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March/April 2018

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

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Jesus, the Deepening River and the Blinding Light

By Mark R. Rushdoony



Six months before His crucifixion, Jesus stood in the temple on the last day of the Feast of Tabernacles and declared

If any man thirst, let him come unto me, and drink. He that believeth on me, as the Scripture hath said, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water. (John 7:37b–38)

The following day was the octave, the “eighth day” of the feast. Though the feast was technically only seven days, the following eighth day was a “holy convocation” observed as a Sabbath day. None of the pilgrims to Jerusalem would have begun their travels home, so the temple would have been crowded once more before feast-goers began their travels home. Once again Jesus spoke out, this time saying,

I am the light of the world: He that followeth me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life. (John 8:12)

These two declarations are usually dealt with in a vacuum, as abstract spiritual metaphors with little or no reference to their context in the Feast of Tabernacles.

Going to Jerusalem

Jesus had been urged to attend the Feast of Tabernacles by His brethren (John 7:2–10). Their desire was that Jesus perform “good works” or miracles so that He could not be ignored. A turning point had occurred in Galilee after the feeding of the 5,000. Jesus refused to

be made their king and demanded they accept Him as the bread of life, their life-giving manna sent from God (John 6:48–51). At that, many who had followed Him turned away (v. 66). The accusation of the religious leaders, that His power was demonic (Matt. 12:22–30), likely frightened away the faint of heart. The cumulative effect of the attrition was so obvious that Jesus asked the twelve, “Will ye also go away?” (John 6:67)

These family members of Jesus therefore made the suggestion that Jesus go to Jerusalem and so display His miracles to the feast-goers that His popularity and acceptance would be guaranteed. Their intention was to see Jesus accepted, but their suggestion was that He so overwhelm them with miracles that faith was unnecessary. Jesus let these family members go to Jerusalem on their own. He followed, but “in secret,” that is privately, not as a spectacle, and He arrived after the feast had begun (John 7:14).

When Jesus left Galilee and went to Jerusalem, He was walking into a viper pit. This was the stronghold of Jewish religion. The city was full of priests and various sects, all easily identifiable by their dress. The attacks of the scribes and Pharisees in Galilee, if not coordinated from Jerusalem, had at least been done with their approval. These supposedly pious religious leaders had early conspired with those close to Herod in Galilee to destroy Jesus, likely hoping he would imprison Jesus as he had John (Mark 3:6). This is why Jesus had responded to His brethren’s suggestion

that He go to Jerusalem with, “The world cannot hate you; but me it hateth . . .” The hate of which He spoke was a vicious one.

We need not assume Jesus knew this by supernatural means alone. He had, by now, three years of interaction with these religious leaders. His fame very early extended to all parts of Palestine (Matt. 4:24), so they kept close watch on Him. Early in His ministry, Jesus had gone to Jerusalem and healed the man at the Pool of Bethesda (John 5). Ignoring the miracle, the religious leaders had focused on the fact that Jesus had told the man to pick up his bed and go home. That they saw as a violation of the Sabbath. In reality, it was only contrary to their rules of what constituted Sabbath observance, not a violation of any commandment. For violating their rules, they sought to “persecute” Jesus and even “to slay him” (v.16). Not one to appease evil men, Jesus then referred to God as His Father, so that they “sought the more to kill him, because he not only had broken the Sabbath, but said also that God was his Father, making himself equal with God” (v. 18).

The will to see Jesus neutralized, even dead, was thus a long-standing contingency in Jerusalem. A warning had been made that if anyone proclaimed Jesus as the Messiah, they would be excommunicated from the synagogue (John 9:22), a shunning so thorough its financial repercussions alone would reduce an individual to poverty. The mere mention of Jesus had to be done carefully for fear of the authorities (John 7:13). When Jesus then

went to Jerusalem and appeared in the temple during the Feast of Tabernacles, the opposition of the religious establishment to Jesus was already determined. Because they did not have the authority to execute Him (that later took the cooperation of Pilate, the Roman governor), their principal attacks were designed to discredit and deflate His popularity, as was clearly in view in the case of the woman taken in adultery. Nevertheless, the desire to kill Jesus was present, as the disciples noted when Jesus determined to return to Jerusalem (John 11:7, 8, 16).

The Feast of Tabernacles

It is easy for us to miss the significance of the Feast of Tabernacles, as well as brief references, such as John's time-stamp in verse 37: "In the last day, that great *day* of the feast ..." ¹ Both are important to understand the significance of the words of Jesus when He "stood and cried, saying, if any man thirst, let him come unto me, and drink. He that believeth on me, as the Scripture hath said, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water" (vv. 37–38). The reference to living water seems, to us, completely extraneous, out-of-the-blue. Our other-worldly view of spirituality inclines us to create a purely esoteric interpretation of the rivers of water Jesus referenced. But Jesus stood and "cried" it, which implies He said it in a loud voice, with emphasis, as a declaration, likely commandeering the attention of the temple crowds. This was not a "spiritual" teaching (which would have been done seated), but a loud pronouncement in the crowded temple. The reference to rivers of water would have been immediately known to the celebrants.

The Feast of Tabernacles was the most joyous of the Jewish celebrations. It is also called the Feast of Tents or Ingathering. It was celebrated from the 15th to the 22nd of Tishri, in the fall

after the harvest was done. It was thus comparable to the American Thanksgiving, yet it was also to commemorate God's provision for His people in the wilderness, when they were taken from the security of Egyptian life and were waiting for the realization of His promise of the land of Canaan.

The feast itself lasted seven days, but the eighth day, the "octave," was observed as a Sabbath and often referred to as part of it. A great deal of ritual, in and out of the temple, was observed. Prior to the feast, the people erected booths, or huts, to represent their temporary shelters in the wilderness. Numerous sacrifices were offered throughout the week as prescribed in Scripture. So many were offered it was the only celebration in which all the priestly orders took part.

The most unique part of the temple ceremony was the carrying of water by priests to the temple altar, accompanied by crowds waving branches and carrying fruit. The priests filled pitchers of water from the Pool of Siloam (outside Jerusalem) and entered the "Watergate" chanting the "Great Hallel" (halleluiah, or praise to God), each part repeated by the people waving their branches. The water represented the miraculous provision of God to sustain His people before they realized the Promised Land. The procession of priests with water was joined by one of priests carrying wine, perhaps to represent the prosperity of the land. Both joined to pour out their pitchers at the base of the altar. This water ceremony is not prescribed in Scripture, but is likely of ancient practice. It is likely the reference of Isaiah 12, especially verse 3, "Therefore with joy shall we draw water out of the wells of salvation." ²

The observances took the people back to a time when they had to anticipate God's promises, but it also referenced promises made by the

prophets which were yet unfulfilled. Isaiah had spoken of God's people being "like a watered garden, and like a spring of water, whose waters fail not" (Isa. 58:11). Ezekiel 47 contains a long description of a vision of water flowing from the altar. The prophet described its beginning as small, but enlarging at a distance to ankle-depth, then further to the knees, then to the loins, then so deep it could not be forded. The waters transformed the lands they touched, so that "everything shall live whither the river cometh" (v. 9). Zechariah echoed this description of the blessings of God: "And it shall be in that day, that *living waters shall go out from Jerusalem*" (Zech. 14:8).

The Jews had known blessings, and the fruits they carried likely represented the fruits of the land into which they had been brought, but not the fullness of such as those described by Ezekiel. Yet Jesus had preached the Kingdom of Heaven and would very soon speak of its blessedness to sheep of other folds of which the people knew nothing (John 10:16). So, the historic context of the Feast of Tabernacles was the people waiting for the promise of the land to be fulfilled. That promise had been realized, but the remembrance of the wilderness anticipation of God's faithfulness also had this future orientation, because God had yet more promises to fulfill. The realized promises of God were the basis for anticipating those yet to be realized.

The ritual of the water went on for all seven days of the feast. It was a loud, joyous celebration. It was the public aspect of the feast, as most of days two through seven were spent in joyful celebrations with family and friends. The water ceremony changed slightly on its last day, the seventh. This time, the priests circled the altar not once but seven times before pouring out the wa-

ter and wine. Willow branches, which had been erected over the altar, were then shaken until their leaves fell off. Children then ate the fruit before the family huts were then dismantled.

“Come Unto Me and Drink”

We are specifically told that when Jesus offered Himself as the source of water, He “stood” and “cried” in a forceful voice for those who wanted “rivers of living water.” Alfred Edersheim believed the account only makes sense if Jesus did this at, or soon after, the conclusion of the water ceremony. The one men feared to speak of, who they would now try to arrest (John 7:45), had injected Himself into the culminating rite of the feast, because it was, in fact, about Him and the Kingdom of Heaven. He was demanding what was rightfully His. He co-opted the ceremony the religious leaders did not fully understand. The sacrilege was theirs.

John, writing some years later, provided us with our best commentary on the meaning of what Christ’s promise of living waters meant: “But this spake he of the Spirit, which they that believe on him should receive: for the Holy Ghost was not yet given; because that Jesus was not yet glorified” (v. 39). After a week of festivities, Jesus had directed the attention of all in the temple to Himself. Despite the standing threats, some ventured to claim Jesus must be Elijah or the Messiah (vv. 40–41, cf. Mal. 4:5–6). When the religious leaders became agitated and prepared to move against Jesus, Nicodemus, a member of the Sanhedrin, urged fairness, but was denounced, their minds were already made up that Jesus was not the Messiah (vv. 50–52).

To us, living water is a mere analogy. To those at the Feast of Tabernacles, it was a clear reference to a river of God’s blessing they believed was certain of fulfillment, even if they were not cer-

tain how. Jesus said, if you want those blessings to flow and grow into a river no man can ford, believe on me. Two thousand years later, the blessings that flow from Jesus are, indeed, a river that cannot be passed over.

The “Octave” of the Feast

Another tradition at the Feast of Tabernacles was the erection of four huge lampstands in the court of the temple. Each had a basin of oil. The wicks of these lamps were retired priestly garments. Young men, all sons of priests, stood on ladders to keep the basins supplied with oil, so this certainly indicates a rapid burn of a large amount of oil. Women filled the galleries while men crowded into the court. The light from these lamps filled the temple, reflecting off its gold, and the glow from the temple could be seen throughout Jerusalem. This was not a solemn ceremony. Men danced with lighted torches, accompanied by music and singing. Gamaliel I, the teacher of Paul, is said to have been a particularly talented dancer, who threw his torches into the air and caught them while dancing. This was repeated the first six nights of the Feast. It was called “the rejoicing of the drawing of water,” so this tradition³ was obviously referencing the same expectations.

There had been an attempt to seize Jesus in the temple on the seventh day. Men were assigned that job but failed (John 7:44–47). On the “octave,” the eighth day which followed the feast, Jesus again entered the temple. This time, the authorities tried to discredit Him over the woman taken in adultery. Instead, it was they who left, defeated (v. 9).

It was then that Jesus declared, “I am the light of the world: he that followeth me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life” (v. 12). It is hard not to associate this statement with the ceremony of the lamps. We

cannot easily dismiss a “light show” run of six consecutive nights which represented the most spectacular its observers would ever see as the context of our Lord’s words.

Moreover, we should note the context of Christ’s words in the reference to light was in the context of a happy, loud celebration. He was not identifying Himself as a tiny glimmer of light in a sin-darkened world, but as a blinding glow that overpowered and consumed the darkness.

A Massive River and a Blinding Light

The analogy of living water should not be given a pessimistic interpretation, as if Jesus merely gives cool water to parched lips. Ezekiel’s vision was rather of a river that no man could cross that came from the altar. That was the water ceremony, and Jesus gave us water from His altar, Calvary, and, as John clearly notes, that water continues in the work of the Spirit. Indeed, the rivers of living water still increase in depth and breadth.

Jesus as the light of the world is also more than a beacon of hope in the dark. It is the nature of darkness that it must yield to light. Jesus is the light of the world, and, as the Spirit’s work increases to a mighty river, the light that is Jesus Christ is extending in time and history to the entire world. 🌟

1. The principle references to the Feast of Tabernacles are in Exod. 23:16; Lev. 23:34–43; Num. 29:12–38; Deut. 26:13–15; 31:10–13; and Neh. 8.

For a discussion of the Feast of Tabernacles, see “Tabernacles, Feast of,” in McClintock and Strong, *Cyclopedia of Biblical Theological, and Ecclesiastical Literature*. Vol. X, pp. 145–151. Also, Alfred Edersheim, *The Life and Times of Jesus the Messiah*, Book IV, Chapter VII.

2. This would contradict the supposition that practices not prescribed by Scripture are

The Bounds of Theonomy: A Critical Review of Dr. Joel McDurmon's *The Bounds of Love*

By Martin G. Selbrede

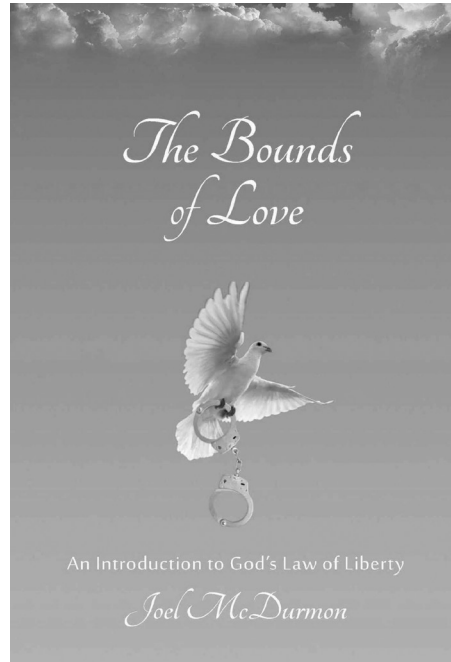


Dr. Joel McDurmon's book *The Bounds of Love: An Introduction to God's Law of Liberty*¹ joins a varied list of books intended

to introduce readers to the law of God from a theonomic perspective. Other books in this category would include the late Dr. Francis Nigel Lee's *God's Ten Commandments*² and William O. Einwechter's *Walking in the Law of the Lord*,³ while Christopher J. H. Wright defended a softer form of theonomy in 1983 from outside the discursive universe of Christian reconstruction.⁴

Heftier contributions in this field (which exceed the scope of an introduction by dint of size) include Stephen C. Halbrook's *God is Just: A Defense of the Old Testament Civil Laws*⁵ and works spanning a larger context, such as Stephen C. Perks's *The Politics of God and the Politics of Man*⁶ and Dr. Joseph Boot's *The Mission of God*.⁷ Jean-Marc Berthoud's primary work on the law of God arrives (in English) later in 2018 (review pending).

But theonomy doesn't enjoy a protective hedge that permits it to propagate its exposition of Holy Writ unmolested. Discourse over theonomy is clouded over by controversy, where its critics outnumber its advocates, and where some exchanges have evidenced more acrimony than charity. Theonomy *does* have sympathetic critics, but open hostility remains a regrettable feature of far too much of the polemic landscape.



Books in opposition to the theonomic premise sometimes warrant a response (in the spirit of Prov. 18:17), and I've examined three such books in these pages: Timothy R. Cunningham's *How Firm a Foundation*,⁸ Paul C. McGlasson's *No! A Theological Response to Christian Reconstructionism*,⁹ and Mel White's *Religion Gone Bad: The Hidden Dangers of the Christian Right*.¹⁰ Greg Loren Durand's *Judicial Warfare* may or may not be next for critical review.

Standing astride the debate, and rightly casting a long shadow over all subsequent discourse, are five key works. Two of them, Dr. R. J. Rushdoony's *Institutes of Biblical Law* (1973) and Dr. Greg Bahnsen's *Theonomy in Christian Ethics* (1977), jointly provide the initial statement of the theon-

omic thesis. Westminster Seminary's faculty mounted a response in 1990 (*Theonomy: A Reformed Critique*¹¹) that was predominantly critical of the published views of Dr. Rushdoony, Dr. Bahnsen, and Dr. Gary North. The remaining two books of *The Five* are the responses Dr. North published to counter Zondervan's publication of the Westminster critique: *Theonomy: An Informed Response*¹² and Dr. Bahnsen's *No Other Standard*.¹³ The confrontation embodied by the orchestrated collision of these five works has set the standard for all subsequent polemics.¹⁴

The False Consensus That Overshadows Debate

This background provides the *formally* acknowledged framework in which intramural debates between theonomists have traditionally taken place: one looks over one's shoulder to see how these men conducted theological battle, and for good reason. But an improperly understood undercurrent was running below the surface since the dawn of the modern theonomy movement, one that shaped the external contours of discussion *because* it suppressed details that stood to change the dynamics had they been known.

