

FAITH FOR ALL OF LIFE

PROCLAIMING *the* AUTHORITY of GOD'S WORD OVER EVERY AREA of LIFE and THOUGHT

**ON THE
ORIGIN OF
VALUE AND ITS
RELATIONSHIP
TO PROFITS,
INTEREST,
AND MONEY**



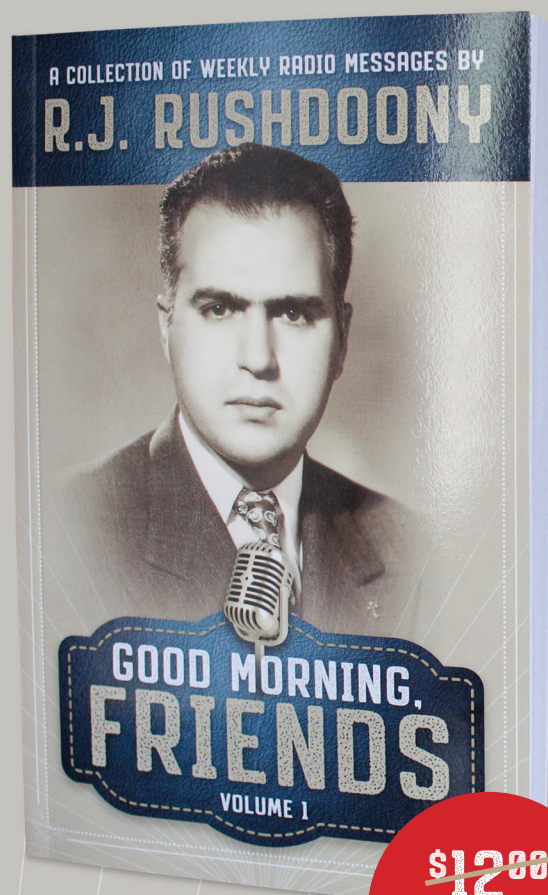
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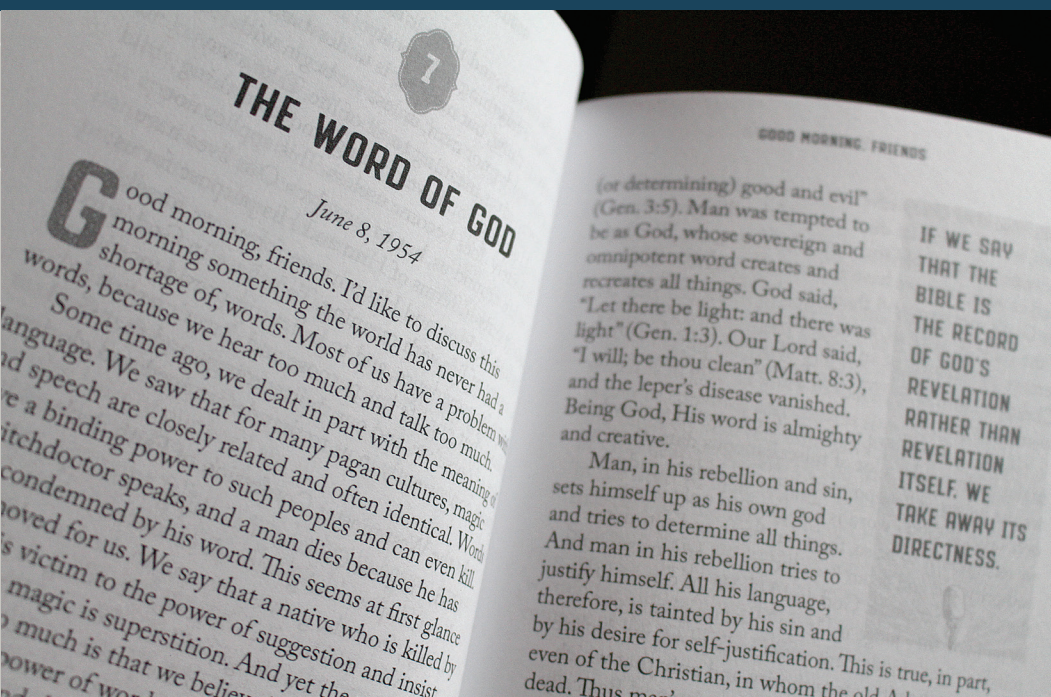
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FAITH FOR ALL OF LIFE

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

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Do You Understand?

By Mark R. Rushdoony

Jesus saith unto them, "Have ye understood all these things?"

They say unto him, "Yea, Lord."

Then said he unto them, "Therefore every scribe which is instructed unto the kingdom of heaven, is like unto a man that is a householder, *which* bringeth forth out of his treasure *things* new and old." (Matt. 13:51–52)



It is always easier to judge others than ourselves, and the disciples are often treated as easy targets. As heirs of two millennia of commentary and sermons we are stunned to have the disciples, after listening to eight parables, respond to Jesus' question with a simple affirmative. We are tempted, perhaps, to object that they could not possibly have fully understood. But there was no chiding by Jesus; He accepted their response! Moreover, He then directed a ninth parable to them. Each of the previous eight were parables about the Kingdom of Heaven itself; this one was about those who were "scribes," learned men, of the Kingdom who could instruct others. Jesus believed they did, in fact, "understand."

"Have Ye Understood?"

The word "understand" may cause a misconception on our part. In a scientific age it can be used in a very comprehensive sense that is not here in view. The word used by Jesus means "to put together." Jesus was asking if they had made the connections in the parables of the sower, the seed growing by itself,¹ the wheat and tares, the mustard seed, the leaven, the hid treasure, the pearl of great price, and the draw net. Did they get the drift of the lessons they were taught about the Kingdom? That was the essential question.

The Jewish expectation of the messianic kingdom was far different than the slow, steady, but certain growth these parables suggested. The Jewish hope was for a Messiah who would rid them of Rome and create a strong and prosperous political state in Palestine. The conception of the Messiah was thus largely a political figure whose power would be measured by the political, economic, and military power of the nation. King Jesus described several aspects of His Kingdom as being very different. When He asked if they *understood* these parables, He was not asking them if they had a comprehensive knowledge, but if they had "put it together." Did they get the gist of what he was saying about the Kingdom He had begun? "Yea, Lord."

Why Parables?

Early in His ministry, as evidenced in the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus had spoken very clearly. He performed miracles freely, at times to all who came. He invited, "Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden light" (Matt. 11:28–30).

