm reads like journal entries in the life of David. His utter reliance on the law of God is voiced in almost every one of the 176 verses. These words, inspired by the Holy Spirit, provide God's people with a way to strengthen themselves in their Christian walk and sanctification.

Parents who desire to obey God, by providing a Christian education for their children, need to arrange the curriculum so that the Kingdom of God is the top priority. This is the essence of the direction God gave Moses as

He gave him the law. The purpose in the giving of the law was so that the people of God would learn it, live it, and teach it. In fact, as Dr. Miles Jones⁴ has pointed out, God not only gave them the commandments by which to live, He also gave them the means of transmitting it to their children, and ultimately the rest of mankind.

The Sinai Covenant was a teaching covenant. “I will give thee ... commandments which I have written; that thou mayest teach them” (Ex. 24:12). The Hebrews were commanded to teach the word of God and the writing of God. “Thou shalt read this law” (Deut. 31:11). Moses first read the holy writing to the assembled nation of Israel, then Aaron and the Levite priesthood taught reading to the heads of households. Finally, every believer was to teach the word and the writing of God to their children. “And thou shalt teach them diligently unto thy children ... And thou shalt write them upon the posts of thy house, and on thy gates” (Deut. 6:7–8). The commands to read and write make it clear Sinai was a literacy covenant. Since the letters were also used as numbers, it was also a covenant to teach numeracy as evidenced by God’s many directives requiring mathematics in the book of Numbers, “According to the commandment of the LORD they were numbered ...” (Num. 4:49).

The Lord did not simply command believers to have knowledge of the law but also the ability to read, write, and teach it to their children. Exodus 19:5–6 was a statement that believers would have the task of preserving and carrying the word and the writing of God to others, “for all the world is mine.” Because of this great commission, learning the characters of the alphabet and their use was a major purpose of the Sinai Covenant. The writing of God exemplified the alphabetic principle of one symbol for each consonant sound of the language. At Sinai, the Israelites received

the *alphabetic principle* of the writing of God as surely as they received the *moral principle* of the word of God. The word and the writing of God guided the Israelites’ path and that of mankind as well. These two principles became the basis of law and literacy in Western civilization.⁵

As we face the self-destruction of humanism, our task is to be prepared, and to prepare our children, to lead in terms of the Kingdom of God. This must include evaluating all subject areas, occupations, political decisions, and family and community life according to God’s law-word, and do so deliberately and self-consciously. If we fail to do so and continue to use the old wineskins of humanistic/statist law, the results are predictable.

God’s law, in its Biblical statement as well as when faithfully mediated through family, church, state, or school, is the God-ordained means of *light*, the valid means of prediction. Man, walking by faith in obedience to God’s law, walks to a great degree by sight. To walk without law is to walk in darkness.

The mediated law cannot take the place of basic law, God’s *tora*. The mediated law must in fact be identical with the divine *tora*. Application, not innovation or addition, is the duty of a mediating person or agency ...

If a man denies God’s law or direction, he has denied himself any relationship to God, and “even his prayer shall be an abomination” to God, a moral offense, for to pray to the God whose direction we despise is to add insult to our offenses.⁶

Reconstructing our lives to conform to God’s law not only prevents His wrath, but showers us with His blessing. Thus, instead of a retreatist mentality so prevalent among many professing Christians, or a mindset which equates the Kingdom of God with nationalistic political action, our perspective must

include a practical adherence to “every word which proceeds out of the mouth of God” (Matt. 4:4).

[O]ur Lord emphatically declares that the test of faith is a very practical one: do men bear good fruit here and now (Matt. 7:15–20)? “The peaceable fruit of righteousness” (Heb. 12:11) is simply the result of God’s chastening of His sons, to cleanse them of fruitlessness and to lead them into righteousness, and it means results here and now. “The night cometh, when no man can work” (John 9:4). If Christians have a blocked future, then the world is in a fearful condition, because it is Christians who are the light of the world and the salt of the earth (Matt. 5:13–15).⁷

Teach by Example

Teach your children to delight in the law by demonstrating in your own life how the law equips you to avoid problems and dilemmas you face. Parents should share with their children how they reach their decisions and why they pursue certain courses of action. For instance:

- Do your children see that you tithe? Do you share with them how you determine how to distribute it?
- Do your children see that you live debt free? Do they understand how you set aside money for the things you want rather than rack up credit card bills?
- Do your children witness you making choices about what you will read and watch based on applying Phillipians 4:8?
- Do your children see you actively pursuing fellowship with other believers and obeying the Great Commission (making disciples and teaching God’s law) with those outside the faith?
- Do you correct your children using God’s law as the standard and helping them see how each and every

offense is an offense against God?