Consequently, we arrived at the point where the "No True Scotsman" fallacy has morphed into the "No Competent Theonomist" canard. This particular strategy was originally directed against Rushdoony in a one-sided war within the Reconstructionist community that anticipated social

media trolling by several decades. If it weren't for the self-proclaimed winners, the war would have had no winners at all.

Because the war (which was not in any way a cross-town rivalry) was one-sided, only one side interpreted the outcome. This paralleled the goal of Nietzsche,¹⁵ to "seize control of explanation itself," leaving observers to ponder how to apply Proverbs 18:17—or whether to even bother ("what further need have we of witnesses in light of the critical mauling we've just read?"). Consequently, we've morphed from "I'm of Apollos ... Cephas ... Paul ..." to "I'm of Bahnsen ... North ... Rushdoony ..." Instead of a natural progression toward true, mature stability, we've regressed into theological sclerosis.

As for social media criticisms of Dr. McDurmon, we need to ask: are these critics keeping it real, or keeping it real hostile? Are his theses to be properly debated, or should their author be excoriated? The prevailing big stink in that arena is Dr. McDurmon's departure from Dr. Bahnsen.¹⁶ A departure from Dr. Rushdoony, however, has become so uncontroversial that we barely hear a peep about it. The truth, of course, is that there is no theonomic confession to subscribe to. The Puritans didn't agree either, as Ernst Kevan¹⁷ has ably documented.

Enter Dr. McDurmon's *The Bounds of Love*

As a result, Dr. McDurmon's introduction to theonomy, by striking out in some reputedly novel directions, has triggered fairly strong critical responses. The author *could* have left the controversial parts of his thesis for some other larger work (where they could have been accorded greater analytic depth versus the constrained treatment this introductory format imposed). Had he done so, *The Bounds of Love* could eas-

ily have been the best introductory text on theonomy on the market without qualification. But Dr. McDurmon surely was free to shape his book as he saw fit,¹⁸ and to handle the consequences set in motion by that choice.

"... and wars ensued," as Dr. McDurmon says in a different context.¹⁹ This is unfortunate, since so much of the book is well-handled (particularly how he welds love and gospel to the law so organically). Aside from spats²⁰ with Covenanters, the big intramural dispute about the book involves Dr. McDurmon's Cherem Principle discussed in his third chapter, "Where to Draw the Lines."²¹ The author says that "this section of the book may in fact be its most important contribution."²² For this reason, it naturally became the focus of considerable intramural heat among respondents taking aim at his so-called *cherem* argument. Among these is a brief assessment by Robert Hoyle that was endorsed by Dr. Joseph C. Morecraft III.²³

The Cherem Principle Explained

Dr. McDurmon takes pains to explain the Cherem Principle (pp. 50–61) as embodying a *special*²⁴ (rather than *normal*) operation of God's law, where "God's presence was in the physical temple/tabernacle, in the altar fire, the land itself was holy and was an agent of sanctions, and the inheritance of God's covenant promises was through blood descent and external possession of the Holy Land."²⁵ As these last conditions were "drastically altered by the New Testament economy,"²⁶ Dr. McDurmon calls for the civil penalties to be re-examined.

Cherem means "devoted" in the sense of devoted wholly unto the Lord. In the instances most relevant to our discussion, it means *specialty devoted to destruction*. To be devoted unto the Lord in this sense means to be separated

from holiness of the Holy Land and immediately into God's holy presence for judgment.²⁷

Dr. McDurmon sees the change regarding *cherem* offenses in 2 Cor. 3:3–10, Heb. 10:26–29, and elsewhere. He asserts that the latter passage teaches that "the principle of *cherem* ... is transferred from earth to heaven."²⁸

The upshot is that civil penalties based on *cherem* under the Old Covenant are no longer to be enforced under the New. It is by promoting this principle that his book "adds some creative approaches to controversial questions."²⁹ If the *cherem* civil penalties are directly and solely tied to the sacrifices and offerings of the Old Covenant, the acknowledged expiration of those sacrifices may well have consequences in respect to any associated penalties.

Dr. McDurmon has labored to assemble a case for his thesis from all quarters of Scripture, as was his obligation given the task he has undertaken. His discussion testifies to his familiarity with the prevailing expositions adopted by earlier theonomists, and is wide-ranging (which it would need to be).

While we disagree³⁰ with his conclusions and many of the points in support thereof in respect to the Cherem Principle, there is no doubt of the author's sincerity, nor of the certainty that he has labored to undergird his arguments from Scripture. We must therefore look to the quality of the argumentation. We must spread at least as wide a net in our analysis as he has spread in promoting his new³¹ model. Only in this way can we properly test *the bounds of theonomy*.

Misplaced Objections to the Thesis

We must take care not to misunderstand what Dr. McDurmon is proposing. He is making a jurisdictional argument, moving the seat of judgment to the throne room of God. He

is not saying that there is no judgment: he is saying the judgment is dealt with in a different location. The perpetrator falls into the hands of the living God—which, we must recognize, is “a terrible thing” (Heb. 10:31). So we must not treat this as being some kind of “reduced sentence” or a vacating of judgment altogether.

In principle (note this qualification), theologians can be comfortable with a “change of jurisdiction” in some instances, and can recognize the gist of it in various places (Genesis 9, Zechariah 6:12–13, etc.). So it is not a matter of Dr. McDurmon’s critics refusing to accept that jurisdiction can change, but rather that they challenge this *specific claim* regarding a jurisdictional change.

One objection can be put in this way: Wouldn’t the offenders (assuming they’re unregenerate) have received the exact same eternal punishment whether or not cherem execution (as a temporal punishment) took place? Is this not, then, more lenient in theory, in light of the claim in Hebrews 2:2 that every transgression received a just recompense of reward under the law?

We need to remember Paul’s assertion to the regenerate: that he did not consider the present sufferings worthy to be compared to the exceeding weight of glory to come (Rom. 8:18; 2 Cor. 4:17). You cannot compare eternal things to temporal things, nor can you apply moral calculus to it based on raw arithmetic. As Isaiah 28:15–18 explains, death is no safe haven from ultimate justice.

Accordingly, objections to Dr. McDurmon’s thesis based solely on this consideration are problematic, and would be easy targets for counter-rebuttal on his part. Objections raised on other grounds would be of more value in determining the question properly.

Filtering Out Psychological Motives

There are two psychological angles to consider and dismiss. The first involves motives driving objections to the Cherem Principle, the second involves motives driving acceptance of it.

When confronted by this doctrine, some defenders of status quo theonomy react as if someone were challenging their religion. The doctrine of sunken costs is in play, so that more is at stake (under this mindset) than an innocent, dispassionate reexamination of Scripture. The idea *per se* is construed as fighting words, and the concomitant fight isn’t far behind.

A secondary factor is the well-known psychology of criminal prosecutors. Prosecutors always insist that they’ve got the bad guy, and far too many of them refuse to be corrected in their views by exculpatory evidence (e.g., DNA evidence showing the wrong man was accused). After all, nobody wants to be responsible for sending an innocent man to his death or to years of imprisonment.

If we’re advocating the death penalty for X, and Dr. McDurmon’s thesis implies our advocacy is in error in respect to X, we may find ourselves in the prosecutor’s shoes, at least psychologically. To avoid this trap, we must rigidly stick to exegetical concerns. Zeal should be for the truth. If the truth is the very thing in dispute, our zeal could easily be misplaced.

Resolving this improperly has serious consequences (a fact which accounts for *some* justifiable heat, albeit not all of it). If we loosen a still-binding commandment, we’re least in the Kingdom of Heaven (Matt. 5:19). If we impose a capital penalty no longer sanctioned by Scripture, we may find ourselves implicated in the lawless taking of human life (which fits the Bibli-

cal definition of murder). We don’t have the luxury of ignoring the issues that have been raised. As Dr. McDurmon states elsewhere, “a wrong answer either way would be tragic.”³²

The Cherem Principle, then, is inherently polarizing, whether it’s right or wrong. If Old Testament events are “examples unto us” (1 Cor. 10:11), both sides had better have a solid explanation for 1 Kings 20:42: “Thus saith the Lord, Because thou hast let go out of thy hand a man whom I appointed to utter destruction [*cherem*], therefore thy life shall go for his life, and thy people for his people.” The stakes are indeed high when one must sail between Scylla and Charybdis.

Some Challenges to Dr. McDurmon’s Cherem Principle

The following should not be taken as an exhaustive list of potential objections to Dr. McDurmon’s thesis. They provide him the opportunity to interact with opposing data and to illustrate how well his model can negotiate the challenges being presented.

The reader is provided the benefit of seeing the widespread implications of his model, and what it must overcome to gain acceptance. The reader can also determine how well Dr. McDurmon deals with each challenge: were his replies convincing? Depending on the quality of the interaction, this exchange could go to round two. This would be important for two reasons: (1) the issues at stake are important enough to warrant revisiting them, and (2) it would be valuable to show that intramural debate *can* be civil, positive, and edifying (putting the respectful Warfield ethos into play, versus defaulting to the scorched earth conflagration model of debate that too often prevails on social media).

Exactly When Did Cherem Jurisdiction Change?

We must ask, When, precisely, did cherem jurisdiction change? Christ's conception? Death? Ascension? When Christ executed His priestly office for us? What precisely happened between that point and 70 A.D.? Was cherem unenforceable in Canaan when God's spirit departed the temple twice?

It is indeed significant that there exists at least one scripture which specifically references the termination of cherem enforcement. The risk with the verse is that respective sides might be tempted to rush in to co-opt it for their respective hermeneutic systems. To support Dr. McDurmon's proposal, the verse *must* be transposed to the past and taken in an entirely preteristic sense. A few commentators do treat the passage preteristically, so such an approach is not unheard of. The salient question remains: is that truly the correct interpretation of the passage?

The text in question is Zech. 14:11, the middle clause of which reads, "there shall be no more utter destruction [*cherem*]." What is the precipitating event that terminates *cherem* here? Let's consider several sources on this point.

Leupold: [T]he prophet adds, "and there shall be no more curse." *Cherem* = devoting to utter destruction and describes the evil condition rather than the outcome as does *A.V.*, "utter destruction." If there is no "devoting to utter destruction" (*A.R.V.m*) or the people are no longer guilty of the misconduct that can serve utterly to destroy the covenant relationship with God, then a new measure of holiness has come about.³³

Wright: The statement, therefore, that "there shall be no more curse," implies that there should be no more any destruction caused by God's righteous judgment, or, in other words, that there

would be no more unrighteous persons to become objects of the Divine anger.³⁴

The operative question is, *when* does this happen? This verse is wedged between verses that, on the face of it, refer to the time of the gospel's triumph over the entire world: Zech. 14:9 ("And the Lord shall be king over all the earth: in that day shall there be one Lord, and his name one.") and Zech. 14:20–21 ("In that day shall there be upon the bells of the horses, Holiness Unto The Lord; ... and in that day there shall be no more the Canaanite in the house of the Lord of hosts.")

In the view of Leupold and Wright *there is no occasion for cherem to be relevant* because there's nobody around who bears guilt concerning it. The preconsumption form of God's Kingdom—when there's finally only one enemy left to destroy (death itself)—is characterized by the basic fact that no place is found for the chaff. Warfield's eschatology dovetails nicely with such a position (a view I have defended exegetically at length elsewhere).³⁵ There would be no need for *cherem* enforcement toward the end of the gospel era on this hypothesis. It disappears for the same reason gospel proclamation is finally made superfluous: because everyone knows the Lord, from the least to the greatest.

Of course, more pessimistic eschatologies insist that so complete a victory must occur only *after* the consummation. Scholars in these camps are closer to the view that *cherem* won't be decommissioned this side of the Final Judgment (e.g., Keil, Drake, Lowe, Fausset, etc.). The point of agreement between the two camps is that, as of today, we've not reached the point where Zech. 14:11 has been fulfilled.

Not so the hard-core preterists who take all of Zechariah 14 as completely fulfilled. The termination of *cherem*

provisions can be transposed to the first century if Zech. 14:11's fulfillment occurred back then. That this puts a tremendous strain on the other details framing the verse is baggage common to all attempts by scholars to unpack the complexities of the fourteenth chapter of Zechariah, "the expositor's nightmare," twenty-one verses that challenge all eschatologies.

Of course, preterists have every right to promote their position, as do their opponents. The concern in respect to the *cherem* issue is simply this: if a theory requires X to be true or else it is falsified, we must beware lest the dogmatic tail wag the exegetical dog. As has been well said, "Theory-driven investigations certainly have advantages but, of course, one has to buy the theory first!"³⁶

Where Do We Draw the Line Geographically?

Dr. McDurmon argues that *cherem* legislation was tied to the land of Canaan, that the word translated "earth" may contextually be rendered "land," as in the Promised Land.³⁷ This imposes a geographic bound on enforcement of cherem provisions in addition to chronological bounds argued for elsewhere by him.

If the land of Canaan and cherem laws are truly joined at the hip, someone guilty of a cherem-worthy violation need only step a foot outside Israel's borders (just like a manslayer steps into a city of refuge) to avoid punishment. He has, in effect, done the land's job for it by vomiting himself beyond the border of Canaan.

Under this hypothesis, the rest of the world outside Canaan constitutes an enormous "city of refuge" from cherem enforcement. Being subject to a cherem penalty amounts to being at the wrong place at the wrong time, but this is nothing that a change of scen-

ery can't fix. If you know your city is being indicted for the offense of Deut. 13:12–16, it makes sense to get out of Dodge.

A different geographic question arises, at least among postmillennialists: doesn't Scripture represent Israel as ultimately extending over all the land area of the world? J. A. Alexander, in considering Isa. 27:6 ("Israel shall blossom and bud, and fill the face of the world with fruit"), goes out of the way to say that the noun in question "does not mean the land of Israel, but the world, the whole expression being strongly metaphorical."³⁸ Abraham cast his eyes north, east, west, and south: he was promised the entire world, not just Canaan (which is why he's called "the heir of the world," Rom. 4:13). In Gen. 9:27, we read that "God shall enlarge Japheth, and he shall dwell in the tents of Shem," a passage generally regarded as an allusion to the accession of the Gentiles. Zion is transnational (Psalm 87), and so Israel shall be as well. Obadiah depicts Judah as occupying *all* of Canaan, Benjamin eastward in the Trans-Jordan, and the other ten tribes distributed north of Canaan. If the land's borders are supposed to remain fixed, God surely sent some mixed signals here.

Of course, Dr. McDurmon makes explicit reference to the universalizing of "the land promise made to Abraham"³⁹ and to Rom. 4:13,⁴⁰ concluding that the NT "teaches that ... [the] land laws reached their terminus in Christ. They no longer continue in the New Testament."⁴¹ No explanation is (yet) given why the land isn't now the entire earth (despite the evident plausibility of this alternate conclusion).

Which brings us to an interesting outlier verse. One of the offenses that trigger being vomited out of the land is relations with a menstruous woman

(Lev. 18:19, cf. 18:24–25). Why, then, does Ezekiel refer to menstruous women as he does (Ezek. 18:6)? What value did this have if he was in Babylon at the time, living on the Chebar River? If the curse only applies within the borders of Canaan, the prophet seems to be unaware of it. If they're in Babylon, they've already been vomited out of Canaan, so why the superfluous reference to a (supposedly) inapplicable ordinance?

Has the Purpose for Temporal Judgment Changed?

Wright translates Isa. 26:9 in this way: "For when the judgments of Jehovah are abroad in the earth, the inhabitants of the world learn righteousness."⁴² The reading in the King James is "With my soul have I desired thee in the night; yea, with my spirit within me will I seek thee early: for when thy judgments are in the earth, the inhabitants of the world will learn righteousness."

Expositors have noted that the following verse (Isa. 26:10) warns that when God's judgments are withheld, the wicked won't change their ways: "Let favour be shewed to the wicked, yet will he not learn righteousness: in the land of uprightness will he deal unjustly, and will not behold the majesty of the Lord." There is a didactic purpose to earthly judgments which is not limited to the land of Israel: the inhabitants of the world will learn righteousness thereby.

Those who defend the view that God relocated jurisdiction from "judgments in the earth" to "judgments in heaven" must explain how it is that Isa. 26:9–10 is now obsolete. Withholding judgments "in the earth," which is to forbear punishment (abstaining to "execute upon them the judgment written," Ps. 149:9), leads to bad results: the wicked will *continue to deal*

unjustly. Is this the price God intends us to pay when He moves jurisdiction out from the earth? If the Scripture cannot be broken, how do we avoid the disaster articulated in Isa. 26:10 once such judgments of His are no longer executed "in the earth"?