Shortly after those words were spoken, things changed. The scribes and Pharisees devised talking points to scare men away from Jesus. They claimed His

undeniable miracles were themselves evidence of demonic influence (Matt. 12:22–37; Mark 3:22–30). This was a slander its hearers could not forget or easily ignore. Some used it, no doubt, as an excuse not to commit to Jesus.

After that point, Jesus suddenly began speaking to the multitudes in parables. Yes, there were still multitudes following Him, hoping, like Herod Antipas, to see a miracle. The crowds could not stay away, but they were not there in faith. Jesus described them at this point:

For this people's heart is waxed gross, and their ears are dull of hearing, and their eyes they have closed; lest at any time they should see with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and should understand with their heart, and should be converted, and I should heal them. (Matt. 13:15)

Two groups now marked the hearers of Jesus, His disciples (in the larger sense) and those whose hearts were now waxed gross, that is, their innermost being was grown fat, callous, or dull. Once the blasphemous slander of the scribes and Pharisees had circulated, the lines were clearly drawn, and Jesus recognized them. He began speaking in parables. The change to parables so caught the disciples by surprise that they asked Jesus the reason for it. His answer was very blunt:

Because it is given unto you to

know the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven, but to them it is not given.

For whosoever hath, to him shall be given, and he shall have more abundance: but whosoever hath not, from him shall be taken away even that he hath. (Matt. 13:11–12)

By grace, some came to believe in Jesus. To their faith, more was given in abundance, grace upon grace. To those who had no faith, that clarity of communication would be taken away. Alfred Edersheim called this the “judicial”² aspect of the parables, but it was not the parabolic style alone which kept them from understanding, but their own spiritual deadness. The first parables of Matthew 13 were given to the multitudes in the presence of the disciples, who understood them. They only asked for clarification about a single aspect of one parable (the “tares,” the problem of evil in the Kingdom, see Matt. 13:36); when asked if they understood all eight, they responded “Yea, Lord.” Parables were understandable to the believing disciples, a grace upon grace.

The Kingdom of Heaven

What was it that the disciples “understood” or put together that the multitude, spiritually deaf and blind, could not? They understood the parallels between these teaching images and an aspect of the Kingdom of Heaven. Let us very briefly note some of the many lessons of this discourse:

1. The Parable of the Sower: Not all who hear the message of the Kingdom will become part of it (represented not by the sprouting of the seed, but by fruit-bearing, see Matt. 7:20, etc., Matt. 13:8, 23).
2. The Parable of the Seed Growing by Itself: Those who sow seeds in the Kingdom must believe that the harvest will come, and live in terms

of that certainty.

3. The Parable of the Wheat and Tares: Throughout its history, there will be evil in the Kingdom, but it is not given to the servants of the King to remove them, though the judgment of evil men at the final judgment is promised.
4. The Parable of the Mustard Seed: The Kingdom of God’s beginning seemed insignificant; but it would grow and bless the earth’s inhabitants.
5. The Parable of the Leaven: The Kingdom’s means of growth is not visible, but that growth is happening, and it will pervade the earth.

Then, Jesus sent the multitudes away, and spoke three more parables to them alone.

6. The Parable of the Hid Treasure: Those who find the Kingdom will know its importance, and gladly value it above all earthly possessions.
7. The Parable of the Pearl of Great Price: Those who seek the Kingdom of God (like some of those early disciples who had searched the Scriptures and been followers of John) will, by grace, know it when they see it.
8. The Parable of the Net: As in the Wheat and Tares, the Kingdom will encompass and identify evil men in its midst, but their ultimate fate is left for the judgment of God.

The Forgotten Parable

After assuring Jesus that they understood all eight of these parables Jesus provided yet another one. It was based on their professed understanding. Each of the first eight had been about some aspect of the Kingdom itself. Now He gave a parable about the responsibility of those who understood, whom He called *scribes* of the Kingdom.

But the scribes had just joined the Pharisees in blasphemy (Mark 3:22ff.), yet Jesus now calls His own disciples to be scribes. What was His meaning?

The scribes had once been experts in legal matters, who committed legal proceedings and contracts to print. During the Babylonian Captivity and thereafter, their role grew to that of experts on God’s law and its application. They were experts on how the case law had been applied. Theirs was a valuable function, but they had fallen into a couple of traps by the first century. *First*, they gave precedence to the traditions of how to keep the law over the law itself, which became academic. *Second*, theirs was a technical and mechanical understanding of obedience rather than an ethical one. The scribes were therefore the theologians behind the false ideas of the Pharisees. They were often the foes of the Kingdom, yet Jesus now calls on those who understand to be scribes of His Kingdom!

The calling of a scribe was to study the law of God, interpret its meaning, and understand its application. Jesus was saying, in effect, “You understand what I am saying about my Kingdom? Then as scribes of my law I have another parable for you.”

Jesus described the scribes of the Kingdom of God as being like householders, the patriarch or master of their family and its resources. As such they were in possession of the treasure, the wealth of the Kingdom. They were its stewards. From their understanding of the words of Jesus, the law of the Kingdom, they were to bring out “new and old.”

The modern mind thinks of *old* as stale if not outdated. Moreover, we see what is new too often as iconoclastic, and challenging the old. This is a subtle problem when we refer to the “Old

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On the Origin of Value and Its Relationship to Profits, Interest, and Money

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The concept of value that we will explore corresponds to the worth that we attribute to material objects. Such value is subjective, volatile, and unmeasurable. But at one point it translates into prices that consumers will agree to pay in money. The sale of a company's products will translate into income for laborers and owners of capital.

Over and above the mercantile result of value imputation, there are processes designed by God to allow Him to enter the economic production. Examining these processes will help to understand how God may participate in the work flow of economic production and distribution of income, and to substantiate how monetary policy could be conducted. As one might expect, current policy-making in those areas tends to move away from Biblical grounds rather than closer.

The income that results from economic production can be distributed between two main types of revenue: wages and profits. It is commonly understood that wages are the price of labor. But if profits are prices—call them return on investment or interest—it has not been clearly decided as to what factor they should be attributed. Marxists hold that it is the price of labor—for labor is, according to them, the only source of value. Free market economists say that it is the price of capital. And again, some (free market) economists of the Austrian school do not retain capital as a factor of production. To them, profits

are the result of a behavior called “time preference.” Following their reasoning, interest or profits are the price of time.