- Do you share with your children circumstances where you had to make a choice that was difficult because you knew the law must be followed?

A Case in Point

There are many family stories I could share about living out the law of God in real circumstances. However, one stands out as a great example of how the law acted as a lamp and light for my family. It is a story that each of my children heard when they were old enough to understand it, and one that continues to strengthen me to this day. It was one of many times that Psalm 119 became a “personal” psalm in my family.

It was December 1984 and I was pregnant with my second child. The dealership where my husband worked at the time had a Christmas party for the sales people. After the salesmen’s dinner, before the men got their Christmas bonuses, the management provided “entertainment.” It involved strippers.

My husband was faced with a dilemma. He knew he didn’t want to have anything to do with this, but was concerned that if he left, he might forfeit his bonus which totaled almost \$2,000—money that we could immediately put to good use. Because he was a student of God’s law, who had been practicing its application, he knew that he could not stay. So, he got up and left as soon as he realized what was about to take place. *The wicked have waited for me to destroy me: but I will consider thy testimonies* (v. 95).

He found the nearest payphone (that was before the cell phone revolution) and called me up quite frazzled. He was talking so fast that all I could gather was that he was sorry that he gave up the \$2,000 bonus but he couldn’t in good conscience stay. When I finally

heard the story, tears came to my eyes. I told him that I was grateful God had given me a husband who valued his Savior and his marriage enough to do the right thing. *Therefore, I esteem all thy precepts concerning all things to be right; and I hate every false way* (v. 128).

After he got off the phone, there were two other salesmen waiting to talk with him. Each explained that they were uncomfortable with what was happening and knew it was wrong but didn’t want to anger their boss and decided to stay put and not leave. However, when they saw my husband exit, it gave them the strength to do the right thing. *Let those that fear thee turn unto me, and those that have known thy testimonies* (v. 79).

As it turned out, the next day at work his bonus was waiting for him. *My soul hath kept thy testimonies; and I love them exceedingly. I have kept thy precepts and thy testimonies: for all my ways are before thee* (vv. 167–168).

Every Word

We must live by every word that proceeds out of the mouth of God (Deut. 8:3; Matt. 4:4). We must learn it, live it, and teach it. This is the real Kingdom work and it is only possible by God’s grace as we take His every law as a command word. As Rushdoony puts it,

God through His law speaks to every man. With the coming of Christ and the new creation, beginning with His resurrection, and continuing in our regeneration, the law is now written in our hearts (Jer. 31:31–34). Every man in Christ must be a walking law and an evidence of the presence of the Holy Spirit. God’s government of the world begins with the self-government of the Christian man.⁸

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1. R. J. Rushdoony, *Institutes of Biblical Law*, vol. 1 (Nutley, NJ: Presbyterian and Reformed Publishing Company, 1973), 689–690.
2. Apologetics: Facts and Presuppositions, Adapted from *Word of Flux: Modern Man and the Problem of Knowledge* (Chalcedon website). See <http://chalcedon.edu/topics/apologetics-2/>
3. R. J. Rushdoony, *Law and Society: Institutes of Biblical Law*, vol. 2 (Vallecito, CA: Ross House Books, 1982), 231.
4. For a greater insight on this topic listen to my podcast with Dr. Miles Jones available at www.chalcedon.edu entitled “The Call From Sinai.”
5. Miles R. Jones, *The Writing of God: Secret of the Real Mount Sinai* (Dallas, TX: Johnson Publishers, 2010), 13.
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7. R. J. Rushdoony, *God’s Plan for Victory* (Vallecito, CA: Ross House Books, [1977] 1997), 17.
8. R. J. Rushdoony, *Sovereignty* (Vallecito, CA: Ross House Books, 2007), 11.