Spewing Doctrine

Under the OT, the land spewed the grossly sinful inhabitants out. Under the NT, Christ spews lukewarm Christians out of His mouth. But Dr. McDurmon appears to conflate these two things:

[The land] would vomit out the inhabitants for their disobedience (Lev. 18:25, 28; 20:22). The function of judging in history and of "vomiting out" is now transferred to the enthroned Christ Himself (Rev. 3:16).⁴³

Note how Christ's threat in Revelation is put forward as a parallel of importance.

However, drawing parallels must be done with care. When two different theologians look at a proposed parallel, one may regard it as the result of unrestrained gymnastics (even violence) to achieve a forced fit, while another might see the parallel as embodying "the stringency of a syllogism" (in Warfield's words).

Is this connection between the land and the mouth of Christ (which involves spewing out lukewarm Christians, not unregenerate people) a valid connection, or a doubtful one? Is there a better substitute connection? Is the land a covenant agent, or is it a victim (Rom. 8:19–23), or can it be both? Why are the droughts imposed on Egypt and other nations outside of Israel's borders not evidence of covenantal agency (Zech. 14:17–19)? What standard should we use when determining answers to these questions?

We encounter other barriers to

treating Rev. 3:16 as a suitable correlate to Lev. 18:28 and Lev. 20:22. The King James translators made distinctions between plural and singular pronouns so that the reader would know whether a given text in the original language was addressing an individual or a group: “ye” for plural, “thou” and “thee” for singular. The “spue” warning is issued to an individual (the angel of the church of Laodicea) and not to the church at large. It is an instructive exercise to work through the letters to the seven churches and mark the singular pronouns (directed to the pastor) and the plural ones (directed to the flock). It becomes quickly obvious that many pastors teaching from these texts deflect the warnings onto the flock that were directed to the shepherds—words Christ directed to them.

It is indisputably true that in the New Testament, only *one individual* is threatened with being vomited out of Christ’s mouth, and that for a specific cause. Consequently, considerable legwork would be required to draw a compelling connection to the land spewing out its inhabitants.

The Sons of Belial

In this issue of *Faith for All of Life*, I have included a chapter from Dr. Rushdoony’s commentary on Deuteronomy that expositis the concept of “the sons of Belial.” The implication here is, any culture that does *not* take the required steps against these terrorists who are dedicated to destroying your society is committing suicide. In other words, “the sons of Belial” is an idea that Dr. McDurmon has not taken as seriously as he should. Under the Cherem Principle, there is no direct prescribed action against them.⁴⁴ Because of this, the idea of the sons of Belial appears to be soft-pedaled as a comparatively minor infraction.

Dr. Rushdoony cites evidence that

this law was applied⁴⁵ against Gibeah in Judges 20 and 21 (citing Hosea 9:9 and 10:9 to supplement his argument). Earlier scholarship, however, held that the law was *never* enforced in Israel.⁴⁶ Nonetheless, Dr. Rushdoony saw the ordinance as embodying a life-and-death issue:

Otto Scott has observed that decadence is the inability of a culture or people to defend themselves. This law requires such a defense, *not* as vigilante action, but as a premise of godly law.⁴⁷

One key aspect of the destruction of the sons of Belial is this: where is the priest who is supposedly sending up this alleged whole burnt offering? There is none mentioned in Scripture. He must be inserted into the picture for this to be a true offering. This, it must be conceded, amounts to a gratuitous imposition on Scripture. Priests are required for “whole burnt offerings” (Lev. 1, Lev. 6, Deut. 33:10). Their absence in Deut. 13:16 must be accounted for.

Consider, then, Patrick Fairbairn’s discussion of the burnt offering:

The name commonly given in Scripture to this species of sacrifice is *olah* (*an ascension*), so called from the whole being consumed and going up in a flame to the Lord. It received also the name *kalil* (*the whole*) with respect to the entire consumption ... [T]he burnt-offering was for those who were already standing within the bonds of the covenant, and without any such sense of guilt lying upon their conscience as exposed them to excision from the covenant...

[T]he guilt for which atonement here [was] required to be made [Lev. 1:4, 16:24], was not that properly of special and formal acts of transgression, but rather of those short-comings and imperfections which perpetually cleave to the servant of God, and mingle even with his best services ... So it appears in Deut. 33:10, where *the office of the*

priesthood in the presentation of offerings [e.a.] is described simply with a reference to this species of sacrifice: “They shall put incense before Thee, and whole burnt-sacrifice upon Thy altar.” ... the burnt-offering was always accompanied with a meat and drink-offering [Num. 15:3–11, 28:7–15].⁴⁸

Part of the issue involves the translation of Deut. 13:16. If you read the KJV you won’t find any reference to a *whole offering*, but rather the instruction to “burn with fire the city, and all the spoil thereof every whit ...” T. E. Espin notes that the KJV translation *every whit* treats the Hebrew word in question the same way it is treated in Isa. 2:18 (“the idols he shall *utterly* abolish”) but he offers his reasons for the alternative rendering *whole offering*.⁴⁹ One translation points firmly away from Dr. McDurmon’s thesis, the other tends towards it: where then is the safe harbor of certainty? Cherry-picking among translations⁵⁰ would be unseemly for either of us to engage in.

Is the translation a minor point? Dr. McDurmon says of the “whole burnt offering” wording, “This detail is crucial.”⁵¹ Consequently, challenges to that detail have a serious impact on the Cherem Principle, more so than other challenges that could be raised.⁵² When we add to this dispute Dr. Rushdoony’s earlier point that failure to enforce this law leads to a society’s suicide, we can’t help but notice how high the stakes are. We’re obviously not arguing about angels dancing on the head of a pin here.

Where is the Correct Place to “Draw the Line”?

Dr. McDurmon offers an answer to the question, where should we draw the line? Is the proper answer to merely reiterate Dr. Bahnsen’s assertion where to draw the line? Or Dr. North’s claims? Where, precisely, should we

look for *the bounds of theonomy*? Claims that theologian X has drawn the line in the right place need more backup than “I agree with X, and besides, X is very smart.” Dr. McDurmon doesn’t make any such spurious argument as that, of course, but it’s not clear that every critic of his has successfully steered clear of this fallacy.

So, while we *could*, with justice, simply claim Dr. McDurmon drew the line in the wrong place without our offering an alternative (or endorsing someone else’s line), that would not be terribly edifying. But to offer an alternative place to draw the line would create a situation similar to that created by Dr. McDurmon’s book: an idea warranting an entire volume in itself is compressed into a short chapter. Our drawing the line in a new way would entail doing the same thing, except in an even shorter span of text. Tactically, we’d be following in Dr. McDurmon’s footsteps to do so.

More importantly, we’d be trying to achieve the commendable goal that Dr. McDurmon set for himself: to let the Scripture draw the line for us. The problem is, it is doubtful that any theologian lives up to that standard. Why? Because all have preconceived notions of which laws have and have not been abrogated. Theologians, being human, will use these laws as the litmus test for determining if a model is good or not. “Model A says law B is no longer valid. Therefore, Model A is good/bad.” The very point in dispute (which laws are valid?) is used to determine if a given model is valid (i.e., that it comports with the boxes we’ve stuffed various laws into).

Could it be that the Old Covenant draws its own lines (or, more accurately, redraws them for us)? I made a case for this approach in my response to John W. Robbins’s 1992 review of Dr.

Bahnsen’s *By This Standard*. This approach uses the much-lauded “scripture interpreting scripture” principle. Here are some salient parts of the (compressed) argument:

The actual content of the jots and tittles makes self-reference to their respective permanence or lack of it. If the Old Testament expressly self-terminates or self-modifies some of its own provisions, then clearly those jots and tittles, if they’re to be eternally valid, must be considered in the context of their own self-reference.

This is to say that there is a flaw in Robbins’s argument concerning theonomic schizophrenia. As Warfield puts it, “What, now, is the flaw in this argument? This, briefly: that it seeks to ground a conclusion in a single premise, severed from its companion premises.”

So Christ, speaking not of the New Testament but of the Old, can assert its exhaustive validity in detail without self-contradiction, since the jots and tittles were self-qualified within the entire Old Testament revelation. So we see the ark of the covenant pass from view in Jer. 3:16, the substitution of myriads of Gentiles as Levites in Isa. 66:21 & Jer. 33:22, a legitimate altar set up by Gentiles (Isa. 19:19), although Israel’s altar at Bethel was condemned (I Kgs. 13:2). The priesthood of Christ was foreordained (Ps. 110:4), terminating blood sacrifice (Isa. 66:3). Citizenship in Zion shall extend beyond genetic Israel (Ps. 87) and incense shall be offered in every Gentile district (Mal. 1:11). Even eunuchs shall be more honored in God’s house than His nominal sons and daughters (Isa. 56:4). In short, the Old Testament jots and tittles *include* qualifications of their own content.⁵³

This alternative hypothesis also seeks to “draw the line,” but draws it in a different place than Dr. McDurmon has drawn it. Nonetheless, the basis on which it proceeds cannot be said to be un-Biblical or extra-Biblical. It appeals

directly to the Old Testament to show how the Old Testament law migrates into the age of the Christ.

Therefore, we don’t propose to “fight something with nothing,” a tactic which Dr. Gary North correctly points out is a fool’s errand. We propose an alternative to the Cherem Principle put forward in *The Bounds of Love*. Whether this brief aside clarifies matters or muddies the waters further, only further discussion will reveal.

We should appreciate that scholars like Dr. McDurmon continue to work through the Scriptures to develop positions that are worth putting to the test of Biblical fidelity. Much has changed in Polemical Theology since Dr. Warfield’s death in 1921: polemics has since become exceedingly ugly. We can agree wholeheartedly, though, with Dr. McDurmon when he observes that “much work remains.”⁵⁴ Surely, that further work should be conducted in a Christ-honoring way, even when we take issue with another Christian brother’s painstaking analysis. We can “test all things” without becoming testy. We can let all things be done unto edification, until Zion shall one day see eye to eye (Isa. 52:8). 🙌

1. McDurmon, Joel, *The Bounds of Love: An Introduction to God’s Law of Liberty* (Braselton, GA: American Vision Press, 2016).
2. Lee, Francis Nigel, *God’s Ten Commandments Yesterday Today Forever* (Ventura, CA: Nordskog Publishing, 2007).
3. Einwechter, William O., *Walking in the Law of the Lord: An Introduction to the Biblical Ethics of Theonomy* (Stevens, PA: Darash Press, 2010).
4. Wright, Christopher J. H., *An Eye for an Eye: The Place of Old Testament Ethics Today* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1983). The bibliography (p. 214) references Greg Bahnsen’s *Theonomy in Christian Ethics* of 1979 as well as the 1964 volume by Ernest F. Kevan, *Keep His Commandments: The Place of Law in the Christian Life*.

5. Halbrook, Stephen Che, *God is Just: A Defense of the Old Testament Civil Laws* (Theonomy Resources Media, 2011 [2nd edition 2014]). My copy is the 2008 spiral-bound manuscript with the earlier subtitle of *Divine Law versus Imperious Humanism*.
6. Perks, Stephen C., *The Politics of God and the Politics of Man* (Taunton, England: Kuyper Foundation, 2016).
7. Boot, Joseph, *The Mission of God: A Manifesto of Hope for Society* (London, England: Wilberforce Publications, 2nd edition 2016 [1st edition 2014]). See www.ezra.institute.ca for details.
8. <http://chalcedon.edu/faith-for-all-of-life/does-theonomy-have-a-fatal-flaw-2/does-theonomy-have-a-fatal-flaw/>
9. <http://chalcedon.edu/faith-for-all-of-life/gods-law-and-taxation/false-flags/>
10. <http://chalcedon.edu/faith-for-all-of-life/paradise-restored-utopianism-statism-and-the-restoration-of-the-christian-order/religion-gone-bad-the-hidden-dangers-of-the-christian-right/>
11. Barker, William S. & Godfrey, W. Robert, ed., *Theonomy: A Reformed Critique* (Grand Rapids, MI: Academic Books [a Zondervan imprint], 1990).
12. North, Gary, ed., *Theonomy: An Informed Response* (Tyler, TX: Institute for Christian Economics, 1991).
13. Bahnsen, Greg L., *No Other Standard: Theonomy and Its Critics* (Tyler, TX: Institute for Christian Economics, 1991). Appearing the same year as *Theonomy: An Informed Response*, the perceived effect was that the volumes constituted a one-two punch put in motion by the publisher, Dr. North.
14. I exclude the exchange between Tommy Ice and Dr. H. Wayne House (co-authors of 1988's *Dominion Theology: Blessing or Curse*) and theologians Dr. Kenneth L. Gentry Jr. and Dr. Bahnsen (co-authors of 1989's *House Divided: The Breakup of Dispensational Theology*) because the topical range is too diffuse. Nonetheless, the impact of the Ice/House volume (structured to feed confirmation bias among dispensationalists) continues to be felt as far away as India where thousands of free copies circulate, and where the antidote *House Divided* is virtually unknown.
15. Robert Erwin, *The Great Language Panic and Other Essays in Cultural History* (Athens, GA: University of Georgia Press, 1990), 69.
16. Dr. McDurmon's critics usually point to the chapter on penology in Bahnsen's magnum opus. See Bahnsen, Greg L., *Theonomy in Christian Ethics* (Nacogdoches, TX: Covenant Media Press, 2002 [1977, 1984]), pp. 421–452, esp. 428ff. on “The Agency of Punishment.”
17. Kevan, Ernest F., *The Grace of Law: A Study of Puritan Theology* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 1976).
18. Dr. McDurmon rightly bemoans the fact that “discussion of controversial theological topics works against concise definitions” (p. 21). In our current TLDR (Too Long; Didn't Read) milieu, “the fate of most full theology books [is] the shelf” (p. 22). Superficial Christians decline to endure sound doctrine.
19. McDurmon, p. 23.
20. McDurmon, p. 133 for example.
21. McDurmon, pp. 42–69.
22. McDurmon, p. 50.
23. <http://theonomyresources.com/pdfs/Spirit-of-the-Law.pdf>
24. McDurmon, p. 52.
25. McDurmon, pp. 50–51.
26. McDurmon, p. 51.
27. McDurmon, p. 50.
28. McDurmon, p. 57.
29. Dr. John Frame, endorsement on back cover of *The Bounds of Love*.
30. Dr. John Frame's endorsement of the book (appearing on the back cover) also admits of reservations, albeit in a constructive context: “Though I do not endorse every statement and argument of the book, I pray that it will get a wide readership.”
31. The “newness” of the model is also open for debate, since Dr. McDurmon sees it anticipated in the teaching of Johannes Piscator and beyond. Cf. McDurmon, pp. 66f.
32. McDurmon, op. cit., p. 27.
33. Leupold, H. C., *Exposition of Zechariah* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 1971), p. 269.
34. Wright, Charles Henry Hamilton, *Zechariah and His Prophecies* (London: Hod-der and Stoughton, 1879), p. 497.
35. Selbrede, Martin G., “Reconstructing Postmillennialism” in *Journal of Christian Reconstruction* 15:1 (1998), pp. 148–225.
36. Ann M. Peters. Review of *The Language Lottery: Toward a Biology of Grammar*, by David Lightfoot. *Anthropological Linguistics* 26:3 (1984), pp. 356–357.
37. Preterist commentaries on Revelation leverage this alternate understanding of the Greek “ge” to constrain the proceedings to Israel's boundaries: it's not the entire world that's under the book's prima facie judgments, but predominantly Israel herself on this construction. Like Warfield, Rushdoony, and others, I interpret Revelation from the idealist perspective, but am a sympathetic critic of preterism and find much to respect in regard to it (despite being ultimately unconvinced).
38. Alexander, Joseph Addison, *Commentary on the Prophecies of Isaiah* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, [1846] 1978), p. 439.
39. McDurmon, pp. 48–50.
40. McDurmon, p. 49.
41. McDurmon, p. 49–50.
42. Wright, op. cit., p. 503.
43. McDurmon, p. 48.
44. Bahnsen, op. cit., p. 460, in an admittedly brief discussion, characterizes the matter of Deut. 13:12–16 and its implications as “important” in the context of contemporary application.
45. Rushdoony, Rousas John, *Deuteronomy* (Vallecito, CA: Chalcedon/Ross House Books, 2008), pp. 209–210.
46. Note Richter on Deut. 13:16: “Since Israel never carried out this sentence on godless places, God has done it Himself, especially through the Chaldeans.” Quoted in Lange, John Peter, *Commentary on Numbers and Deuteronomy* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, n.d.), section 2, p. 130.
47. Rushdoony, p. 210.
48. Fairbairn, Patrick, *The Typology of Scripture* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1963), Vol. 2, pp. 302–304. The same point is made by Andrew Jukes (1815–1901). See Jukes, Andrew, *The Law of the Offerings*

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The Rock and the Hard Place

by Andrea Schwartz



Many idiomatic expressions decorate the landscape of our speech. Finding oneself “between a rock and a hard place” is among them. The common understanding involves a situation where one is faced with two equally difficult alternatives. However, the expression does not do justice to reality. If we posit that God’s Word is a faith for all of life, and the attendant faith involves application, then each situation we face may have difficult alternatives, but there *will* be a righteous one to choose.