Money as a store of income carries such value through time. In this process, as is generally accepted, a payment of interest accrues to the owner of the savings. The logical basis on which we agree to pay interest influences the way monetary policy should be conducted.

In this analysis, the creation of wealth through profits and interest is linked to demography. The management of profits and money is set upon Biblical principles of justice where free banking is a possible, even Biblical, framework for promoting economic growth and development. Most contemporary theories on these subjects suffer from the confinement of the contemporary scientific method and lack a relationship with ethical conduct that will bring justice into the distribution of income.

In the book of Jeremiah,¹ the plan of God for the salvation of His people is interwoven with that of the creation as a whole. The implication is that God is involved in the functioning of this world to a much deeper degree than we generally tend to think.²

The Issue in Perspective

The framework of analysis used by Böhm-Bawerk in 1884 to analyze the existing theories of capital, interest, and income distribution offers a method that can help us make advances again today.³ His fundamental question is used here as a basis for the analysis: what is the *originating* factor that can

explain the appearance of excess revenue over costs? His analytical review of the then-existing theories offers penetrating insights into the problem. However, his subsequent model of profit formation and income distribution has not been as successful. In contemporary economics, the theory on this subject now rests on the foundations laid by Irving Fisher in 1930.⁴ Böhm-Bawerk thought that Fisher's contribution was remarkable, since it built on some elements that were common with his own analysis. But according to him, Fisher's development was guilty of circular reasoning. Fisher replied to this criticism, but Böhm-Bawerk had passed away in the meantime. So the issue was abandoned.⁵ A model has been proposed more recently by George Reisman, but it is not much more successful from this author's point of view.⁶

The solution given to this problem by Karl Marx in 1867—the exploitation theory of value—has changed the world, precisely because it provided an explanation for a prevailing injustice in income distribution. Very simply put, the theory says that the rich have become so by stealing from those who are now poor as a result of the injustice. We now know the devastating effects that that theory has had in the past, and even today, even though it has been proven wrong.⁷

The Marxist theory draws its credibility from the fact that there is a persistent reality of poor segments of population within Western societies and in developing countries. The free market-based society has evolved in a fashion where the general distribution of

income leaves much less room for crying injustice than it did in the nineteenth century. Most Americans and Europeans have a decent income that allows them to satisfy their basic needs. So, the Western free market structure still has the upper hand in the organization of society. But there are still huge and growing gaps in the distribution of income within Western societies and outside them in the developing world.

So, despite the prevailing organization of society, the “profit question” is still begging for a consistent answer that will bring a sense of justice.

Economic Value

The value attributed to an object by a consumer is a psychological phenomenon.⁸ It can be volatile. That value is personal and cannot be measured.

Similarly, economic value cannot be produced in the same way as a good or a service can be produced. Value is an attribute that is determined by those who seek to acquire goods. In other words, value is in the “eyes of the beholder.” Neither capital nor labor can “produce” value that is beheld in the heart of consumers.⁹ Goods and services receive value from people who purchase them. The price of a good will hold only as long as someone agrees to purchase it at that price. This is one of the arguments that explain why the “exploitation theory of value” cannot hold.

The value that we will refer to is the market price of an object. We will refer to it as “economic value” or “revenue.” The economic value of production—its revenue—is the product of its price times the amount of merchandise manufactured. The price is the explicit manifestation of a value imputed to a product as determined by the market; this implies that consumers have expressed their desire to acquire the product given their capacity to purchase it. The economic value distributed as

revenue will come from that part of the output that will have been purchased by customers, at a price resulting from the bargaining process within the marketplace. The total income (aggregate revenue) of a population corresponds roughly to the economic value of the total products and services manufactured and purchased by it.¹⁰

Aggregate revenue can grow over time, and it can also shrink. As a population grows, given constant technical manufacturing procedures, aggregate revenue will tend to grow with it. Conversely, if it diminishes, aggregate revenue will tend to diminish. Also, given a constant population, aggregate revenue will grow with the capacity of the population to produce more goods using new technology. It will have a tendency to fall if equipment and systems are not maintained and improved upon.

In short, economic revenue is that part of the general (psychological) value that becomes materialized through the market system and is transformed into income.

Economic Value Creation and Profits

The puzzling aspect of the systematic appearance of profits from economic production and market operations is the fact that we are facing a phenomenon of “economic revenue creation”: there is more economic revenue existing at the end of the production process than there was in the beginning. After having paid for all the inputs, including the entrepreneur’s salary, there remains a “net income” or profit.

The net income from the process has been created *ex nihilo*. It is not the result of transformation. It was created out of nothing. We can see that, for a given amount of goods or services that was produced and sold, it results from the price difference between the cost of the inputs and the price that consumers

agree to pay. But if we really understood how it was created, we would not need to ask who owns it. On one hand, capitalists say, of course, that since they own the production process, it belongs to them.¹¹ On the other, those who hold on to the “exploitation theory of value” say that only workers can “produce” value and that therefore they are the sole owners of the net economic value. This issue deserves attention.

The basic difficulty comes from the fact that something has been created out of nothing. As human beings, we find it impossible to understand how this can happen in general. This problem is like that of understanding how the universe began if there was nothing before it.

Man cannot create *ex nihilo*. Man can make something new out of existing materials. But the power to create *ex nihilo* is an attribute of God alone.

Can God Participate in the Economic Process?

We need to bring God into the economic analysis. Any form of thinking process that has not been reset on Biblical grounds lacks a determining source of information for the foundation of science.

We need to ask four fundamental questions—questions that in fact must be answered for humanity:¹²

1. Where does the world come from? (ontology)
2. Where does true knowledge come from? (epistemology)
3. What is the ultimate source and absolute standard of value? (axiology)
4. Who or what controls the direction of time, or history? (teleology)

Before answering the questions, we need to address a matter of methodology. Such questions, beginning with the first, have tasked scientific researchers for as long as we can remember, and there is yet no scientific answer. Below

we examine this issue a bit further. Formally speaking, we need to use presuppositions. That is, we admit a principle as a truth without proof. We need to do this because God is removed from the possibilities of scientific research. Immanuel Kant demonstrated that by reason alone, man cannot prove the existence of God.¹³ Moreover, Jesus said that God will not be found by the wise and intelligent.¹⁴ But for our purposes, He reveals Himself: the Bible is the Word of God. There is no need to prove that He exists. We can accept the existence of God as a fact.