The Lion's World: A Journey into the Heart of Narnia

by Rowan Williams

(Oxford University Press, Oxford, UK: 2012) Reviewed by Lee Duigon



I approached this book with some misgivings. During his ten years as Archbishop of Canterbury (2002–2012), Rowan Williams seemed

to blunder into one controversy after another, like a stranger lost in an unlit china shop at midnight. (“Maybe we could have some sharia law in Britain ...” *crash* “How about some female bishops?” *smash* “Let’s ordain gay clergy ... er, maybe not ...” *boom*) It was not a good ten years for the worldwide Anglican Communion, and I formed a strong impression of Archbishop Williams as a feckless nincompoop. What insight could such a ninnie give me into Narnia?

Before I finished reading this little book (144 pages), I came to learn that Rowan Williams is not a fool, and not a false prophet out to subvert the Christian faith. This is a wise book by a man who loves the Lord and has delight in others who love God. It’s written with feeling, in clear and simple language not often achieved by academics at Williams’ level.

It belongs in your library, right next to the *Chronicles of Narnia* by C. S. Lewis.

Not to make too much of it, but I have learned a lesson—judge no one by what you read about him in the papers. The stories might be true, but they won’t be the whole truth.

It seems to me now that Williams was simply the wrong man for the

job. Being Archbishop of Canterbury from 2002 to 2012 was going to be a challenge and a minefield for anyone who dared to try it. I find it makes me surprisingly happy to have to change my mind about him.

All of which is a roundabout way of saying that *The Lion’s World* is well worth reading.

The Point of Narnia

In his Preface, Williams writes, “I can only confess to being repeatedly humbled and reconverted by Lewis in a way that is true of few other modern Christian writers” (p. xi). We applaud Williams for keeping the focus tightly fixed on C. S. Lewis and his seven books about the fantasy world of Narnia—written for children, and loved also by adults the world over.

In these books, writes Williams, “Lewis is trying to recreate for the reader what it is *like* to encounter and believe in God” (p. 16). Why? Because, “The point of Narnia is to help us rinse out what is stale in our thinking about Christianity” (p. 28). What could be a bigger problem in Christianity than simply taking it for granted? But in the Narnia books, Lewis tried to put his readers in a position of seeing Christ for the very first time, as something new and fresh and strange—strange enough to make us hungry to know much more.

Lewis invited his readers to encounter Jesus Christ in an unfamiliar form—Aslan, the great lion who sang the world of Narnia into existence. Writes

Williams, “[T]he essential thing is this invitation to hear the story as if we had never heard it before. And for a growing number of readers who actually *haven’t*, the effectiveness can be measured” (p. 29).

Have we here encountered something new? When the Narnia books were first published in the 1950s, it was a different world: still Christian, if only on the surface. Things that are commonplace today—e.g., atheists being lionized as oracles, notorious homosexuals being feted at the White House, baby showers for out-of-wedlock births—were then unheard of. Narnia was popular and successful then. But could it be, under God’s providence, that the books will be even more fruitful now than they were then? Because they are more needed now?

We can see a parallel in Rowan Williams’ own career. His ten years as Archbishop of Canterbury, whatever we might think of his performance in that office, came to an end in 2012. He stepped down and took a less exalted post, Master of Magdalene College, Cambridge.

In January of this year, in his new role, Williams engaged in a formal debate at Oxford with world-famous atheist militant Richard Dawkins—and decisively defeated him.¹ With the atheists falling back on sophomore penis jokes, the ex-archbishop was voted the winner by a crushing margin of two to one.

To clobber the world’s loudest and

most celebrated atheist in debate, at a major Western university which the atheist would probably consider his own home turf, is a glorious achievement in God's service—in my own opinion, greater than anything Williams was able to accomplish as Archbishop of Canterbury. Might it not be that his most fruitful work still lies ahead of him? We probably won't hear about it in the news; but he may reach minds at Cambridge that he couldn't reach from Canterbury. His quiet service as a teacher, out of the public eye, may bring forth abundantly.

To Know Him by Another Name

Williams is suggesting that such might be the case with Narnia. The Western world today is full of children who, had they been born sixty years ago, would have been raised as at least nominally Christian, but who are now raised with no Christian instruction at all. At the same time, Christian homeschooling continues to grow steadily. This home-schooled Christian generation will grow up to find a vast mission field laid out before them, right on their doorstep.

In this different world, with different opportunities for a classic book to have an impact, the young missionaries who have read Narnia will have learned that Jesus Christ can be approached in unexpected ways, and met in unexpected places. Williams quotes from the end of *The Voyage of the Dawn Treader*. Lucy has just asked the Lion, "And how can we live, never meeting you?"