As our culture has drifted away even from the superficial Christianity of the past seventy years, we have lost a societal compass that had a basis in Biblical truth, although a remnant of one. Jesus’ words have meaning that are largely lost today when He stated:

Enter ye in at the strait gate: for wide is the gate, and broad is the way that leadeth to destruction, and many there be which go in thereat: Because strait is the gate, and narrow is the way, which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it. (Matt. 7:13–14)

Today the narrow road is identified as the *narrow-minded* road, as we (in order to stay politically correct) have to express toleration and a pluralistic mindset regarding issues that the Bible clearly delineates as wrong. Moreover, appeals, such as “hate the sin, but love the sinner,” reveal a humanistic rather than a Biblical worldview. A truly Bibli-

cal worldview would state, “Love the sinner enough to demonstrate it by preaching the law and the gospel to him.” Instead, even sincere believers soft-pedal the truth of Scripture to make it palatable to those at war with God. However, those who war with us are not defeated by appeasement; they are won by the faithful exposition and application of God’s Word according to the working of the Holy Spirit

This battle first must be waged in our own head and spirit. As the culture has made a seismic shift away from Biblical foundations, much ground has been taken in the minds and hearts of professing believers. R.J. Rushdoony made the observation that:

Modern humanism, the religion of the state, locates law in the state and thus makes the state, or the people as they find expression in the state, the god of the system ... In Western culture, law has steadily moved away from God to the people (or the state) as its source, although the historic power and vitality of the West has been in Biblical faith and law.¹

Too few examine Biblical solutions to urges, impulses, and choices when faced with decisions, and seek the broad way rather than the narrow path outlined in Scripture.

I submit that *every* situation a Christian faces can ultimately be addressed by Jesus’ words regarding the two roads spoken of in Matthew 7:13–14 above. Rushdoony notes of this passage:

Our Lord thus makes use of a very familiar idea, one well known to all His

hearers. He was not thereby confirming a Greek wisdom, nor merely passing on a Hebrew aphorism. Our Lord’s use of *the two ways* is determined, not by past usages, but by the context of His use...

First, our Lord speaks of *the two ways* immediately after declaring the Golden Rule: “Therefore all things whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them: for this is the law and the prophets” (Matt. 7:12). It is therefore essentially related to the Golden Rule. We can say, briefly, that *the broad way* for many is, do in others, before they do you in; knife them, before they knife you. The world sees *conflict* as basic, because it sees chaos as basic to the universe. Such men justify their amoral policies on the ground that such is the nature of reality; they see it as a dog-eat-dog universe, not as God’s creation and moral order. *The broad way* is thus a denial of the Golden Rule, and the pursuit of a contrary way. Lip service may be paid to the Golden Rule by the pilgrims of *the broad way*, but their lives are a constant denial of it.

Second, *the broad way* is commonly seen as the way of toleration and freedom. To follow Christ and Scripture strictly and faithfully is held to be the rigid and narrow way. The premise is that too strong a commitment to anything other than oneself is unwise: keep your options open, and your mind “free.” *The broad way* is thus presented as the source of intelligence and rationality, and narrowness is decried. The straitness of the gate, and the narrowness of the way, that leads to life is in terms of no personal options: the way is ordered by the Lord, not by our tastes. We cannot pick and choose what to believe, as if at a smorgasbord: the

Bible is a command book from God the Lord.²

Returning to the idiom of being “between a rock and a hard place,” it behooves us to realize that since Jesus tells us that the road is narrow that leads to life, we will often be in the midst of “tight” situations. If we are not standing on the Rock, the hard road we must travel will be one of compromise and disloyalty. Instead of making our personal comfort, social status, or occupational security of uppermost importance, we must realize that, however important these things may be, they do not and must not assume a priority higher than the Kingdom of God and His righteousness.

The tests in life often happen right in the context of family life. If we fail there, the opportunities to make an impact on the surrounding culture will be few and far between. In addition, these tests sometimes come in the form of apostate spouses or adult children. It is here where our loyalty is tested: Do we love anyone or anything more than we love Christ? In truth, the tests are more for our benefit than God’s as He already knows the end from the beginning. His mandate to us to remain on the straight way has tremendous implications.

Our Lord says of the strait way, “Few there be that find it.” As Whedon noted, “They do not look for it. They see the crowd rushing through the broad gate; they desire nothing better than so liberal a route, and they would not press through the narrow way before their eyes.”

“Narrow is the way” means, literally, *pressed*, or hemmed in between walls or rocks, as in a mountain gorge.³

Therefore, if we are in the midst of a hemmed-in situation, we know that there is a narrow way that leads to life. Understand that the life described here is eternal life, which surpasses the com-

forts of this life. Thus, we should get used to living—not between a rock and a hard place—but on the Rock as we face being hemmed in by the hard place. Knowing that His Word and His Spirit are promised gifts to help us in the passage should spur us on to faithfulness.

But the very society surrounding us promises advantages if we take the broad way. This is not just restricted to the world of so-called atheists and agnostics. This broad way is all too often advocated within the institutional church where sin is winked at and tolerance promoted.

[T]he broad way is the way of parasites. Our Lord is not making an obvious statement. He is not saying that murderers and moral degenerates go to hell. Rather, He is talking about false righteousness, hypocrisy, and Phariseism. In the Sermon on the Mount, He contrasts the (false) “righteousness of the scribes and the Pharisees” (Matt. 5:20) with true righteousness. The contrast therefore between the *many* who go to hell as against the *few* who take the way of life is contemporary, applying to His day, not to the end results of history. In brief, *the broad way* refers to the ostensibly good people who are actual roadblocks and enemies to Christ’s people and realm.⁴

Those wolves in sheep’s clothing convince their listeners that some areas of life and thought do not need to be consulted with the Word of God. Because these false guides are in league with the humanistic state and its indoctrination centers (state schools) they promote a tolerance of most behaviors so long as they maintain their audience. When there is no call to holiness as defined in Scripture, what is left is instruction on how to succeed in the broad way: the course of non-commitment.

But such a course of non-commitment, *the broad way*, is the way of death. *The strait way* “leadeth unto life.” “Lead-

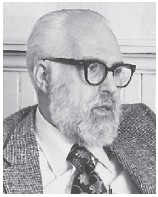
eth,” *apago*, *apagousa*, means literally leads away, i.e., leads away unto life. It leads away from *the broad way* and from *destruction*. *The strait gate* is at the beginning of this road of life. We do not enter into life in heaven, but here and now, as we give ourselves without reservations to the Lord. The test of that commitment our Lord then sets forth: “by their fruits ye shall know them” (Matt. 7:20).⁵

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1. R.J. Rushdoony, *The Institutes of Biblical Law*, Vol. 1 (Phillipsburg, NJ: The Craig Press: 1972), p. 5.
2. R. J. Rushdoony, *Sermon on the Mount* (Vallecito, CA: Ross House Books, 2009), pp. 110–111.
3. *ibid.*, p. 111.
4. *ibid.*
5. *ibid.*, p. 112.

Treason, Part 2 (Deuteronomy 13:12-18)

(Shortened extract reprinted from *Deuteronomy* [Vallecito, CA: Ross House Books, 2008], pp. 207-210).



There are many churchmen who wish that texts like this one would disappear. Like Matthew Arnold, they want a religion of sweetness and light, not a strong and militant faith. This text is again about treason. It does not call for searching out persons whose faith may be false, but for dealing with aggressive treason by covenant members against the covenant and the God of the covenant.

It calls for action because of a serious problem. "Certain men" are describable as "the children [or, sons] of Belial." The word *Belial* in Hebrew means *wickedness*. According to ancient Hebraic accounts, the sons of Belial had abandoned the faith and were uncontrollably lawless. Having denied the covenant God, they denied and violated the covenant law as a matter of principle. The word *Belial* occurs twenty-seven times in the Hebrew Bible. It is used to indicate radically lawless men, as in Judges 19:22-26, who demand homosexual rape and will take a woman and abuse her to the point of killing her. It is *not* a term used lightly. The sons of Belial are associated with hell. They are ready to be used against the godly, as in the insistence of the two men who gave perjured testimony against Naboth (1 Kings 21:10-13). Proverbs 19:28 says, "An ungodly witness scorneth judgment," and the word translated as "ungodly" is "Belial." It is a Belial witness who mocks justice. In 2 Corinthians 6:15, Paul asks,

And what concord hath Christ with Belial? or what part hath he that believeth with an infidel?

In 2 Corinthians 6:14 Paul prefaces his comment on Belial with the statement, "what communion hath light with darkness?"

Certain things are very clear about the biblical use of the term "sons of Belial." *First*, these sons of Belial are aggressively anti-God and anti-Christ. They are deliberately lawless because they hate God. One aspect of their lawlessness is their homosexuality. God's order is despised in all its manifestations, so that, whether it be sodomy or perjury, they are ready for it.

Second, as already indicated, they manifest a militant hatred of God and His law, and of God's people. They resent God's law and justice, and His holiness in anyone. Their aggressive aim is to humiliate and to defile all that is good. The term "sons of Belial" implies an uncontrollable and aggressive lawlessness. If permitted, they will take over a city or a society to remake it in their own evil image.

This should tell us why any text concerning "sons of Belial" is important. We live in a world where the sons of Belial are in high places, where they riot in the streets, and where they often command the media.

Such a city is at war against the covenant and the nation. Its actions have been aggressive and vicious. It is a perversion of the text to see it as a warrant for a fanatical attack on innocent people: *they are lawless in every sphere*. This is the meaning of being "sons of

Belial." To be indifferent to this threat is to surrender the nation.

Lawlessness is to be met with God's law. Has the city worked against the punishment of criminal activity? Has it favored the lawless and the guilty against the godly and the innocent? A city was then a center for trade and for law. The surrounding countryside depended on it in both spheres, i.e., as a trading center, and as the locale of the courts of law. The lawless desecration of trade and courts means that the innocent are punished. This cannot be tolerated.

We have a reference to this law in the case of Gibeah, in Judges 20, 21. Although the assault and its aftermath indicate that Israel's premises were somewhat mixed, i.e., not based solely on loyalty to God's law, it does provide us with an incident where this law is applied.

In the case of Gibeah, the outrage of the people was due to a murderous rape and the threat of sodomizing a Levite. According to Hosea 9:9 and 10:9, more was involved. Gibeah had apparently given itself over to idolatry and to lawlessness. Their hostility was directed against a Levite, a servant of God, and they demanded the right to sodomize and to kill him (Judg. 19:22; 20:5). We are again reminded that this law deals with aggressive lawlessness and a militant hostility to God. There seems to be an echo of this law also in Joshua 7:26, the execution of Achan.

Otto Scott has observed that decadence is the inability of a culture or people to defend themselves. This law requires such a defense, *not* as vigilante action, but as a premise of godly law. 🏰

Did the Medieval World Really Abolish Slavery?

by Suzannah Rowntree



Most introductory resources, especially written from a Christian perspective, will tell you that slavery virtually disappeared in medieval Christendom. In the late Roman Empire, up to 20 percent of the population may have been enslaved, or as many as 9.65 million souls, although other estimates put the percentage much higher.¹ Over the next few centuries, this vast slave population transitioned into a new class within medieval society.

Many materials from a Christian perspective will hint that this came about through the influence of the gospel. Good reason to pat ourselves on the back? Not so fast.

The Serf System

First, the slaves of the Roman Empire were never fully emancipated as a class. Indeed, in the Eastern Roman, or Byzantine Empire as it's known today, slavery continued to be practiced up until the Empire's fall in 1453. Meanwhile in the west, the slave system was gradually replaced by the serf system.

Medieval society largely consisted of the knightly/warrior class, the priestly/churchman class, and the peasant/commoner class. Peasants, while often poor and suffering from legal discrimination, had opportunities to rise in the world. They were able to join the church. They could be knighted,² although this became less common from the middle of the twelfth century.³ As townsmen, they might grow rich as merchants and influential as aldermen or burgesses. But

for the serfs, it was a different story.

While the practice varied in detail from place to place, serfdom was legally signified by three things: *chevage*, *mainmort*, and *formariage*.⁴ Chevage was a head tax payable as a sign of servile status. Formariage was the payment a serf must make to his lord if he wished to marry a serf belonging to another lord. Mainmort meant that legally speaking, a serf had no right to pass an inheritance to his family after his death: his lord was his heir, though in practice the lord often claimed only the best cow or pig as a sign of his right to the whole.

Serfs were also tied to the land. If land was sold or ceded by one lord to another, the serfs would be bought or ceded right along with it. They were required to perform *corvees*, or unpaid servile labor, on the lord's manor, fields, mines, roads, or forests. In addition, a large percentage (up to 50 percent) of the serf's own crops each year could be taken by the lord. Many other legal handicaps also existed: for example, even where there were laws against the rape of a serf, the penalty was no more than a light fine.⁵

Ancillae

While still keeping thousands in a state of servitude, the serf system must have been preferable to the Roman-style chattel slavery which it replaced. But this substitution was not comprehensive. Chattel slavery also persisted throughout the medieval period. Western merchants kidnapped and sold Christian boys at a vast profit to the Moors in Spain, for example, operating out of the slave

market at Verdun in northern France. "Despite repeated papal decrees against the trade, Christian merchants refused to give up the lucrative business of enslaving, castrating and selling young men," Judith Herrin reports, further noting that Rome itself hosted a major slave market.⁶

Chattel slavery also persisted at manors and in workshops throughout northwestern Europe. The victims were primarily women, known as *ancillae*. Roman law provided that women would pass on their servile status to the heirs of their bodies, so these women and their offspring were items of property to be bought and sold. The laws concerning their rape were aimed not at protecting the women, but at enabling a master to prosecute someone else's trespass on, or damage of, his property. *Ancillae* did not ordinarily marry, and although they were clearly vulnerable to their masters' lusts, it was they who bore the blame and gained a reputation for concupiscence.

Although the land-based feudal economy of medieval Western Europe made male slavery economically unviable, *ancillae* were still valuable as domestic slaves in great manorial houses, as skilled workers in textile workshops, or as beasts of burden within cities, hauling heavy loads up and down hills or staircases. More docile and easily managed than their male counterparts, and constantly under the eyes of their owners, *ancillae* had little chance of escape from a lifetime of repetitive toil.⁷

Slavery in the Crusader States

While chattel slavery was largely impractical in Western Europe, the economic situation was quite different in the Frankish crusader states (A.D. 1099-1291) where slavery was both convenient and profitable.⁸

Prisoners of war or the Saracen inhabitants of conquered towns were liable to be captured and enslaved by the crusaders. The Moorish traveler Ibn Jubayr, during his visit to the kingdom of Jerusalem in the early 1180s, described seeing chain gangs of both male and female Muslim slaves on the roads. Just a few years later, in 1187, as Saladin reconquered much of the kingdom, his chroniclers claimed that he had freed between nine thousand and twenty thousand Muslim slaves.

The customary law of Frankish Jerusalem provided that a slave must be freed if he converted to Christianity, but in practice many slave owners found ways to circumvent the law. Some refused to allow their slaves to be baptized, while others refused even to let them hear Christian sermons. In 1237, accordingly, Pope Gregory IX came up with a solution: slaves must be allowed to convert, but would remain slaves.⁹

The Templars employed Muslim slaves in building projects, and in the thirteenth century shipped many of them west to work on their substantial holdings in Sicily and Apulia. This was not merely because they had a surplus of prisoners of war and no easy way to deal with them. Prisoners of war could usually be exchanged without too much trouble.

In 1263, the chronicler known as the Templar of Tyre tells us that the Egyptian sultan Baibars offered to exchange his Christian prisoners for Muslim captives held by the Templars and Hospitallers. The military orders refused, saying that “their slaves were of

great profit to them, for they were all craftsmen and it would have cost them dearly to hire other craftsmen.” Baibars, a bloodthirsty tyrant himself, was amazed by their refusal even to take pity on the Frankish prisoners in Saracen hands.