Answer to first question: Following Augustine (354–430), bishop of Hippo, who was the first to systematize a Biblical Christian worldview,¹⁵ we presuppose that the world was created by God.

Answer to second question: It follows that all knowledge, to be useful in this perspective, must be consistent with the will of God as revealed in the Bible—His word in written form—and from the illumination of the Holy Spirit.

Answer to third question: To be absolute, a standard must be able to be a standard for itself. However, only God can be a standard for Himself. Thus, only God can be an ultimate and absolute standard for anything, including the imputation of value. As for man, created in the image of God and reconciled to Him through the blood sacrifice of Jesus Christ, God imputes value to him (he is redeemed) because the spirit of God dwells in him.

Answer to fourth question: On that basis, God controls the direction of time, of history, by means of His covenant. Any discourse on the origin of value that does not fit into the above framework is not consistent with God's plan for His creation.

God is a logical starting point for the analysis of value, for God is the point of origin of creation as a whole—

and thus of all value created. And not only is God a logical starting point, but also a logical end point. For creation was made for His glory.

But How Does God Enter the Economic Process?

Two observations can be made. The first relates to demography, and the second relates to the capacities, or the talents, that individuals possess.

First, men and women reproduce themselves and so they bring into existence other human beings. But in so doing, men are not the creators of other human beings. They perform a pre-programmed procedure that yields systematically the same result. Their only decision is to initiate a process—which they have not designed themselves—by which a human being is born.

We can ask where the spirit of one child comes from, when it is “created.” The spiritual counterpart to the biological process that takes place when a life comes into existence has not been revealed to mankind. However, what we have from the Bible to that effect, states that it is God Himself who imparts the spirit (the breath) to man, thus making him a living being.¹⁶ That is the created part *ex nihilo*.

Second, in the population of a country, we observe that all the talents, trade, and professional specialties are available to produce the goods and services that it needs to be able to grow and prosper. We can ask, who provides such talents in the minds and bodies of individuals? As we know, this is part of genetic development. The “selection” of gifts takes place at the fertilization level. If the “choice” was purely random, could there exist a self-regulating equilibrium of the distribution? It is safe to attribute to God the general distribution of talents within populations.¹⁷ At the moment of conception, an embryo receives both its breath of life and the talent that will

position it in the organization of society.

There is a statistical confirmation of the place of demography and of the creative capacity of mankind to contribute to the creation of income. The *2000 Economic Report of the President of the United States*¹⁸ reported on the basic factors that could explain the real growth of the gross domestic product (GDP). It appeared that there were two factors: the demographic growth of the labor force and the growth of productivity. These two factors are directly linked to the two nodes that were identified previously as the points of entry of God in the economic process.

It follows that the presence of God is immanent in the economic process. From that position, God provides for all populations on earth the necessary basic elements that they need to become, grow, and develop in their search of their future. Whether or not God will be part of their own future is another matter.

So, the creation of income *ex nihilo* is the result of (a) mankind's faculty to develop and accumulate knowledge, by which it produces goods and services, imputes value to and consumes them, and (b) God's intervention in the growth and character of the human population—the consumers of value.¹⁹ Thus the creation of revenue *ex nihilo* is a phenomenon in which God plays a role.

We see this in the order of creation. God intervenes in a way that touches every human being. The Kingdom of God is at work not only for those who believe in Him, but also for the entire population, however defined.

God as an Actor in the Economic System

The question asked earlier was: what could be an *originating* factor for the net economic value that is not dependent on some other element of

the creation itself, such as labor, capital, or time? Despite formidable advances in economic thinking in other areas, research on that question has not led to any breakthrough since Irving Fisher.²⁰

We have identified that God is an actor in the economic system. Significantly, this fact is rooted in God's own words. God depicts Himself as an actor when He makes this formal promise to His people: "If you fully obey the Lord your God and carefully follow all His commands I give you today, the Lord your God will set you high above all the nations on earth."²¹ He then describes how Israel's economic output will be touched and made prosperous in many ways: "The Lord will send a blessing on your barns and on everything you put your hand to ... The Lord will grant you abundant prosperity *in the fruit of your womb*,²² the young of your livestock and the crops of your ground ... The Lord will open the heavens ... to send rain on your land in season and to bless all the work of your hands."

In this passage, the "prosperity in the fruit of the womb" is emphasized intentionally. We have identified that this is where God, in His immanent presence, intervenes directly in all fertilization processes. But there, He can favor those who are in covenant with Him, as He did for the servants that worked at building His tabernacle and His temple. In His capacity to impart the breath of life, there is additional power that He can use in relationship with the covenant or otherwise as He sees fit. In relation to the building of the tabernacle, at the time of Moses, He imparted several talents to the people entrusted with its construction.²³ The Israelis' extraordinary capacities to create income was a gift from God.

Increased income also implies that the output of Israel's economic production will be purchased, and that value

will be imputed to their economic production by potential consumers, be they from Israel or another country. As God moved the heart of Pharaoh in the pursuit of the Hebrews,²⁴ God sees to it that there are customers who are willing to purchase the goods and services produced in Israel.

The purpose of His promise of prosperity is that "all the people on earth will see that [His people are] called by the name of the Lord."²⁵ That promise was kept until the reign of Solomon. But the Hebrews could not fulfill God's requirement in the long run because their heart was not delivered from sin. God made that promise also—and even more so—to His people in Christ, for it is Christ who fully and perfectly accomplishes the law—which is the order of the universe.

God is the originating factor in the creation of net income. Isaac was made prosperous because of his covenant with God.²⁶ The Old Testament shows how God, through His covenant, transformed the condition of His people from that of desolate slaves to the most powerful nation on earth. The form of the alliance has changed since then, but God's purpose remains the same: that His name be glorified on earth as it is in heaven. It is now the purpose of the body of Christ to manifest His glory. In the concrete form of modernity, the consequence of God's involvement in His peoples' economic processes could be that His peoples' economic growth pattern becomes independent of the business cycle. There is a condition for this, as we will see below.

An Analogy with the Causal System of Aristotle

Having a given worldview will impact how scientific research will evolve. A simple analogy using the set of fundamental causes developed by Aristotle will put this into perspective. Jean-Marc

Berthoud showed their consistency with a Biblical Christian worldview.²⁷

The four fundamental causes are: the formal cause, the material cause, the efficient cause, and the final cause. For example, in the case of a house, the formal cause corresponds to the architect's plans; the material cause, obviously, corresponds to the materials used in the construction process; the efficient cause links to the work involved in the general building process; and the final cause corresponds to the final use made of the house.