"But you shall meet me, dear one," said Aslan.

"Are—are you there, too, Sir?" said Edmund.

"I am," said Aslan. "But there I have another name. You must learn to know me by that name. This was the very reason why you were brought to Narnia, that by knowing me here for a little, you may know me better there" (p. 143).

For the work of re-Christianizing the West, the new generation of missionaries will have to be creative. The Narnia books are an example of how that might be done.

But Rowan Williams writes that many of us have a recurring need to re-Christianize ourselves. He cites a critic who "speaks of the shock of finding on the last page of *The Last Battle* [the seventh and final Chronicle of Narnia—ed.] the great lion ... given a capital H—'and as He spoke to them, He no longer looked like a lion': pure shock, as if cold water had spouted up from the page." Williams concludes, "Lewis could have asked no better reaction than such a shock, the shock of unexpected homecoming as the Lion's world is revealed once and for all as our own" (p. 144).

Be Transformed

For Williams, this is what the Narnia books are all about: to re-encounter Jesus, to refresh and renew one's relationship with Christ—or, for some, to meet Him for the first time, maybe without even realizing that it's Jesus, and at least to *imagine* being loved by Him: to taste God's grace and see that it is good (p. 142).

Williams examines other issues, too. He answers Narnia's critics, past and present; explores the concept of Christianity as a kind of rebellion against the world: not only against the world, but against the whole mass of lies, rationalizations, and delusions which we build around our own selves, that hide us from the truth; and explains how Christians must deal with both the world and with themselves as they truly are, not as how we wish to think they are. But he never loses sight of his main theme: that the Chronicles help us to re-discover Jesus Christ and renew our minds in Him. It's no accident that the Christian teacher and commentator, R. C. Sproul Sr., named his long-running radio show,

"Renewing Your Mind," after St. Paul's teaching in Romans 12:2,

"And be not conformed to this world; but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God."

A month ago, had anyone suggested to me that I would ever find Williams and Sproul on the same page, I would have gaped at him in sheer amazement. But then I wouldn't have expected Williams and C. S. Lewis to go together, either.

I have learned some valuable lessons from this book and I think that you will, too. 🙏

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1. <http://www.theguardian.com/science/2013/feb/01/richard-dawkins-rowan-williams-debate>

Infallible Man

By R. J. Rushdoony



Salvation is a concern common to all political theorists and activists, because the world as it exists is obviously not right.

Political theories are thus presented as plans of salvation, although they are not labelled as such. Basic to all non-Christian political thought since Plato is the attempt to save man by political efforts on the part of man through the state. God and the supernatural are ruled out as inadmissible: what saves man must come from man.

This means statist power. Since an authoritative, binding, and saving word from God is ruled out, it means an authoritative word from man. That word must be the Right Word, the binding word. Rousseau raised this question at the beginning of *The Social Contract*:

However strong a man, he is never strong enough to remain master always, unless he transform his Might into Right, and Obedience into Duty. Hence we have come to speak of the Right of the Strongest, a right which, seemingly assumed in irony, has, in fact, become established in principle. But the meaning of the phrase has never been adequately explained. Strength is a physical attribute, and I fail to see how any moral sanction can attach to its effects. To yield to the strong is an act of necessity, not of will. At most it is the result of a dictate of prudence. How, then, can it become a duty?¹

Man needs a standard, a criterion for Right, Duty, and Justice. What the sovereign God of Scripture had once provided needed now to be succeeded

for Rousseau by a new sovereign with a new word. This new sovereign was for Rousseau “the body politic,” or the state, i.e., the state as the totality of its people. It is the people who are sovereign, but the people in social contract, organizing a state. By definition this sovereign power is the inerrant voice of the people:

Now, the Sovereign People, having no existence outside that of the individuals who compose it, has, and can have, no interest at variance with theirs. Consequently, the sovereign power need give no guarantee to its subjects, since it is impossible that the body should wish to injure all its members, nor, as we shall see later, can it injure any single individual. The Sovereign, by merely existing, is always what it should be. But the same does not hold true of the relation of subject to sovereign. In spite of common interest, there can be no guarantee that the subject will observe his duty to the sovereign unless means are found to ensure his loyalty.²