Nor was the Templar interest in slaves limited to Saracen prisoners of war. During the 1270s and 1280s, the Templars established a wharf in the busy Cilician shipping town of Ayas, which became a hub for the trade of Russian, Circassian, and Greek captives as well as Turks and Arabs.¹⁰

The Renaissance of Slavery

By the 1300s, the Italian city-states of Venice, Genoa, Pisa, Florence, and others had succeeded in opening the whole Mediterranean to trade. Meanwhile, the serf class was gradually dwindling in most of Europe, a process hastened by the arrival of the Black Death in 1348. When the plague arrived in Florence, more than half the population died and the plague victims were predominantly from among the lower classes, already weakened following a severe famine the previous year. A manpower shortage followed, and in 1363 Florence responded with an edict that permitted unlimited importation of foreign slaves, provided that they were not Christians.

If the decline of serfdom created the demand for slaves, supply came through the Italian merchants via the Black Sea and the Eastern Mediterranean. In this period many of the slaves were Tartars (or Mongols), but Ethiopians and Moors were also traded, along with Russians, Greeks, and Circassians. “Every prosperous noble or merchant had at least two or three of them; many had more,” says Iris Origo of the slaves in Tuscany, which the poet Petrarch called “the domestic enemy.”¹¹

Slavery sat uncomfortably on the

consciences of many people. Devout Venetians were unwilling to face God as slave owners, so many of them wrote wills providing for the emancipation of their slaves after their death.¹² But the church did little to protect slaves during the lifetime of their masters. Origo explains:

The Catholic Church—starting from the premise that all human institutions were merely remedies for sin, and that maladies inherent in the social structure could not be eradicated without danger to the whole—tolerated slavery as a necessary (and indeed, not very important) evil. Christian masters were urged to be merciful; but to the Christian slave the chief consolation offered was that which Seneca had already given to the Stoic: that bondage could only enslave the body, not the soul. “Not circumstance, but sin, makes us slaves; not enfranchisement, but inner perfection, makes us free.”¹³

Renaissance slavery could be brutal, especially for female slaves. One insurance policy taken out on a slave in transit stated the insurer’s willingness to bear the risks for acts of God, perils of the sea, and men of war, but not attempts at escape or suicide: “if she throws herself into the sea of her own accord.” This was clearly common enough to be taken into account by the canny insurer, and female slaves had to cope with a great deal of trauma. Rape and ensuing pregnancy were common even though a pregnant slave was almost worthless. On her arrival in Genoa, one pregnant slave claimed that her previous owner in Majorca was responsible for her condition. Her new owner contacted Majorca, and received the following reply:

We have spoken to the cappellano to whom your slave belonged and he says you may throw her into the sea, with what she has in her belly, for it is no creature of his. And we believe he is speaking the truth, for if she had been

pregnant by him, he would not have sent her. He says that it belongs to a nephew of his, who had a great quarrel about this slave. So that he does not want her back here on any account. We think you had better send the creature to the hospital.¹⁴

Conclusions

While slavery was never as commonplace in medieval Christendom as it was in the late Roman Empire, it was never entirely eradicated—and where it was mitigated or partially transformed, the main motive seems to have been economic pragmatism, not true compassion. Wherever it was convenient or profitable to own slaves, the medievals bought, sold, and exploited them.

Medieval slavery differed from American slavery primarily because it was justified by classism rather than racism. Christian nobles in the Crusader states seem to have felt far more in common with Muslim leaders, whom they viewed as being of the same social status, than they did with their own Christian serfs or peasants. While it was not unheard-of for men of the peasant class to attain knighthood or nobility, such people faced intense prejudice and even hatred in the high and late middle ages. In a poem lamenting the fall of Acre in 1291, the Templar of Tyre identified one reason why he believed God had judged Christendom:

And though we are all creatures
Of God, still it is not right
That all should have the same status.
It was by the Will of God,
That Abraham placed Ishmael
Beneath the feet of Isaac, who though
younger,
Was begotten of the lady wife.
Ishmael was considered a serf,
For he was a bastard, born of a serf-
girl.¹⁵

By the 1600s, when chattel slavery was introduced to the American

colonies, the intellectual foundations for the medieval caste system seem to have crumbled before the Reformation doctrine of the priesthood of all believers. For whatever reason, the new justification of racism was required in order to justify the new chattel slavery.

In many other ways, medieval and American slavery were startlingly alike. Both drew on the same tradition of Roman civil law. Both, after a brief hesitation over the idea of enslaving fellow Christians, quickly overcame their scruples. Both turned a blind eye to the Exodus 21:16 prohibition of man-stealing among other slavery provisions in God's law. Both rendered women vulnerable to rape with no hope of justice. And both were tolerated and even justified by the church of their day.

Did medieval practices influence American slavery? Did medieval justifications and excuses get recycled in the 1600s as American slavery was getting started? Certainly, there were echoes of Ambrose of Milan's words as quoted by Origo above: "Not circumstance, but sin, makes us slaves; not enfranchisement, but inner perfection, makes us free."

This ought to be a sobering warning to us today. Medieval and Renaissance slavery was nowhere near as prevalent as American slavery was, and because its victims included people of a wide variety of ethnicities, it didn't result in the same kind of institutionalized racism. Nevertheless, in some sense the medievals can be held responsible for what happened in America later on. If they had dealt truthfully with the slavery question in their own day, if they had applied God's law to slave traders and their victims, then it's not a huge leap to imagine a very different version of American history.

The medievals did not sin as outrageously as their American descendants, but they never repented. The church

never uprooted the legal foundations laid by the classical pagan world that came before them. And its failure to do so left the doors wide open for much, much worse. 🏰

When Suzannah Rowntree isn't travelling the world to help out friends in need, she lives in a big house in rural Australia with her parents and siblings. She is currently working on a very different second draft of *Outremer, Book 1* of which will be published in late 2018, Lord willing. Visit her online at suzannahrowntree.site.

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2. John France, *Western Warfare in the Age of the Crusades, 1000–1300* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1998), p. 55.
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4. Christopher MacEvitt, *The Crusades and the Christian World of the East: Rough Tolerance* (Philadelphia, PA: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2007), pp. 145–149.
5. Stephen P. Pistono, "Rape in Medieval Europe" in *Atlantis* Vol. 14 No. 2 (1989), p. 39.
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The Addiction Treatment That Refuses to Die

By Martin G. Selbrede



This is the eighteenth—and final—article in our ongoing series covering the story of Christian physician Dr. Punyamurtula

S. Kishore, whose extraordinary addiction medicine practice was destroyed by the Commonwealth of Massachusetts in September 2011. The film project inspired by this series—*Hero In America*—is in postproduction and will soon see the light of day, covering aspects of the story only hinted at in this series. A companion book to the film, derived from the articles, is also planned.

It has been a year since the seventeenth article appeared in print. From one point of view, much has happened on the addiction treatment front ... in terms of sound and fury, signifying nothing. The same trends present five years ago have prevailed in each of the following years: higher death tolls, strident calls for action, deceitful framing of dangerous answers as “the gold standard” in treatment—we lack for none of these.

The 2018 State of the Union speech touched on opioid addiction (pretty much guaranteeing that authorities will double down on their existing failed policies). People wore purple ribbons, but because clinically proven strategies have been derailed, the ribbons are impotent gestures embodying no promise whatsoever.

We will take a slightly different tack with this final article, primarily to avoid treading old ground or stealing thunder from the documentary film project.

Rather than recount the growing litany of failures, or the promising first efforts at putting Dr. Kishore’s work back on its feet, we will divide this article into three distinct sections.

The first section will deal with a specific aspect of the addiction industry’s ongoing actions to dismantle Dr. Kishore’s legacy brick by brick. Parts two and three are interviews I’ve conducted with two principals who appear in *Hero In America*.

First, however, we turn our attention to The Massachusetts Model of Dr. Punyamurtula S. Kishore to see what has become of it.

What’s in a name?

If you were being treated under The Massachusetts Model, you were in the care of Dr. Kishore, and were benefiting from a system that had a clinically proven success rate (sobriety maintenance plus sobriety enhancement) of 50 percent to 60 percent (having risen from a remarkable 37 percent first clinically documented in 1994). As belabored in the previous articles, Dr. Kishore’s yardstick for success was *sobriety* as established by robust testing.

After the destruction of Dr. Kishore’s clinical practices beginning in September 2011, the process of switching patients back to narcotic-based solutions (methadone and Suboxone) proceeded in earnest. But the choice of medications prescribed wasn’t the only thing to be switched. Even the name “Massachusetts Model” would be coopted by the narcotics-based methodologies: the exact opposite of Dr. Kishore’s approach. “Where the carcass is, there

the vultures are gathered.” The name of Dr. Kishore’s non-narcotic practice was, as he sees it, picked over and hijacked by the purveyors of narcotics.

Imagine that you created The Massachusetts Model, an addiction treatment program that was achieving a 50 percent to 60 percent sobriety success rate without prescribing addictive substances. After the government takes down your program, promoting their preferred programs with only a 2 percent to 5 percent success rate, you then read that The Massachusetts Model is a Suboxone-based model developed by Boston Medical Center. Their Collaborative Care model was “subsequently dubbed the Massachusetts Model (Alford et al., 2007; Alford et al., 2011).”¹ I checked the two Alford references and found no reference to any “dubbing” with this moniker: the references provide details of the program, but don’t seem to disclose the program by that name.

More to the point: in 2011, the great successes of Dr. Kishore’s Massachusetts Model caused his clinics to thrive (a natural result of healing people from addiction so much better than other clinics). Being treated with the Massachusetts Model meant a shot at 60 percent odds of sobriety. People sought out The Massachusetts Model; they wanted Dr. Kishore’s clinics in their neighborhoods!

But now, if you seek out the Massachusetts Model, you’re getting something radically different—and *far less effective*. Cementing a Mercedes-Benz badge onto the hood of a Ford Pinto

doesn't turn the Pinto into a precision German sports car. Labeling a Suboxone-dependent program the "Massachusetts Model" won't make it deliver a success rate of 50 percent to 60 percent sobriety for a year based on robust testing (let alone approaching Dr. Kishore's sobriety enhancement standards).

Big players in the drug industry have adopted the new nomenclature. The only Massachusetts Model that exists, or ever existed so far as they're concerned, is the narcotics-based one. The quarter-million people who Dr. Kishore treated without narcotics never enter their imagination. They're consigned to the proverbial dust bin of history.

Many hands were involved in the death of Dr. Kishore's life-saving clinics: ignorant hands, ambitious hands, even greedy hands. Now the tombstone itself suffers the indignity of having his model's name erased. While Dr. Kishore himself is busy working in nearby states, Massachusetts, whether by design or not, has closed the door on the founder of the original Massachusetts Model ever using that name.

Two Interviews That Matter

Two individuals who appear in the film *Hero In America* were worth separate telephone interviews with me: Rev. Steven Craft and Holly Cekala. Both of these principals approach the addiction treatment question from a Christian perspective. Such an approach can serve to filter out over-simplified reductionisms when dealing with the complexity of human nature (as seen in Rev. Craft's case) or can provide powerful motivation to reach out and minister compassionately to those in dire need (such as in Cekala's experience).

My questions appear in bold type, with the responses following in normal type.

My Interview with Rev. Steven L. Craft

Rev. Steven Louis Craft (B.A. in Bible and Pastoral Counseling, Central Bible College; M.Div., Harvard Divinity School) is ordained as a Correctional Chaplain with the American Baptist Churches, USA and has ministered as a prison chaplain in several states. He co-authored *Virtue and Vice: A Fascinating Journey into Spiritual Transformation* and wrote *Morality and Freedom: America's Dynamic Duo*. A former heroin addict, Rev. Craft often speaks on issues involving race, religion, politics, and culture from a Christian, Black American, and conservative perspective.

My phone interview of May 6, 2017, with Rev. Craft provides insights into the addiction crisis from someone who works sacrificially, eye-to-eye, with those affected by it.

Rev. Craft, what struck you first about the series of articles Chalcedon published about Dr. Kishore?

One of the precepts that really grabbed my attention was the idea of *moral inversion*, the spiritual concept of truth being turned on its head according to Isaiah 5:20. When Dr. Kishore and I were on various speaking engagements, we discussed the need for Sobriety Enhancement, where people struggling with substance abuse could learn to enjoy their sobriety! I truly thank God for you publishing those articles in *Faith for All of Life* magazine.

What is your experience working with drug addicts?

I work as a Pastoral Counselor with recovering addicts at our local church through a residential program entitled Renovation House. The program is fashioned out of the Teen Challenge Curriculum and takes approximately one year residence to successfully

complete. Some of the residents finish and become success stories, while other relapse and leave prematurely. We have also experienced a few overdose deaths over the years.

What's your view of Narcan, the quick-fix "life-saver" the government is promoting?

I am not a fan or promoter of this for a very simple reason. If an addict shoots heroin and overdoses when no first responders are standing at their side, the obvious result is death. This is nothing more than a secular Band-Aid, one of many so-called solutions to the drug crisis which in my opinion are too little, too late.

What's the right solution then, Rev. Craft?

Solid detoxification needs to happen first. Primary care must follow, consisting of working with those struggling with addictions, mentoring them through programs of self-discipline, and loving them in order that they may overcome and be victorious!

In 2017 I reached out to both Gov. Paul LePage of Maine and former Governor Chris Christie of New Jersey in regard to the drug addiction crisis. Unfortunately, I did not get any response whatsoever in that regard. I have come to the conclusion that we in the Bible-believing churches must step up to the plate and disciple those who are considered "the least of these." I came to realize that as long as the drug problem was considered an urban issue, nothing of substance would be accomplished. However, as soon as the problem spilled over into middle class communities, it became a national crisis!

Rev. Craft, can you share your personal testimony in respect to drug addiction?

I was a heroin addict from 1964 until 1976. I had a "hole in my soul"

and used drugs to escape the inner pain! I had an awful hatred of Caucasians due to the fact that I came of age during the 1960s. I was born October 10, 1943, in New Brunswick, New Jersey. I was a black racist. I felt that white people were my problem, when in reality my problem was staring back at me in the mirror.

My cousin, Jimmy Van Dyne, who was also an addict, introduced me to narcotics. We began committing all sorts of criminal activities in order to feed our habit, which amounted to at least \$100.00 per day! As a result, Jimmy died from a drug overdose in a “shooting gallery” in Harlem. So I left New York City and relocated to Los Angeles. Once there, I began using heroin again and finally got institutionalized with “temporary drug psychosis.”

That was God’s intervention in my life, and probably the best thing that ever happened to me! I submitted to God and turned my life completely over to Him through the gospel of Jesus Christ. I went into an eighteen-month residential Christian drug program known as Teen Challenge, and now can testify that I have been enjoying my sobriety and freedom from addiction bondage to this very day. I now rejoice that I have been made free through the Son of God and I travel around the world with that Good News!

Tell us about your ongoing work with your local church and ministry.

My wife and I are members of a small independent church under the supervision of Abundant Life Churches of Perth Amboy. There is a small sixteen-bed residential drug and alcohol program called Renovation House on the second floor of the church building (located at 200 Jefferson Street in Perth Amboy, New Jersey). Reverend Frank Collazo, a former addict, started the ministry in the 1970s and Pastor Paul

Sears is the minister in charge at this time.

How is the Renovation House program structured?

The men in the program typically stay for anywhere between nine months to one year. Some have stayed longer, rebuilt their lives, and even go on staff to serve others that come in. Others come in, but relapse and go out because they are not committed to true change in their lives.

Renovation House teaches the Teen Challenge Program, which is Bible-based and built on consistently Christian principles. Some of the men are married with children, others are single with an average age range between twenty and fifty years old.

Rev. Craft, what do you see as the root of this national crisis?

Dr. Kishore and I have dialogued on this issue from both a medical and spiritual perspective. We challenge our various audiences with the question, “Is drug and alcohol addiction a disease or is it a sin?” It is true that once one becomes addicted, it brings forth all kinds of disease. But addiction itself is not disease. It is sin simply because our will to choose drugs is what brings on the sin itself.

For example, one is never stigmatized for having a true disease such as cancer, but drug addiction, because of political correctness, has redefined all manner of sin to remove the stigma. This is how the addict finds solace, by saying “I have a disease” rather than by repenting and finding true deliverance from the bondage of sin.

As we know, people can kick the physical addiction simply by going through drug detox. But addiction affects body, mind, and spirit. We hear very little about the spiritual root of addiction, but we won’t get very far unless

we follow the lead of John the Baptist and “cut off the sin at the root of the tree.”