If we apply these to the scientific process, we see that it has erred and led men to believe that God had no part to play in science. Today, the scientific process dwells only on two causal factors: the material cause and the efficient cause. The other two causes were eliminated from the scientific process early by Galileo because he believed that they contributed nothing to the understanding of creation.²⁸

Scientists have since followed Galileo's example. In that respect, economists have done the same and have contributed maybe more so than others to the general belief that men could "chart their own course" by studying market trends and modelling economic behavior, without reference to the formal and final causes of economic phenomena.

From our Biblical Christian worldview, we see that God is the author of the plan, the formal cause. He is the author of creation, the material cause. Through the demographic process, He is part of the efficient cause. And He is the final cause. As we mentioned earlier, God is more involved in the functioning of this world than we realize.

There is a limitation to the extent to which we can chart God's role in earthly processes. Calvin wrote extensively on this subject,²⁹ and we can only follow his conclusion that men are "close"

causes of men's actions while God is a "distant" cause. It is not possible for men to completely penetrate the counsel of God and see the totality of His plan.

What we absolutely need to know is what God wishes for us to learn about Him, through His involvement in the economic process. He wants us to know where His heart is, so that we can partner with Him in creation. He wants us to understand His power and His compassion, His wealth and His humbleness, His glory and His meekness ... in the distribution of income.

The Management of Profits

The consequence of the above is that God plays a role as an *originator* of net revenue (profit income) which entitles Him to a right of ownership. Its appropriation should follow God's rules to achieve His purpose in terms of justice. But His way of dealing with profits is not a simple arithmetical rule. He needs for His people to understand His heart and share His burden.³⁰

The issue that needs to be addressed relates to the seemingly unlimited capacity that Western capitalism has to feed its wealth through profits.³¹ Our common sense warns us that there is something wrong in this state of affairs. This is partly why Marx believed that capitalist production begets its own negation and establishes the socialist ownership of the means of production.³²

The question is: what limitations, if any, could God impose on the accumulation of wealth through the rate of profit? From the reading of the Pentateuch, it is obvious that God is not opposed to an unequal distribution of wealth. The basic rule that He gave in that respect is the following: *one that has much should not have too much, and the one that has little should not lack basic necessities*.³³ What does it mean more specifically to "not have too much"? We understand that the door is not open to

unlimited accumulation of wealth.

God required His people, the Hebrews, through sabbatical years and the Jubilee, to periodically restore the initial distribution of capital that He originally ordained, to lend with no interest to the people of Israel, and to regularly cancel debts. The reason for this is that the people of God did not achieve its wealth by its own strength but by the grace of God; for the people of God were all slaves, a condition from which they had no means of escape, if not by the sheer power of God alone.

And so He requires His people to remember their former condition—and the grace that He manifested—by asking them to extend this grace among one another on a continuing basis. This is where His heart is and where He is expecting us to meet Him. Should His people agree to manifest His grace, God will see to it that their prosperity would never tarry, as He promised. The redeemed sons of God in Jesus Christ who share in that same grace have no less a tribute to credit to God, for they were cursed to die.

How could we apply such principles today? After due and just payment to all factors of production and investments, profits could be used, in part, to invest in the development of projects explicitly conducive to the growth of the Kingdom of God.

Such profits could also be applied to funding projects and investments in a way that is indirectly conducive to building the Kingdom of God. They could finance schools that teach curriculum subjects but from a Biblical Christian worldview. They could finance Christian universities that will train economists, businessmen, mathematicians, lawyers, biologists, astronomers, and philosophers on how to use their academic knowledge from a Biblical Christian worldview.

Robert LeTourneau set a good example in this regard.³⁴ He loved God deeply. God gave him talents that enabled him to conceive new earth-moving machines. He is recognized as having been ahead of his time by years if not decades. His technologies spread around the world. He became wealthy to the point that he could invest very large sums of money in the Kingdom. In his desire to serve, he founded and financed a private Christian university.³⁵

More recently, J. Gunnar Olson created the International Christian Chamber of Commerce.³⁶ As we will see below, his story is about how he could start and grow a new business, from scratch with no capital, and see its explosive growth under the direction of the Holy Spirit. Many such stories exist but there is no reason for them to remain exceptions. God gave entrepreneurs the power to create and multiply wealth to empower the Kingdom on His behalf, in a partnership with Him. Christian entrepreneurs such as LeTourneau and Olson should dominate the world economy.

This is consistent with the recommendation of Jesus that we should worry about the Kingdom and not about our own welfare.³⁷ That this applies to corporate behavior as well as individual behavior is self-evident.

One may ask: is it not enough to tithe? If we consider profits, we understand that they are an economic value created *ex nihilo*. Does it not become obvious that God created the economic process so that He could create value in a fashion that is proper to Him, but also that He could involve human beings in the process in a way to glorify His name? Through that process, His sons and daughters can partner with Him in the distribution of income. The rule of 10 percent made sense in the old alliance because it was a period

of formation, designed to help us grow in the understanding of God's heart. But in the new alliance in Jesus Christ, God is embracing the earth, empowering His nation in Christ to overcome the forces of sin on earth. Through the covenant written on His people's hearts, He can speak directly to His children what amount needs to be transferred to what purpose for the achievement of His Kingdom, as He did in the hearts of Robert LeTourneau and J. Gunnar Olson.

The matter of sharing our income with God is central to the discussion. The question is not how much God is "entitled" to. God wants to be generous not only with us, but to others also who hope in Him because they are out of resources. He desires that we be manifested as His ambassadors by our giving in turn into the hands that are stretched out with no hope other than in God. And the more we participate in His distribution of income, the closer we become to Him and the more power He will manifest through our endeavors—because through us, He becomes real to those who put their hope in Him.

If the people of God could understand His heart, God could bless His people economically as He promised. Then the path of economic growth for God's people could follow a different one than that of the rest of the world.

The Condition for Having God as a Business Partner

The first question would be, "What would be the contract?" The answer is the Cross of Jesus Christ. It means accepting Him as Savior and Lord as well, which opens the way for Jesus to speak into one's life. It implies that He is obeyed when directing one on a path that one would not have chosen from a human point of view. It means relinquishing the position of sole commander in one's own life.