Here we have the exaltation of the state into the truly Grand Inquisitor of all history: the state is infallible, but the people are not, and means must be found to “ensure the loyalty of the people.” In Rousseau’s words, “it may be necessary to compel a man to be free.” Freedom in this sense is the freedom of the “political machine” to fulfil its goals.³ Rousseau stresses this again and again: the state incorporates and incarnates the general will, which is infallible; the individual will cannot set itself against the general will. “The general will is always right and ever tends to the public advantage.”⁴

There can be no freedom for anyone or any institution from this omnipotent, indestructible, inerrant, and infallible general will. The church must emphatically be brought into submission to it. Like Hobbes, Rousseau demanded that “all should be brought into a single political whole, without which no State and no Government can ever be firmly established.”⁵

Rousseau’s state is a corporate and mystical body. It is a merger of the Christian ideas of the church and of God to constitute a divine-human order on earth. The political order was converted by Rousseau into man’s new God, Savior, and church. Infallibility was thus transferred from God and His word to the general will and its political order.

Rousseau’s legislator is thus one who “must, in every way, be an extraordinary figure in the State. He is so by reason of his genius, and no less so by that of his office. He is neither magistrate nor sovereign. His function is to constitute the State.”⁶ This great man who lays down the foundations for the democratic state which incarnates the general will is a man-god who has “no contact with our nature” and is something of a god, or, if more than one, gods. The experts who thus create this new social order are, like Plato’s law-giver and Machiavelli’s founder prince, more than ordinary human beings:

In order to discover what social regulations are best suited to nations, there is needed a superior intelligence which can survey all the passions of mankind, though itself exposed to none: an intelligence having no contact with

our nature, yet knowing it to the full: an intelligence, the well-being of which is independent of our own, yet willing to be concerned with it: which, finally, viewing the long perspectives of time, and preparing for itself a day of glory as yet far distant, will labor in one century to reap its reward in another. In short, only Gods can give laws to men.⁷

Here we see the genesis of the new gods, the intellectuals and the scientific socialist experts. We cannot understand the arrogance of the intellectuals and the scientific experts unless we realize that modern political thought has called them into being as the new gods of creation.

Rousseau required “a purely civil profession of faith,” i.e., faith in the state as lord rather than in the God of Scripture. “Any man who, after acknowledging these articles of faith, proceeds to act as though he did not believe them, is deserving of the death penalty.”⁸ The state is the order of salvation. Hence, “anyone who dares to say ‘Outside the Church there can be no salvation,’ should be banished from the State.”⁹

Rousseau’s ideas, despite all their contradiction, met with a ready response because man’s faith was now in man as incarnated in the state. Condorcet saw the future as a happy road of progress, because the West, meaning the humanistic thinkers of the West, had discovered “simple truths and infallible methods.”¹⁰

John Stuart Mill, in *On Liberty*, presented the individual as sovereign, over himself and over his own mind at least. Herbert Spencer held that every man has the freedom to do all that he wills, provided that he did not infringe on the same freedom of any other man.

Infallibility in all this was not denied. It was transferred from God and His Word to Nature and the laws of nature, and then to the state or to

individual man. Spencer’s future society is a millennial picture, not unlike Marx’s perfect communism. The new man lives then in a new estate made possible by the new freedom of the true state. For Spencer, the new infallibility was in the evolutionary process.

The new infallibility has had its prophets. Claude Henri de Saint-Simon and Auguste Comte each saw himself as the inspired prophet of a new age for mankind. Saint-Simon wrote of “the voice of God” issuing “through his mouth,” and of himself as the messiah of the new creed.¹¹ Comte saw himself as both the new prophet and pope of the post-Christian era. More than that, he saw himself as being identical with the Great Being or God, i.e., Humanity and its general will. Rousseau’s legislators were asserting their presence! Mazzini saw himself also as mankind’s prophet-savior, although he also identified the messiah with the whole people of the nation which moved into the new age. Hegel asserted the infallible nature of the new state and its absolute power. Proudhon, affirming man’s absolute liberty, declared that man must remake himself by defeating and killing the God of Scripture. Only then could man realize himself.

In more recent years, the plain-speaking of these earlier humanists is gone, but the presumption and faith still remain. Skinner is no less Rousseau’s god-man than Comte, and the same is true of countless other scientists and intellectuals.