Should we trust the civil government with solving this crisis?

It is very dangerous to allow the civil government to usurp the authority of the Bible-believing churches in dealing with the sin problem of addiction. The state is a false god which has only recently “discovered” (hijacked without credit) the great work Dr. Kishore was doing to truly help those struggling with the sin of addiction. Among other achievements, he combined Vivitrol for detox with primary care and spiritual counseling to achieve total sobriety enhancement.

The *Wheel of Death* image that Dr. Kishore developed and had you publish in *Faith for all of Life* vividly illustrates how elements of civil government work together at so many levels to profit financially from people’s misery.

Rev. Craft, are the churches missing the boat on this issue?

Yes, they are for sure! There is definitely a fear of addicts. The powerful stigma is very difficult to overcome, even when Christ commands us to care for “*the least of these*.”

Rev. Craft, in closing, have you seen other effects of stigma outside of the church?

Yes I have. I tried to get the Executive Director of a secular drug advocacy program to meet with Dr. Kishore in New York City. When she discovered some negative coverage from the media concerning his work she became very hostile. She required me to disavow my association with him or else resign from the board which she had asked me to serve on!

I tried to explain the falsehoods in the news that she had read and asked

that she let him tell her his side of the story. She decided that we would part company rather than having the name of her organization “tarnished” by the likes of Dr. Kishore! I discovered that she was more interested in making a name for her organization than with working together, in a common cause, to help those struggling with alcohol and drugs.

In conclusion, I pray that my small contribution will greatly benefit your readers throughout the ministry of Chalcedon!

My Interview with Holly Cekala

Holly Cekala is a tireless advocate who has overseen the opening of two recovery centers in New Hampshire. Cekala is a certified trainer of the CCAR-Recovery Coach Academy working over the years with hundreds of Certified Peer Specialists who have graduated to placements in hospitals, prisons, and faith-based centers, in senior centers, mental health centers, homeless shelters, domestic violence centers, re-entry centers, and transitional housing.

My phone interview of July 15, 2017, with Holly can give the reader a better insight into the nature of the industry that has grown up around addiction treatment. Her experience provides a fascinating counterpoint to Rev. Craft's and is worth digging through.

Holly, is addiction a brain disease, as former drug czar Michael Botticelli claimed?

It's Michael Botticelli [*so take it with a grain of salt*]. Did the Surgeon General say it too? In 2015 the Surgeon General said addiction was a brain disease, and that was during Botticelli's tenure. I don't see that claim being backed up by any pathology reports. It's only a condition. But a disease? I'm not sure. I've not seen enough documentation by any

neurology team to support that claim.

What is your view of the CARA Act?

The CARA Act was finalized towards the end of 2015, beginning of 2016, and it really dumped millions of dollars into law enforcement training, but the recovery community supported it because it was said to put treatment dollars into the community. It is the same system that is only delivering 7 percent results during this period of time, during this crisis.

Promises notwithstanding, the millions of dollars that the CARA Act approves for treatment is delivering a 93 percent fail rate.

That massive failure rate gets glossed over, doesn't it?

Yeah. I've lost a brother, a niece, a nephew, and many aunts and uncles to addiction and opiate use, so news of government action was something you wanted to celebrate. After all, they seem to be taking time to address the crisis and they're going to spend money on it. But the system is hopelessly broken. Investing millions in a broken system is not the answer, in my opinion.

Families are so desperate for answers and ways to save their loved ones that when any hint in the media or propaganda appears concerning legislative action, they jump on it and support it. What they don't do is read the legislation through.

Are they being emotionally manipulated?

I certainly feel like I've been emotionally manipulated by advocates that I've known for years. They all jumped on Medicaid expansion and the Affordable Care Act (ACA). All of this was under the direction of Michael Botticelli.

Of course, the state delivered a glowing report: it's working out so well!

But others analyzed it and saw it was a mess: people are being dropped

off the insurance, there are huge wait lines, and there remain large concerns. Though Trump hasn't made nice with a lot of people here, I'm thinking some reform has to be done. I support the ACA's philosophy, but not at the expense of others!

What can you tell us about the 21st Century Cures Act?

I'm glad research dollars are in there somewhere, but the destruction of informed consent means the patients have no recourse against a manufacturer of implants. Further, it's a very small appropriation so far as addiction goes, so it's like they slipped this in primarily to revoke informed consent. If you're incarcerated and diagnosed as a substance abuse addict, they can give you the implant whether you want it or not.

This results in a snowballing effect: we're gathering all these people with this medical condition. But where are the pathology reports? Where is the medical community? Where are the neurologists? Eighty years have gone by with clinicians who grew out of AA, a free spiritual program—I repeat, FREE—that does work for many, many people, but now we have millions and millions of dollars being pumped into this new clinical service.

If clinical care drives people into chemical slavery, I want no part of it.

How did this all unravel?

Some of the concerns that I had go back to 2012, when I sat and watched them build this Medicaid expansion in Rhode Island, “I said hey, slow down, this isn't going to work! My outcomes aren't going to be what they used to be!” We enjoyed an 86 percent success rate using peer-based treatment: the patients went back to work, to school, and rejoined their families. When the fee per service billing was pushed on us, I saw my peers falling off and burning

out very quickly. The peer-to-patient relationship changed, and I saw that it was now all about money.

I saw these subsequent legislative acts and it seemed like they're finally going to change things, but none of these acts fundamentally changed the way we treat this condition. I purposely use the word "condition" rather than validate the "disease" model. Addiction was defined as a disease so Medicaid could be billed for it.

There are some great clinicians out there, some great treatment programs out there, but there are a *lot* of programs out there that are not reimbursed through Medicaid funding. These are structured programs, faith-based programs, that might not deal directly with the condition of addiction but structure the living environment, and these are effective too. So why are we only focusing on Medication-Assisted Treatment [MAT, which involves substitute narcotics like methadone and Suboxone]?

Like Dr. Kishore, you seem to have a dim view of the MAT drugs.

I see kids in their twenties and they're put on these medication regimens that they can never get off of. Even when they say, "I want off of this," they're told, "You're not ready." Where does that end? It's not enough that Medicaid patients and people who can't afford insurance are put on these drugs. One of the biggest costs, even for Workers' Comp, is Suboxone. This is what they're pushing? It doesn't make any sense to me. If you're putting people all on the most expensive medication so far as insurance is concerned, how is this a stable solution?

What did you see happening in New Hampshire?

Pregnant mom after pregnant mom was being put on Medicaid, so they're then prescribed Subutex® so the child

is born alive. Time and again I'd see the mother relapse repeatedly through the pregnancy and after birth—and then she's no longer eligible for Medicaid and is moved onto other programs. How is this saving the mother or child? How is this considered investing in a solution?

Young mothers that get on methadone don't do that well. I don't see real people in real time in real communities do that well on methadone. I simply have not seen it. I have seen not hundreds, not thousands, but *hundreds of thousands of people* at some point in their life going through their addiction journey.

Could the manufacturers pull up numbers favoring their treatments?

Sure they could, but I have not seen true success. If a patient hasn't used heroin, that's considered a success? What about all the other things that they're using? I picked up a young man from the hospital. He was using 190 mg of methadone *and shooting up meth* [methamphetamine]. He went to work every day doing these drugs. He wanted off the methadone, but you have to go to a special titration center to get off of it, *and Medicaid won't pay for getting off of methadone!*

In fact, you have to have a special protocol for getting off methadone, because you have to go against the doctor's advice, and typically doctors never say you're ready to get off of it. You're never going down in dose: they keep kicking the methadone dose up. "You mean I'm not high enough to not want to be high?" The system is incoherent.

In what ways is the current orthodoxy incoherent?

If addiction is a brain disease, why aren't they going to see a neurologist? Why is there no neurological treatment for them? The medical providers have

long since left the building because there was no reimbursement rate for this particular "disease," so doctors spent no time dealing with it.

Now that this waiver thing is in place, they're all scrambling to treat those "addicts," even at terrible reimbursement rates. What does that say for how we're dealing with this? You can't incarcerate everyone, so you're going to put chemical bonds/chains on them? Is that not just the same thing? Enslavement? You know? If we're supposed to be a country of free people, free-thinking people, how can you have free thought if you're dependent on chemicals?

That I'm the only one talking about this makes me feel like a tad bit radical, because *none* of the other recovery advocates will talk like this. Those few who do are typically centered in faith-based programs. Those are spiritual, abstinence-based programs that have been proven to be very successful, like Teen Challenge, or Living with Grace, and things of that nature. For years those programs didn't get *any* reimbursement from any insurance company, though they were saving the insurance companies hundreds of thousands of dollars.

What was your response to all this?

I didn't want to accept Medicaid on a pay-per-service scale when I came to New Hampshire. In Rhode Island I watched it not be very successful. I watched it dwindle. When I came to New Hampshire and we set up the centers, we came up with a model that did not need to seek Medicaid fee-for-service reimbursement. And that was not received very well by those who supported the Affordable Care Act.

It was truly a big battle when I arrived here in 2015, and they're now certifying peers. I gave clear warning about using certification for peers, because you're essentially certifying lived experience, and quite frankly I'm not

sure that's the academically correct way to approach it.

The politicians keep pushing for the system to remain the same way, and pushing a 93 percent fail rate isn't going to help—it's not metaphysically possible. If there aren't huge systematic changes in mental health and addiction care, you can't possibly begin to scratch the surface in changing the outcomes.

As you describe it, the situation looks grim.

I don't know where to turn, because there's no advocacy organization willing to discuss this in a reasonable light. There's no middle ground between ACA all in, or kill the ACA. My God is a loving God, and I know something good is going to happen, and I think it's important that people speak up if they have information to share. My mom told me, "You have to speak the truth even if your voice shakes." Even on my own Facebook page there are people who are desperate to keep ACA intact. But they don't understand the underlying issues that make it such a horrendous bill.

If you're going to have insurance for people who need it, of course treatment has to be in there, *but to what end?* Where are the successes? How do you hold the providers accountable for that? "Oh, you can't hold people accountable—it's a disease!" How do you hold a provider accountable? With no after-care, no recovery house, no life skills after-treatment occurs, you'll simply perpetuate that 7 percent "success" rate. How are they protecting that investment? Are they going to appropriate money for recovery houses? They just keep saying, "This is going to help people." That now seems like an empty talking point to me.

I dropped \$65,000 on an education to become a clinician, only to find out I don't want to work in that field because the system is so broken. We have to find

another way to approach this. Something better than taking away informed consent and slipping people an implant—that's not the way to deal with it. We've been sold a bill of goods that will not hit the mark.

How did the current crisis start?

This goes back to years and years ago when they deinstitutionalized all the state hospitals, which were atrocious anyway. Then the homeless population got bigger, and that group was fraught with addiction issues. Did the country ever look to the communities of faith for help? No, they didn't. No matter what religion you are from, Jewish, Christian, Buddhist, we all want humanity to do better, but they never embraced the faith community to say, hey, we have a problem with spirit here.

We don't stick together as families anymore. We have broken home after broken home. We have people who make babies but don't want to be a father. "It's not a moral failing, addiction ... but a lot of moral failings lead to addiction."

I was spiritually bankrupt when I was using alcohol and cocaine. Spiritually bankrupt. Is there a way to find a bridge? Years ago people went to church when they had marital problems. They went to their pastors when they were spiritually bankrupt. I had bad experiences in my church youth group, and that pushed me away from my God for a while, but thankfully I found my way back to Him. These experiences push people away from God, and I find this heartbreaking because there is joy in faith, and there are a lot of people have no more joy in their life.

What things need to change, then?

I watch time and time again men coming out of prison, and they can't be hired at a job to take care of their families. Once they're arrested, it's a life

sentence. All they want is to take care of their families, and this, they're denied.

We need programs that teach independence, not dependence. When do you come off the treatment? When is that program going to find you independence? I see people celebrating that they have low-income housing. They celebrate that they've become completely dependent. I don't think that's very American. People are being sold this bill of dependence. And who benefits from that? Unless you're a pharmaceutical company, you don't benefit from it.

A true Christian is kind to other humans. We treat people as we would want to be treated. We love people and we don't judge. That's a true Christian value to me. You help where you can. So the mission was to help people any way we could so they'd realize that having a life of independence and joy is where they want to be.

Let's walk through some of the status quo tools now in use. What about methadone?

Methadone? It can be really effective for people who have comorbid conditions (serious accidents who need pain medication). For them it can be a very effective protocol. I would not recommend it to the twenty-year-old that is physically able, or to a younger person who could fully recover without it. But time and time again, I see exactly that happening. What are we looking to build? What kind of generation will we build on methadone? I'm not against medication, but mainstreaming chemical slavery is not a good thing either.

And Suboxone?

I think Suboxone could work as a detoxification drug in a five to seven day protocol. People should not have to withdraw in such pain that they go through hell. That is terrible. It could be effective if used the way researchers

intended it in the first place. But now Suboxone has snowballed into a money grab.

And the new “panacea,” Narcan?

Well, Narcan was effective until the onset of fentanyl and carfentanyl. I advocated for Narcan for the Good Samaritan law for loved ones and recovery houses to have it. From 2012 to 2015 I saw it save many lives (because relapses happen). But now it's becoming less and less effective. Why? The way it's administered? Now we're at the point that we're saying, go into a public place and use your drug safely? Where does this trend end?

People *could* be saved to embrace a life of recovery (which would be optimal). That doesn't always happen, but it's optimal. In that sense, Narcan is no different than a defibrillator. It's just a tool in a medical toolbox and gives the patient an opportunity to make the changes to get to recovery. But nowadays it is administered but the second, third, and fourth steps *are never taken* to get them into recovery.

What's your opinion about the sheriff in Butler County who refuses to issue Narcan to his officers?

If you're defibrillated, you go to the hospital and get care. They don't just defibrillate you and let you go to sit on a couch and eat potato chips. The clinical world and the addiction world live on two different mountains and there's a huge valley between them. We're pretty smart people in this country and we have yet to come up with viable medical solutions that people can live with viably, live with successfully? That seems very strange to me. The conversation needs to change.

But these status quo approaches are still being aggressively pushed.

I'm not buying it anymore, the

claims that “they need A, they need B.” I say, show me the research, show me the pathology reports, the neurology reports ... *then* I'll buy it. But right now it seems like a huge money grab to me. It's seems awful to say, but it's true.

I've seen people struggle to keep recovery houses open, but there are hundreds of thousands of people who have recovered through them. “Where's the reimbursement?” is a greed-filled motive, and that has to change, because we're losing a whole generation to chemical slavery. That's not enough to start a conversation that's different? It should be. It should be.

And where do you stand in the midst of all this?

Quite frankly, I'm not trying to be popular. I'm trying to help people survive. I don't have anything paying my way to say it that way. I'm not being paid by this provider, or that pharmaceutical company. I'm not being paid by anybody. I'm Holly Cekala, John Q. Public, not being paid by anybody. I've seen hundreds of thousands of people get their lives back, and that was not attributable to some pharmaceutical company. When is the conversation going to be about *THAT*? When are we going to talk about *THOSE* things, and teaching people how to embrace their freedoms? I hope that comes some day.

What do you see as the pitfalls of Medicaid?

Under Medicaid you have to accept \$3,200/month. To accept this, you have to have less-educated staff. Where is the scientific basis for that? What are you getting for that money? How do you navigate this complicated system? Do I got to Betty Ford or go the cheap way and pay \$3,600/week? How is John Q. Public supposed to figure out how to get the best care you can get? There's no transparency. And what does a treat-

ment center actually give someone?

What are you connecting people with?

If my job as a clinician is to connect people to a free program, why don't they connect them to a free program in the first place? That doesn't make sense to me. We have a whole generation in crisis here. It's no time to multiply paperwork. So I don't follow that methodology.

Like Dr. Kishore, you're no stranger to major controversy.

I had a couple of employees lodge a complaint against my license. I'm a licensed alcohol and drug counselor, even though I've never had a patient or client the entire time I had the license. I don't believe you can be effective without creating a personal relationship or friendship with somebody.

License, yes, I paid a lot of money to go to school to get it. So I'm not worried about it. Did I leave the organization as a result? Sure I did. I don't want a couple of complaints against me to stop the organization from doing what it needed to do. “We're going to suspend the funding until we figure this out,” they said, but the investigation was over in two days. But then they said that to turn the funding back on, the organization would have to bill Medicaid. And at that point I said, okay, I'm done.

The centers don't take that much money. Why they would want to push fee-for-service onto people? The only reason is to further the Affordable Care Act! Fine, but that's not what I want to do.