This is the kind of relationship that Robert LeTourneau and Gunnar Olson had with God. And this they share with other Biblical leaders, such as David and Job.

When David went up to Goliath, he knew! He knew that he would dominate over God's enemy, because he had accepted the Lordship of God over himself. He did so by accepting that the law would be his unique counselor. This is the essence of what we read in Psalms from David in general, but 19, 23 and 26 especially. God had given David victory over formidable odds already, since with no more than a sling he could defeat lions whose physical power largely exceeded his.³⁸ He had a commanding relationship with God because not only was he submitted to Him, He dwelled in David's heart. Embracing God's command as expressed in the law—not in a resigned fashion but with love because God's Word is the truth, the way and the life—gave David a level of authority unmatched in the seen world. Goliath could not see who was coming up against him. God gave David His power and authority.

Job declared spontaneously that he had accepted the Lordship of God over his life when he said:

Naked I came from my mother's womb, and naked shall I return. The Lord gave, and the Lord has taken away; blessed be the name of the Lord.³⁹

Job never accepted the charges of his "friends" because he knew! He knew the heart of God. His blessings had been so abundant:

... because I delivered the poor who cried for help, and the fatherless who had none to help him. The blessing of him who was about to perish came upon me, and I caused the widow's heart to sing

for joy. I put on righteousness, and it clothed me; my justice was like a robe and a turban. I was eyes to the blind and feet to the lame. I was a father to the needy, and I searched out the cause of him whom I did not know. I broke the fangs of the unrighteous and made him drop his prey from his teeth.⁴⁰

When God joined the conversation that Job was having with his "friends," He confirmed that Job had not sinned. And for having accepted His Lordship throughout and despite his trial, God increased by twofold His blessings towards His servant Job.

Robert LeTourneau was committed to serving his Lord on a fulltime basis, but he was not a theologian. When he prayed about this with his pastor, the answer that came from his pastor was: "*You know, Brother LeTourneau, God needs businessmen as well as preachers and missionaries.*"⁴¹ Robert LeTourneau was not highly educated. He started from scratch. But God inspired him and gave him wealth. In his desire to serve, LeTourneau used his wealth like Job did.

In a similar fashion, Gunnar Olson's deep desire was to start a company in partnership with the Holy Spirit. He was led to relinquish all his savings. Before starting, he had only a dime in his pocket. His office had been lent to him. He didn't have a car.⁴² The Holy Spirit did not need more than his heart. In the end, he could build an enterprise that grossed several millions in turnover. "*He is currently (in 2017) the owner and Chairman of ALFAPAC AB, a high tech plastic film manufacturing company, the Chairman and owner of ALFAPAC ACON AB, the Holding Company of the previous company, and the Chairman and owner of MODEFA EXTRUDING AB, a plastic film extruding and printing company.*"^{43, 44}

The Rate of Interest and Monetary Institutions

Revenue “creation” corresponds to the net increase in income. Money is used to measure economic revenue. To an increase in aggregate revenue there is normally a corresponding increase in the stock of money, which is referred to commonly as money “creation.” The parallel growth of both revenue and money at a constant rate maintains the stability of prices.

To be able to measure aggregate revenue, store it over time, and simplify the exchange of goods and services (including loans), the economy needs a stock of money. This is consistent with Biblical principles.⁴⁵

Given a stock of money, there are two subjects that need to be examined. The first one relates to the ethical issues regarding the treatment of interest. The other addresses the structure of the monetary system.

The Rate of Interest

It follows from our analysis that the existence of excess revenue over costs is not something that can be suppressed, unless God decides to withdraw from the process. Excess revenue over costs is dependent on the inherent characteristics of populations and the immanent role of God.⁴⁶ In that context, rates of interest on the money market parallel the rate of growth of aggregate revenue.⁴⁷ Monetary rates of interest reflect the work of God in the creation. They cannot be suppressed altogether any more than the growth of population can be stopped.

However, the Bible does suggest that zero interest rates should be practiced in specific circumstances. A practice of zero interest rate then requires that its function be replaced by something else; in God’s promise to His people, God insures that economic growth will not suffer from a practice

God’s part in the economy relates to a most sensitive element of economic production, namely profits—the creation of net income. It is at the heart of income distribution. It is the privilege of God’s people in Christ to demonstrate the truth and reality of God’s purpose on earth through income distribution based on God’s principles.

of zero interest. He will see to it that their economic output, and thus their income, grows at a rate greater than that of other nations despite their adoption of a zero interest rate.

Earlier attempts at banishing interest rates in Europe could not be successful, as it happened, because those attempts did not rest on a comprehensive foundation anchored upon God’s economic principles. If the people of God apply *all* of God’s principles in the economic order, *then* God will participate in their economic output and the growth of their income, as we have seen above.⁴⁸

The instructions that God gave in Exodus, Leviticus, and Deuteronomy in that respect can be applied today.⁴⁹ John Calvin reaffirmed those in the sixteenth century, and so has Rousas John Rushdoony in the twentieth century.⁵⁰ The fundamental principle was simple: no interest should be charged in the case of loans to the needy, but interest could be charged for investment loans. The body of Christ could define practical ways in which this can be done.

We could add that among Christians, we could consider not charging interest for any type of loan. But our conclusion is that this can work only in

the framework of a covenantal relationship with God, meaning that it is indispensable that Jesus Christ be recognized as Lord, that His decisions be applied in the daily lives of all those who claim to be part of His Kingdom.

Monetary Institutions

The second question deals with the presence or absence of metal reserves for the backing of the stock of money. The difference between a system with or without a metal reserve can be described by illustrating how new money is brought into the operations of exchange.

In a system based on metal reserves, a metal is monetized by depositing the metal in banks, in exchange for money notes. Ore from a mine can be melted into ingots and deposited in a bank, in exchange for bank notes. By that process, using a 100 percent reserve ratio, the quantity of money in bank notes in circulation can only increase by the exact same amount as metal reserves. A metal is used as a store of economic value that is imparted to money, which in turn serves as a medium of exchange. The increased amount of gold (or another precious metal), times its price, forms the counterpart to the increase in the stock of money. The idea of using a commodity as “numéraire” for the system of exchange is derived from the simple transformation of existing ore, which is within the competence of man to achieve (a competence which God bestowed upon His image-bearers). This concept is consistent with Biblical values.