In brief, infallibility is *not* a doctrine limited to theological studies. It is a fact of contemporary life, with the new gods claiming for themselves that power which properly belongs only to God

Therefore, any discussion of infallibility which confines itself to a discussion of what theologians have said is blind to the problems of our time. The

new infallibility doctrine confronts us in art, politics, and the sciences. Failure to challenge these rivals of God and enemies of His Word and Kingdom is faithlessness and incompetence. To sit idly by while these new doctrines of infallibility parade their pretensions and to assume that a Sunday morning assertion concerning Scripture suffices is cowardice and desertion. 🏴‍☠️

1. Jean-Jacques Rousseau, “The Social Contract,” Book I, Chapter III, “Of the Right of the Strong,” in Sir Ernest Barker, editor, *Social Contract, Essays by Locke, Hume and Rousseau* (London, England: Oxford University Press, [1947] 1958), 244.

2. Ibid., “Of the Sovereign,” Bk. I, Chap. VII, 260.

3. Ibid., 261.

4. Ibid., “Whether the General Will Can Err,” Bk. II, Chap. III, 274.

5. Ibid., Bk. IV, Chap. VIII, 429.

6. Ibid., Bk. III, Chap. VIII, 292

7. Ibid., 290f.

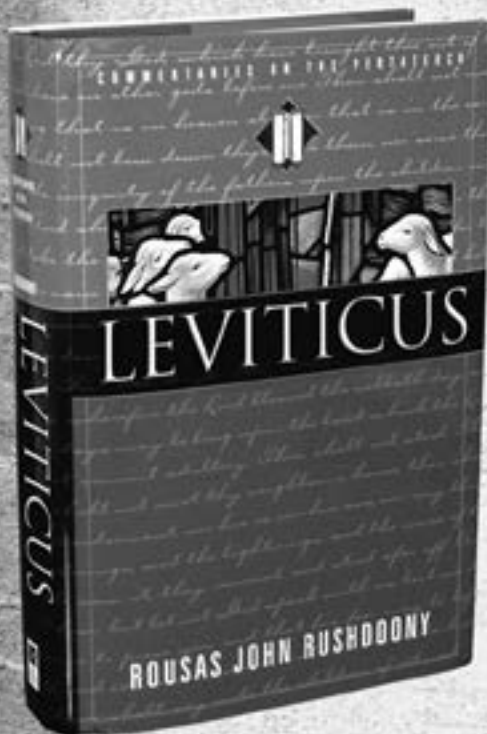
8. Ibid., Bk. IV, Chap. VIII, 437f.

9. Ibid., 439.

10. Dante Germino, *Modern Western Political Thought: Machiavelli to Marx* (Chicago, IL: Rand, McNally, 1972), 164.

11. Frank E. Manuel, *The Prophets of Paris* (Cambridge, MASS: Harvard University Press, [1962] 1965), 142.

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(Reprinted from *A Word in Season*, Vol. 4 [Vallecito, CA: Ross House Books, 2012], 139.)



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Selbrede ... Ultimate Meme cont. from page 9

The view that the “brief word of exhortation” mentioned in Hebrews is the book of Hebrews itself strains credulity: it contains 13 chapters of the most complex theology this side of Romans. The 25-verse epistle of Jude is a far better candidate. Unfortunately, some translations have attempted to distort these texts to conform to modern notions of authorship (or lack thereof).

6. This is, of course, a huge understatement deployed solely for its ironic effect. There *is* no more important meme than the Word of God.

Raymond... Economics cont. from page 13

to the general population in your local community you may be able to reverse the trend of oppressive property taxation. You will at least stir the pot and begin debate. Gary North calls these “Brush Fire Wars.” Rather than being silent on these issues, Christendom must become conspicuously vocal. This will get people thinking. It may even get them talking and perhaps you can get them to act accordingly.

3. Lastly, since the banking and monetary system is flawed to the extent of being evil, you should reconsider your personal stewardship by investing your dollars in something other than a savings account, money market accounts, or the stock market. You may be able to purchase land and then sell it at a profit so as to tithe the profit (or give it outright) to a faithful ministry. You may wish to give an endowment to a faithful Kingdom advancing college or institution. Monthly financial support to faithful ministries is always helpful as so many of them depend on your support. You may be entrepreneurially minded and seek to start a profitable business with ministerial goals. You can even donate your time to some of these ministries in their operational or fundraising tasks. The list of things you

can do is exhaustive. Be creative. Think Biblically—then take action Biblically. In this way Christendom can be restored to a place of cultural prominence and dominion based upon the holy standard of His righteousness, the law-word of God, the Holy Scriptures. 🙌

Rev. Paul Michael Raymond is the pastor of the Reformed Bible Church in Appomattox, VA, and founder of the Institute for Theonomic Reformation (www.hisglory.us).