So at the height of my career, I realized I don't want to do this. I'd rather work with the faith-based community and do my best to save the ones I can. It took me a couple of weeks to process through this, but that's the way I feel.

One of the complaints was that I offered a young mom and child a place to stay. And I *had* offered them a place to stay. And the authorities said,

“That’s not good for your license,” but I answered, “That’s not good for my faith, not to offer this mother and child a place to rest their head while they’re figuring things out, so if it’s between my faith and my license, I choose my God.” That’s what people do when they have conviction. The organization even retained an attorney for me since they didn’t feel I did anything wrong.

I’ve been very vocal about a lot of things, like Dr. Kishore, you know. When you’re vocal about things that are not public mainstream, things like this happen. I take it one day at a time. But to choose between my faith and that license, they can have the license, because I want to go to heaven.

Is there a connection between your story and Dr. Kishore’s story?

When I heard the timeline for Dr. Kishore, I gave him a call. “Hey, I want to hear your story,” I said. The timeline for him perfectly aligned with all the ACA imposition and the push for this chemical slavery. This guy, Kishore, had actual results, scientific reports, urine tests, blood tests, etc. He had the actual scientific evidence that what he was doing in his practice was working. He circumvented the treatment system, and that is why this happened to him. You circumvent the billion-dollar clinical care system and boom: you’ve got a problem.

They had a lot riding on that in Massachusetts, and Michael Botticelli and the Obama Administration had a lot riding on that plan, so I don’t doubt the Kishore story ... not even a bit. The timeline is uncanny for the Kishore timeframe. Uncanny. They did that to him to perpetuate the generation of more chemical slaves. 🦹‍♂️

1. <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC4682362/#R1>

M. Rushdoony...Jesus cont. from pg. 4

forbidden. There is no indication that Jesus frowned on this custom. In fact, His claim to be the source of rivers of living water validated its representation of the reality of God’s promise. He did not condemn the celebration, but only claimed Himself as the source of life.

3 Again, this was extra-Scriptural, but nowhere condemned.

Selbrede...Theonomy cont. from pg. 12

(Grand Rapids, MI: Kregel Publications, n.d.), pp. 60–61.

49. “The A.V. in thus taking it has the support of the Versions generally; but the words following ‘for the Lord thy God’ do not fit aptly to this sense ... which ... certainly suggests the other sense of the word, found also in Deut. 33:10, ‘whole offering’ ... [as supported by] the Mishna, and other Jewish authorities, cf. Gesenius, Fürst, Keil, Knobel, &c.” F. C. Cook, ed., *The Bible Commentary*, Volume 1 (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 1981 [1871–1881]), p. 849. “Versions” as used by Espin above is theological jargon for early translations of the Biblical text into other languages (mentioned here because not all our readers may know this). Note that Espin correctly reported C. F. Keil’s preferred translation, the translation that would be required by Dr. McDurmon’s thesis. C. F. Keil, C. F. and F. Delitzsch, *Commentary on the Old Testament* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1983), Vol. 1, p. 366.

50. Dr. McDurmon (p. 53) appears to cite either the ESV or Amplified Bible, both of which give the reading he uses.

51. McDurmon, op. cit., p. 53.

52. In the category of other challenges, there are many, but we will mention only two in passing. Dr. McDurmon says, “God’s consuming fire is no longer on earth in an altar. It was removed” (p. 54). But an opposing argument to “removal” could easily be made for a *transition* from one central pillar of smoke and fire to millions of pillars of smoke and fire hovering over every dwelling place of Zion (Isa. 4:5). He also states, “... the land itself was holy and was an agent of sanctions” (p. 50), and Canaan is surely

known today as the Holy Land. But other texts of a postmillennial import teach that *all* of the earth’s land will be holy. How do these texts then affect the argument of agency being limited to Canaan? Further, one can argue that cherem is repatriation of God’s property to Himself for repurposing (even involuntary repurposing). Fire purifies what is defiled, and the Messiah is a refiner’s fire purifying everything (Mal. 3:2–3). From this vantage point, *everything* is cherem (devoted to purification). Unshakeable things alone will remain.

53. Selbrede, Martin, unpublished but privately-circulated paper of 1992. The temple’s destruction of Dan. 9:27 would have been apposite as well. The paper points out that the “the very passage disputed by Robbins (Matt. 5:17–18) embraces the exhaustive validity of the law AND the prophets, *together*.” This last aspect is often omitted from modern discourse. There is confusion over other issues too. E.g., circumcision is only mentioned in the Mosaic Law in the passive voice because it is Abrahamic in origin and antedates the law (as Moses discovered to his horror in Ex. 4:22–26). Warfield even asserts that the church *has* Israel’s circumcision, as his exposition of Col. 2:11 illustrates, in the form of baptism. It is an indication of adoption as the seed of Abraham and is a pre-law issue.

54. McDurmon, p. ix.

Rowntree...Slavery cont. from pg. 18

30 No. 3 (1955), pp. 321–326.

12. Thomas Madden, *Venice: A New History* (London: Penguin Books, 2012), p. 278.

13. Origo, p. 323; the quotation is from Saint Ambrose, *Epist.* CI, p. 37. (*Editor’s note: here it is easy to see how the dangerous legacy of Neoplatonic thinking undermines morality under cover of facile pretexts and sophistry.*)

14. Origo, p. 332.

15. Paul F Crawford (trans.), *The ‘Templar of Tyre’: Part III of the ‘Deeds of the Cypriots’* (New York, NY: Routledge, 2016).

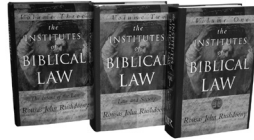
16. Joel McDurmon, *The Problem of Slavery in Christian America* (Powder Springs, GA: The American Vision, 2017) is a detailed and convincing study of American slavery.

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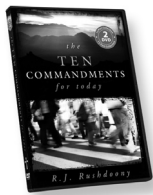
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By R. J. Rushdoony. This work examines various areas of life from a Biblical perspective. Every area of life must be brought under the dominion of Christ and the government of God's Word.

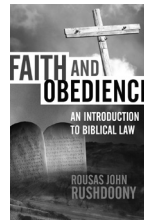
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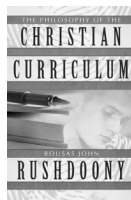
Faith and Obedience: An Introduction to Biblical Law

R. J. Rushdoony reveals that to be born again means that where you were once governed by your own word and spirit, you are now totally governed by God's Word and Spirit. This is because every word of God is a binding word. Our money, our calling, our family, our sexuality, our political life, our economics, our sciences, our art, and all things else must be subject to God's Word and requirements. Taken from the introduction in *The Institutes of Biblical Law* (foreword by Mark Rushdoony). Great for sharing with others.

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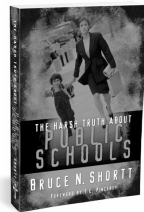
Education



The Philosophy of the Christian Curriculum

By R. J. Rushdoony. The Christian School represents a break with humanistic education, but, too often, the Christian educator carries the state's humanism with him. A curriculum is not neutral: it's either a course in humanism or training in a God-centered faith and life.

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By Bruce Shortt. This book combines a sound Biblical basis, rigorous research, straightforward, easily read language, and eminently sound reasoning. It is a thoroughly documented description of the inescapably anti-Christian thrust of any governmental school system and the inevitable results: moral relativism (no fixed standards), academic dumbing down, far-left programs, near absence of discipline, and the persistent but pitiable rationalizations offered by government education professionals.

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By R. J. Rushdoony. Dr. Rushdoony predicted that the humanist system, based on anti-Christian premises of the Enlightenment, could only get worse. He knew that education divorced from God and from all transcendental standards would produce the educational disaster and moral barbarism we have today.

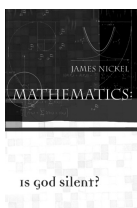
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By R. J. Rushdoony. From Mann to the present, the state has used education to socialize the child. The school's basic purpose, according to its own philosophers, is not education in the traditional sense of the 3 R's. Instead, it is to promote "democracy" and "equality," not in their legal or civic sense, but in terms of the engineering of a socialized citizenry. Such men saw themselves and the school in messianic terms. This book was instrumental in launching the Christian school and homeschool movements.

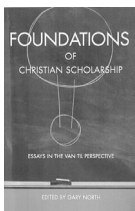
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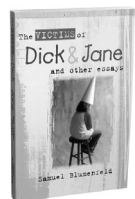
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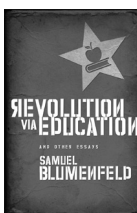
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By Samuel L. Blumenfeld. America's most effective critic of public education shows us how America's public schools were remade by educators who used curriculum to create citizens suitable for their own vision of a utopian socialist society. This collection of essays will show you how and why America's public education declined.

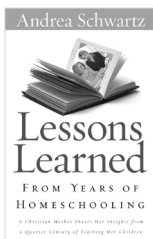
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Revolution via Education

By Samuel L. Blumenfeld. Blumenfeld gets to the root of our crisis: our spiritual state and the need for an explicitly Christian form of education. Blumenfeld leaves nothing uncovered. He examines the men, methods, and means to the socialist project to transform America into an outright tyranny by scientific controllers.

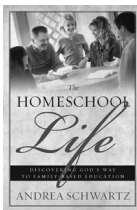
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Lessons Learned From Years of Homeschooling

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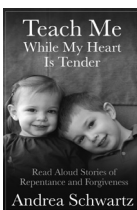
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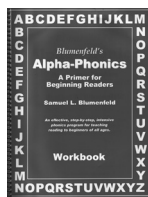
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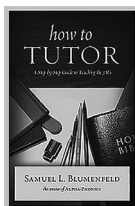
By Sam Blumenfeld. Provides parents, teachers and tutors with a sensible, logical, easy-to-use system for teaching reading. The Workbook teaches our alphabetic system - with its 26 letters and 44 sounds - in the following sequence: First, the alphabet, then the short vowels and consonants, the consonant digraphs, followed by the consonant blends, and finally the long vowels in their variety of spellings and our other vowels. It can also be used as a supplement to any other reading program being used in the classroom. Its systematic approach to teaching basic phonetic skills makes it particularly valuable to programs that lack such instruction.

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The **Alpha-Phonics Readers** accompany the text of Sam Blumenfeld's *Alpha-Phonics*, providing opportunities for students to read at a level that matches their progress through the text. These eleven readers move from simple sentences to paragraphs to stories, ending with poetry. By the time a student completes this simple program, the phonetic reflex is well-established. This program has also been successfully used with functionally illiterate adults.

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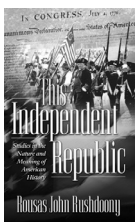
How to Tutor by Samuel Blumenfeld demystifies primary education! You'll learn that you can teach subjects you already know without requiring specialized academic training or degrees. Here's what you'll discover:

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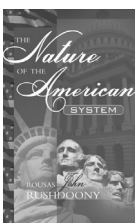
American History & the Constitution



This Independent Republic

By R. J. Rushdoony. Important insight into American history by one who could trace American development in terms of the Christian ideas which gave it direction. These essays will greatly alter your understanding of, and appreciation for, American history.

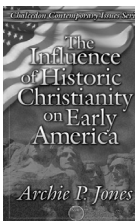
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The Nature of the American System

By R. J. Rushdoony. Originally published in 1965, these essays were a continuation of the author's previous work, *This Independent Republic*, and examine the interpretations and concepts which have attempted to remake and rewrite America's past and present.

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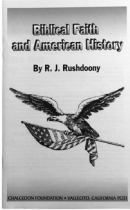


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By Archie P. Jones. Early America was founded upon the deep, extensive influence of Christianity inherited from the medieval period and the Protestant Reformation. That priceless heritage was not limited to the narrow confines of the personal life of the individual, nor to ecclesiastical structure. Christianity positively and predominately (though

not perfectly) shaped culture, education, science, literature, legal thought, legal education, political thought, law, politics, charity, and missions.

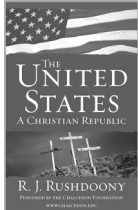
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Biblical Faith and American History

By R. J. Rushdoony. America was a break with the neoplatonic view of religion that dominated the medieval church. The Puritans and other groups saw Scripture as guidance for every area of life because they viewed its author as the infallible Sovereign over every area.

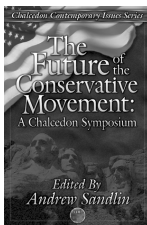
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The United States: A Christian Republic

By R. J. Rushdoony. The author demolishes the modern myth that the United States was founded by deists or humanists bent on creating a secular republic.

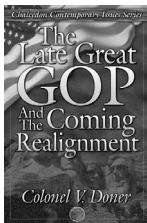
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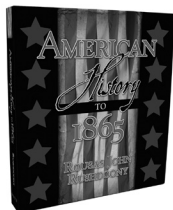
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By Colonel V. Doner. For more than three decades, most Christian conservatives in the United States have hitched their political wagon to the plodding elephant of the Republican Party. This work is a call to arms for those weary of political vacillation and committed more firmly than ever to the necessity of a truly Christian social order.

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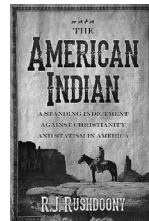


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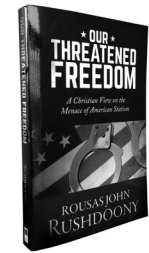


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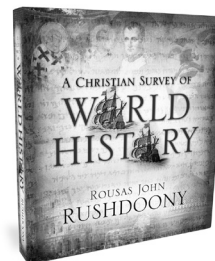


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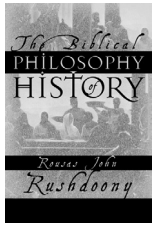
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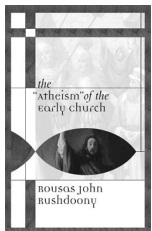
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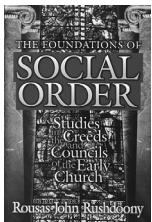
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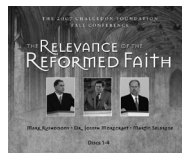
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By R. J. Rushdoony. Modern philosophy has sought to explain man and his thought process without acknowledging God, His revelation, or man's sin. Philosophers who rebel against God are compelled to *abandon meaning itself*, for they possess neither the tools nor the place to anchor it. The works of darkness championed by philosophers past and present need to be exposed and reprovved. In this volume, Dr. Rushdoony clearly enunciates each major philosopher's position and its implications, identifies the intellectual and moral consequences of each school of thought, and traces the dead-end to which each naturally leads.

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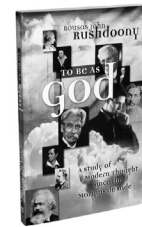
The Word of Flux:

Modern Man and the Problem of Knowledge

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anything if you reject God and His revelation? This book takes the reader into the heart of modern man's intellectual dilemma.

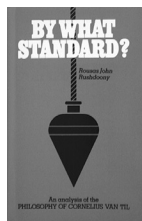
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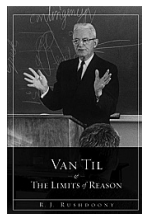
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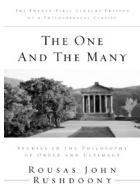
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Van Til & The Limits of Reason

By R. J. Rushdoony. The Christian must see faith in God's revelation as opening up understanding, as thinking God's thoughts after Him, and rationalism as a restriction of thought to the narrow confines of human understanding. Reason is a gift of God, but we must not make more of it than it is. The first three essays of this volume were published in a small booklet in 1960 as a tribute to the thought of Dr. Cornelius Van Til, titled Van Til. The last four essays were written some time later and are published here for the first time.

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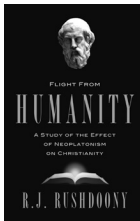


The One and the Many: Studies in the Philosophy of Order and Ultimacy

By R. J. Rushdoony. This work discusses the problem of understanding unity vs. particularity, oneness vs. individuality. "Whether recognized or not, every argument and every theological, philosophical, political, or any other exposition is based on a presupposition about man, God, and society—about reality. This presupposition rules and

determines the conclusion; the effect is the result of a cause. And one such basic presupposition is with reference to the one and the many." The author finds the answer in the Biblical doctrine of the Trinity.

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The Flight from Humanity: A Study of the Effect of Neoplatonism on Christianity

By R. J. Rushdoony. Neoplatonism presents man's dilemma as a metaphysical one, whereas Scripture presents it as a moral problem. Basing Christianity on this false Neoplatonic idea will always shift the faith from the Biblical perspective. The ascetic quest sought to take refuge from sins of the flesh but failed to address the

reality of sins of the heart and mind. In the name of humility, the ascetics manifested arrogance and pride. This pagan idea of spirituality entered the church and is the basis of some chronic problems in Western civilization.