In a system without metal reserves, it is a touchy matter to decide how the stock of money should increase to meet the increasing economic value of production. The system that is applied by central banks runs along the following lines: to increase the stock of money, bonds are issued by the government and bought by the central bank—debt is cre-

ated. To pay for these bonds, the central bank adds the amount of money to the government's bank account literally by writing in the amount, plain and simple. It thus "creates" the new money necessary for the purchase of the bonds by a stroke of the pen. That money is then distributed in the economy through regular governmental spending.⁵¹ In this system, debt is the counterpart to the increase in the stock of money.

The money created parallels that of economic value, both created *ex nihilo*. But when a loan is granted, debt accumulates and involves the payment of interest. The crucial question reduces to this: to whom does this interest belong? Is it normal that the population who is at the origin of the income should pay interest on top of the income that it created?

The supplementary money that is created is the mirror image of the net revenue produced by the economy. The real net economic value belongs to those who generated that revenue. Why should they borrow money and pay interest to monetize what belongs to them? It should be obvious that the interest paid on the corresponding sums of money to lenders has no legitimacy. Only a metal reserve *free banking* system could avoid this pitfall.⁵²

These observations are important, for they support the theses that have been defended so notably by Rushdoony and North, as referenced earlier. These observations also support the theses of the Austrian school of economic thought about money, in particular those formulated by Ludwig von Mises.⁵³

In Conclusion

The basic role of economic theory is to explain who does what in the economic production and market processes, and who is entitled to what in the distribution of income. The above analysis

reframes the theory within a Biblical Christian worldview and introduces the part played by God.

God's part in the economy relates to a most sensitive element of economic production, namely profits—the creation of net income. It is at the heart of income distribution. It is the privilege of God's people in Christ to demonstrate the truth and reality of God's purpose on earth through income distribution based on God's principles.

Jesus Christ is God incarnated in the created world. After having created the economic process, in which He is immanent, God opened the way to enter man's economy explicitly through the body of Christ. A working economic relationship between God and His people could lead the Christian community to follow an economic growth pattern that is independent of the business cycle.

In that perspective, the body of Christ could carefully examine the way its savings and investments could be managed. It could innovate ways to manage its savings independently of the banking system, using a set of interest rates that conforms to God's instructions.

The body of Christ could become the source of change on earth—by the power of God—that all nations could look up to. In that line of thinking, the recommendations of John Calvin with respect to the role of the Church,⁵⁴ emphasized and further developed by Rushdoony,⁵⁵ are applicable in full. 🙌

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1. Jeremiah 33:19–21; 25–26.

2. The first Christian writers on economic matters go as far back as the early Church. Although we would not necessarily agree with their analysis and recommendations today, we mention among them Clement of Alexandria (about 150–215), Ambrose (340–397), and Chrysostom (347–407), followed later on by Thomas Aquinas (1225–1274). See Joseph Schumpeter's *History of Economic Analysis*, Oxford University Press, New York, 1994, p. 71. John Calvin (1509–1564) became a major leader in Christian economic reform in the sixteenth century. He is recognized for his contribution to the "liberation" of capitalism from the shackles of prohibitive Christian doctrinal views on interest. More recently, Rousas John Rushdoony headed (from 1965 onwards) the Chalcedon Foundation, a Christian educational organization devoted to research, publishing, and promoting Christian reconstruction in all areas of life. His magnum opus, *Institutes of Biblical Law* (1973), includes a seminal effort to re-establish Biblical principles in the management of money. His views continue in the direction set out by John Calvin, but he extends the analysis to criticize modern banking practices. In 1975, he contributed a segment in a book edited by Hans Sennholz: *Gold Is Money* (Westport, Connecticut: Greenwood Press). In September 1981, he published an analysis in the *Chalcedon Report* #193 titled "God, the Devil, and Legal Tender," in which he asserts that gold and silver reserves should be reinstated for the backing of money. For a complete list of R. J. Rushdoony's contributions to subjects related to economics and the Bible, and for an extensive resource list of contributors to the Reconstruction movement, visit the Chalcedon Foundation at <http://www.chalcedon.edu>. In the same perspective,

Landa Cope, International Dean of the College of Communication for Youth With A Mission's University of the Nations, showed how the teachings of the Old Testament are still relevant for discipling a nation today. Her teachings can be downloaded from a website (<http://templateinstitute.com>) that she created especially for this subject. In the following of Rousas J. Rushdoony, Gary North wrote extensively on the subject of economic behaviour and Biblical principles, notably *Honest Money—Biblical Principles of Money and Banking*, Biblical Blueprint series #5, Institute for Christian Economics Freebooks, 1986. For other contributions of North on this and other topics, visit the Institute for Christian Economics Freebooks at <https://www.garynorth.com/freebooks/sidefrm2.htm>. Also of interest are: E. L. Hebden Taylor, *Economics, Money and Banking, Christian Principles*, The Craig Press, 1978; Brian Griffiths, *The Creation of Wealth: A Christian Case for Capitalism*, InterVarsity Press, 1985; Tom Rose, *Economics: Principles and Policy from a Christian Perspective*, American Enterprise Publications, Mercer, 8th printing, 2000; Stephen C. Perks, *The Political Economy of a Christian Society*, Kuyper Foundation, Taunton, England, 2001; Craig Hill and Earl Pitts, *Wealth, Riches and Money*, Family Foundations publishing, Littleton, Colorado, 2001.

3. Eugen von Böhm-Bawerk, *History and Critique of Interest Theories*, first edition in 1884, re-edited by Libertarian Press, South Holland, Illinois, 1959.