1. The Greek word *exousia*, translated in the KJV as “power” should be translated as “authority.” The word used is not to indicate a force but rather a lawfully conferred authority or jurisdiction given by a supreme magistrate.

2. David W. Hall and Matthew D. Burton, *Calvin and Commerce: The Transforming Power of Calvinism in Market Economics* (Phillipsburg, NJ: P & R Publishing Co., 2009).

3. John Jefferson Davis, *Your Wealth in God's World* (Phillipsburg, NJ: P & R Publishing Co., 1984), 111.

4. John M. Otis, *Glorifying God with Your Wealth* (Corpus Christi, TX: Triumphant Publications, 2006), 21–22.

5. Edward A. Powell and R. J. Rushdoony, *Tithing & Dominion* (Vallecito, CA: Ross House Books, 1979), 27.

6. *Ibid.*, 1.

7. *Ibid.*, 2.

8. *Ibid.*, 3.

9. *Ibid.*

10. *Ibid.*, 4.

11. *Ibid.*, 9.

12. *Ibid.*, 30.

13. *Ibid.*, 9.

14. R. J. Rushdoony, *The Roots of Reconstruction* (Vallecito, CA: Ross House Books, 1991), 545.

15. *Tithing and Dominion*, 35, 36, 37.

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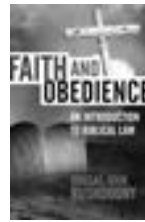
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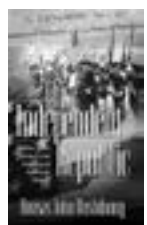
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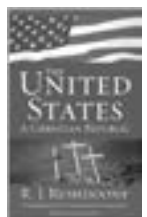


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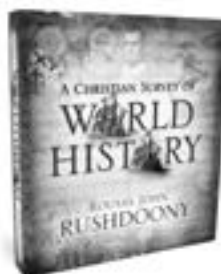
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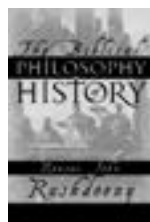
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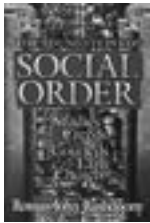
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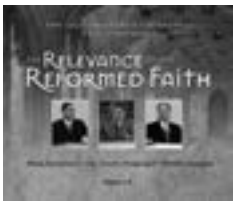


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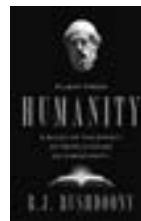


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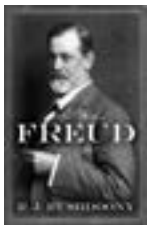


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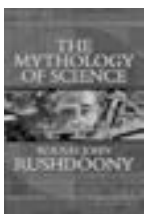
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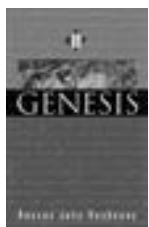
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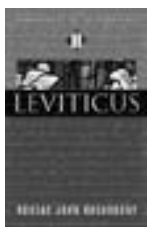
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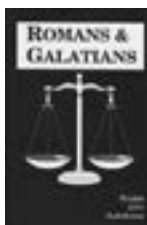
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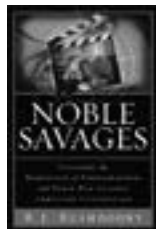
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Rushdoony elucidates the Christian's calling to charity and its implications for Godly dominion.

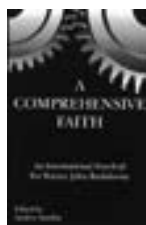
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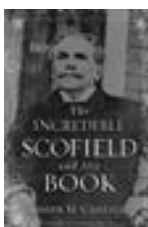
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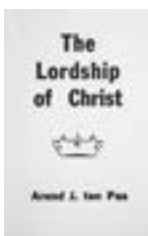
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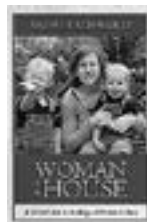


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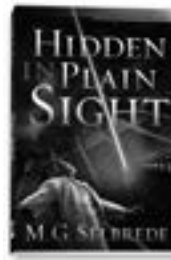
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