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Psychology

Politics of Guilt and Pity

By R. J. Rushdoony. From the foreword by Steve Schlissel: "Rushdoony sounds the clarion call of liberty for all who remain oppressed by Christian leaders who wrongfully lord it over the souls of God's righteous ones.... I pray that

the entire book will not only instruct you in the method and content of a Biblical worldview, but actually bring you further into the glorious freedom of the children of God. Those who walk in wisdom's ways become immune to the politics of guilt and pity."

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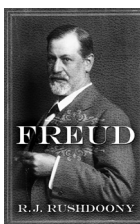


Revolt Against Maturity

By R. J. Rushdoony. The Biblical doctrine of psychology is a branch of theology dealing with man as a fallen creature marked by a revolt against maturity. Man was created a mature being with a responsibility to dominion and cannot be understood from the Freudian child, nor the Darwinian standpoint of a long biological history. Man's history is a short one filled with responsibility to God. Man's

psychological problems are therefore a resistance to responsibility, i.e. a revolt against maturity.

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Freud

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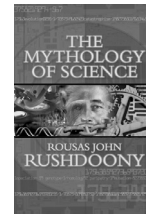


The Cure of Souls: Recovering the Biblical Doctrine of Confession

By R. J. Rushdoony. In *The Cure of Souls: Recovering the Biblical Doctrine of Confession*, R. J. Rushdoony cuts through the misuse of Romanism and modern psychology to restore the doctrine of confession to a Biblical foundation—one that is covenantal and Calvinistic.

Without a true restoration of Biblical confession, the Christian's walk is impeded by the remains of sin. This volume is an effort in reversing this trend.

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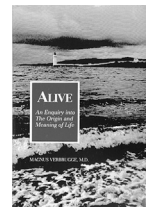
Science

The Mythology of Science

By R. J. Rushdoony. This book is about the religious nature of evolutionary thought and how these religious presuppositions underlie our modern intellectual paradigm. The "mythology" of modern science is its religious

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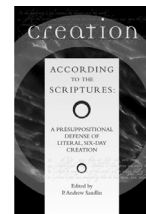
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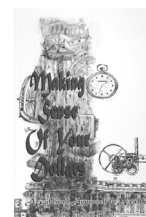
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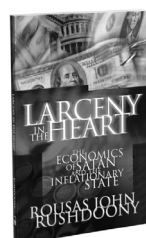
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Making Sense of Your Dollars: A Biblical Approach to Wealth

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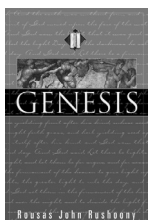
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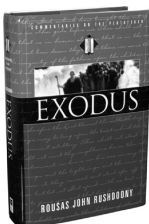
Biblical Studies

Genesis, Volume I of Commentaries on the Pentateuch

By R. J. Rushdoony. In recent years, it has become commonplace for both humanists and churchmen to sneer at anyone who takes Genesis 1-11 as historical.

Yet to believe in the myth of evolution is to accept trillions of miracles to account for our cosmos. Spontaneous generation, the development of something out of nothing, and the blind belief in the miraculous powers of chance, require tremendous faith. Theology without literal six-day creationism becomes alien to the God of Scripture because it turns from the God Who acts and Whose Word is the creative word and the word of power, to a belief in process as god.

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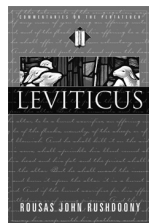
By R. J. Rushdoony. Essentially, all of mankind is on some sort of an exodus. However, the path of fallen man is vastly different from that of the righteous. Apart from Jesus Christ and His atoning work, the exodus of a fallen humanity means only a further descent from sin into death. But in Christ, the exodus is now a glorious ascent into the justice and dominion of the everlasting Kingdom

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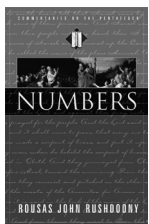
By R. J. Rushdoony. Much like the book of Proverbs, any emphasis upon the practical applications of God's law is readily shunned in pursuit of more "spiritual" studies. Books like Leviticus are considered dull, overbearing, and irrelevant. But man was created in God's image and is duty-bound to develop the implications of that image by obedience to God's law. The book of Leviticus contains

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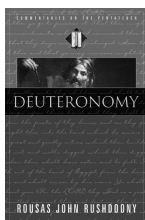
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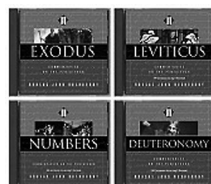
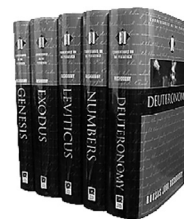
to summarize the central tenets of a truly Biblical worldview—one that is solidly established upon Biblical Law, and can shape the future.

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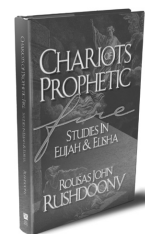
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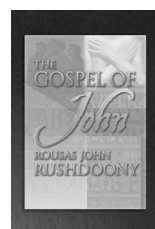
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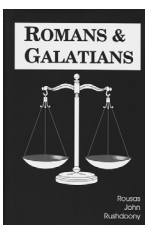


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By R. J. Rushdoony. Nothing more clearly reveals the gospel than Christ's atoning death and His resurrection. They tell us that Jesus Christ has destroyed the power of sin and death. John therefore deliberately limits the number of miracles he reports in order to point to and concentrate on our Lord's death and resurrection. The

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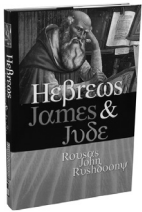
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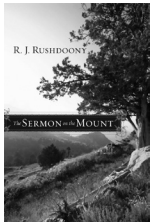
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Hebrews, James and Jude

By R. J. Rushdoony. The Book of Hebrews is a summons to serve Christ the Redeemer-King fully and faithfully, without compromise. When James, in his epistle, says that faith without works is dead, he tells us that faith is not a mere matter of words, but it is of necessity a matter of life. "Pure religion and undefiled" requires Christian charity and action. Anything short of this is a self-delusion. Jude similarly recalls us to Jesus Christ's apostolic commission, "Remember ye the words which have been spoken before by the apostles of our Lord Jesus Christ" (v. 17). Jude's letter reminds us of the necessity for a new creation beginning with us, and of the inescapable triumph of the Kingdom of God.

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Sermon on the Mount

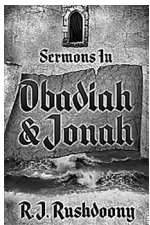
By R. J. Rushdoony. So much has been written about the Sermon on the Mount, but so little of the commentaries venture outside of the matters of the heart. The Beatitudes are reduced to the assumed meaning of their more popular portions, and much of that meaning limits our concerns to downplaying wealth, praying in secret, suppressing our worries, or simply reciting the Lord's Prayer. The

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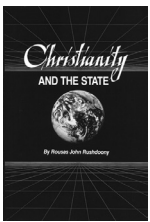
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By R. J. Rushdoony. In his study of Obadiah, Rushdoony condemns the "spiritual Edomites" of our day who believe evildoers have the power to frustrate the progress of the Kingdom of God. In Jonah, he demonstrates that we play the part of Jonah when we second-guess God, complain about the work He gives us, or are peevish when outcomes are not to our liking.

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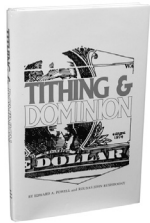


Taking Dominion

Christianity and the State

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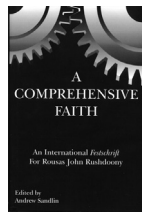


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By Edward A. Powell and R. J. Rushdoony. God's Kingdom covers all things in its scope, and its immediate ministry includes, according to Scripture, the ministry of grace (the church), instruction (the Christian and homeschool), help to the needy (the diaconate), and many other things. God's appointed means for financing His Kingdom activities is centrally the tithe. This work affirms

that the Biblical requirement of tithing is a continuing aspect of God's law-word and cannot be neglected.

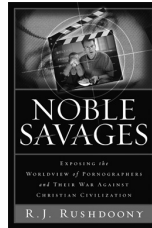
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A Comprehensive Faith

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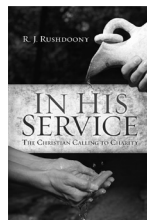
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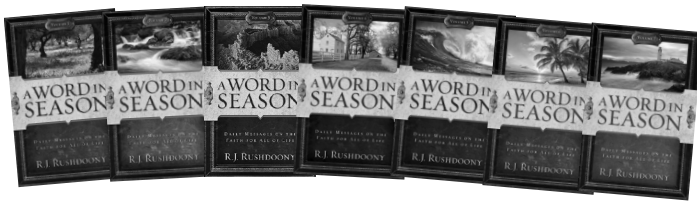
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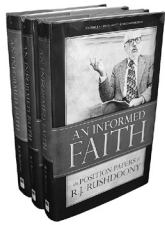
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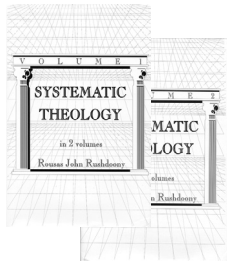


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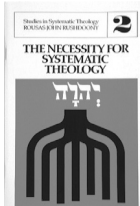
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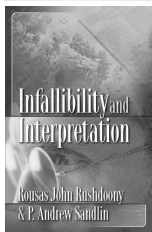
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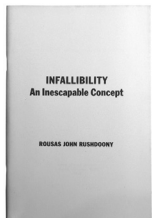
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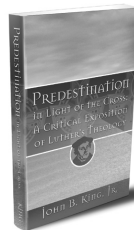
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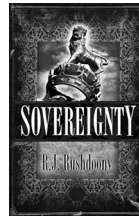
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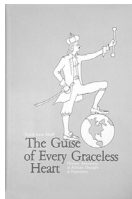
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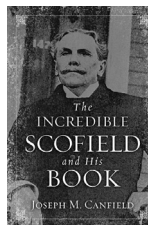
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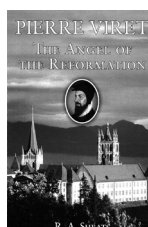
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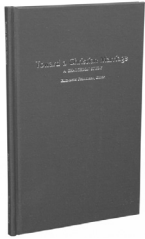


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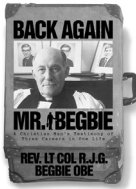


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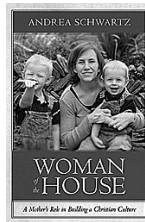


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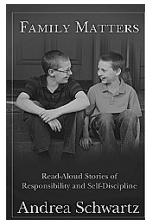
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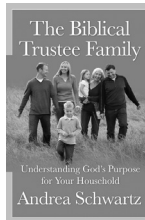
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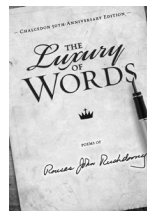
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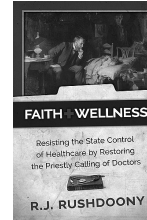
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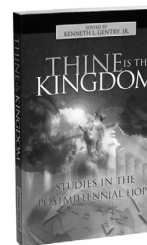
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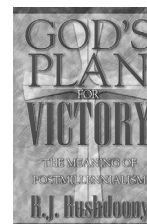


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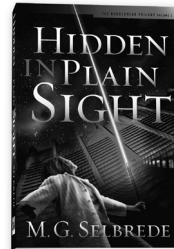
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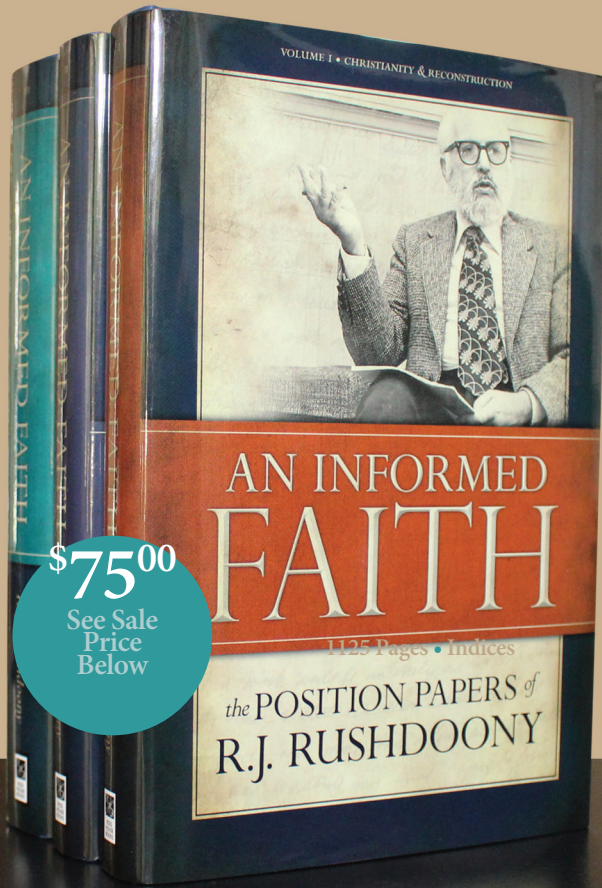
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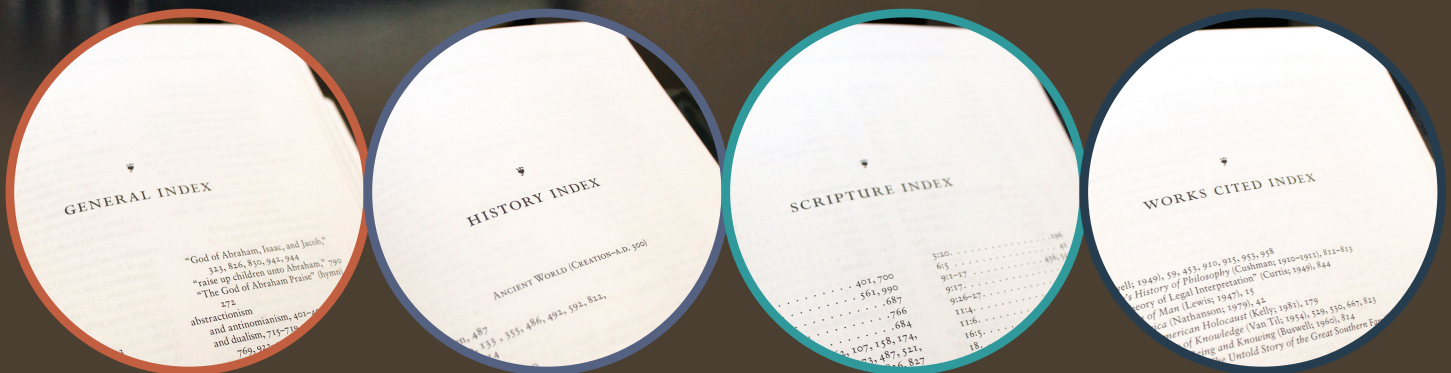
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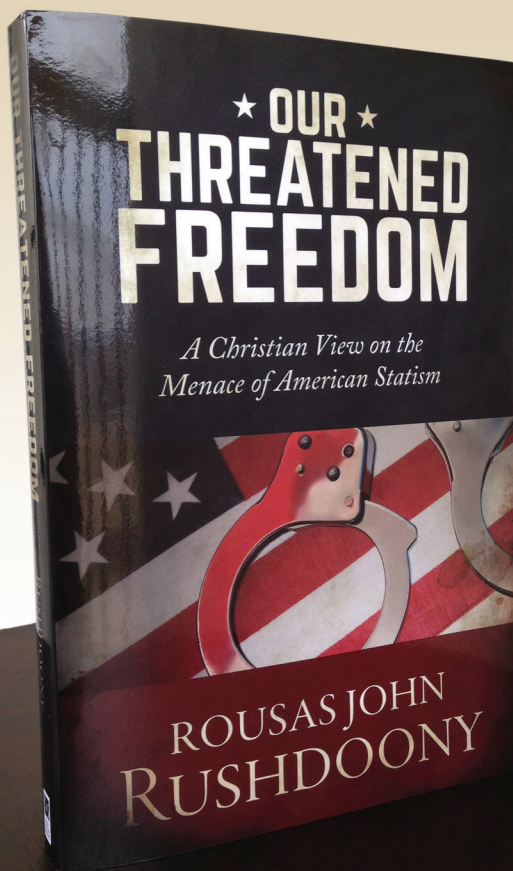
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