4. Irving Fischer, *The Theory of Interest*, MacMillan, New York, first edition 1930, reprinted in 1977.

5. Eugen von Böhm-Bawerk, *Further Essays on Capital and Interest*, first edition in 1912, re-edited by Libertarian Press, South Holland, Illinois, 1959, pp. 162–193. In that book, Böhm-Bawerk reacted to an earlier work by Irving Fisher, *The Rate of Interest*, published in New York in 1907. Fisher rewrote that book into *The Theory of Interest*, published in 1930. In this later work, Fisher explains (p. viii) that the arguments were rewritten entirely but the mathematical model remains the same. He discards Böhm-Bawerk's charge of circular reasoning by saying that "The causal solution can-

not be so simply conceived as to make one factor solely *cause* and another solely *effect*. The advance of all science has required the abandonment of such simplified conceptions of causal relationship for the more realistic conception of equilibrium." *The Theory of Interest*, op cit., p. 484 n. (Emphasis is Fisher's.) Böhm-Bawerk passed away in 1914; he could not reply to this rebuttal. Following his line of reasoning, he might have replied that the problem at hand is not one of endogeneity but one of exogeneity. In this essay, we retain the important question as to what *exogenous* factor causes the "excess of revenue over costs" to arise. That factor could then act as a determinant of a just distribution of income. There is an ethical appreciation to this matter which mathematics cannot address, however elegant and precise mathematicians' analyses and solutions might be. The reader is encouraged to read George Reisman's view on this concept of equilibrium. Reference to his book is given in note 6. On page 9 of his treatise, he says that equilibrium analysis "takes attention away from the real-world *operation* of the profit motive and of the *market processes* by means of which the economic system continually tends to move towards a state of full and final equilibrium without ever actually achieving such a state." (Emphasis is Reisman's.)

6. George Reisman, *Capitalism—A Treatise on Economics*, Jameson Books: Ottawa, Illinois, 1990. Reisman's approach rests on the time preference proposed initially by Böhm-Bawerk and retained in the literature on the subject. However, Reisman faces the same limitation as did Böhm-Bawerk and his followers, namely the one that comes from dualism: the separation of material from spiritual problems into different and *unrelated* domains of investigation.

7. Böhm-Bawerk wrote a complete and systematic refutation of that theory as early as 1884, in his important *History and Critique of Interest Theories*, op cit., pp. 241–321. He observes: "The perfectly just proposition that the laborer should receive the entire product may be understood to mean either that the laborer should now receive the entire present value of his product, or should receive the entire *future* of his

product *in the future*. But Rodbertus and the Socialists expound it as if it means that the laborer should now receive the entire future value of his product." p. 264. (Emphasis is Böhm-Bawerk's.) A more recent refutation of the exploitation theory can be found in George Reisman's *Capitalism—A Treatise on Economics*, Jameson Books: Ottawa, Illinois, 1990.

8. See Tom Rose, op cit., pp. 21, 99–100.

9. See Böhm-Bawerk, op cit., pp. 90–92.

10. For a complete discussion of this subject, we must refer the reader to economics textbooks.

11. Truly they own the equipment, the production process, and the output, since they have purchased the equipment, the labor, and materials entering the production. They own the products and services that are produced by them and, therefore, the income from the sales of these products and services. If the price agreed to by consumers for these products and services is superior to the cost paid for the inputs of labor and material that entered the production process, there is creation of value and income. If consumers buy none of the items produced, the costs transform into a loss. There is no value created; rather, it is destroyed. There is no income. We see that consumers are determinant elements of value creation.

12. The four fundamental questions are borrowed from Glenn Martin (1935–2004), formerly professor at Indiana Wesleyan University, Indiana, U.S.A.

13. Immanuel Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason*, Penguin Classics, 2008, Second Part, Second Division, Chapter III.

14. Matthew 11:25; 1 Corinthians 1:19; 3:19–21.

15. Saint-Augustine, *City of God*, Modern Library, 1994.

16. Genesis 2:7; Isaiah 2:22; Psalm 144:4.

17. This is akin to the general equilibrium of genders among populations on earth. There is no demographic explanation for this equilibrium.

18. *Economic Report of the President*, United States Government Printing Office, Washington, 2000, p. 85.

19. This observation fits very well with

William J. Baumol's proposition by which the "natural" rate of growth of an economy depends on the rate of growth of the population and that of productivity. See Roy F. Harrod, "An Essay in Dynamic Theory," *Economic Journal*, March 1939. A more recent formulation of this point can be found in Roy Harrod, *Economic Dynamics*, MacMillan, London, 1973, pp. 16–31. An application of this principle can be found in *The Economic Report of the President*, United States Government Printing Office, Washington, 2000, p. 85.

20. See note 5.

21. Deuteronomy 28:1–14.

22. Emphasis is the author's.

23. Exodus 35:31–35.

24. Exodus 14:8.

25. Deuteronomy 28:10.

26. Genesis 26:12–14.

27. Jean-Marc Berthoud, *L'école et la famille contre l'utopie*, L'Age d'Homme, 1997, pp. 227–255.

28. Jean-Marc Berthoud, op cit., p. 236.

29. For a synthesis, see Cornelius Van Til, *The Theology of James Daane*, Presbyterian and Reformed, Philadelphia, 1959, pp. 50–53; quoted from Jean-Marc Berthoud, op cit., p. 254.

30. In Job 29, Job explains where his wealth came from and how he shared God's burden for the needy.

31. As a case in point, George Reisman asserts, "The principle that man's desire for wealth is limitless is fully consistent with the law of diminishing marginal utility, one of the most important and well known principles of economics." op cit., p. 49.

32. Karl Marx, *Das Kapital*, 7th ed., Hamburg, 1914, Vol. I, p. 728. (Quoted from Ludwig von Mises, *Planned Chaos*, 5th reprint, Foundation for Economic Education, Irvington-on-Hudson, New York, 1977, p. 35.)

33. In reference to the manna, Exodus 16:18. Emphasis is the author's. One should keep in mind that the amount of resources at one's command means nothing to God. If we have more to manage, we have more to be accountable for (1 Corinthians 3:9). The attitude of our heart towards the Kingdom

is what really matters, as the widow's offering teaches us (Mark 12:41–44).

34. Robert LeTourneau, *Mover of Men and Mountains*, Moody Publishers, Chicago, 1972.

35. See <http://www.letu.edu>

36. J. Gunnar Olson, *Business Unlimited*, ICCC, Sweden, 2002

37. Matthew 6:31–34.

38. A lion can weigh between 150 kg to 250 kg, run up to 60 km/h and jump up to 11 meters. <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Lion>

39. Job 1:20–21.

40. Job 29:12–17

41. Robert LeTourneau, op cit., p. 109. This took place around 1920.

42. J. Gunnar Olson, op cit., p. 51.

43. <http://economicsummit.eu/about-us/j-gunnar-olson-sweden>

44. For further reading, we recommend Dennis Peacock, *Doing Business God's Way*, Rebuild, 2003.

45. See Deuteronomy 14:22–26; 15:1–11.

46. This observation could be related to the analysis made by Patrick J. Buchanan in his recent book *The Death of the West*, Thomas Dunne Books, New York, 2002. In that book, he shows how dying populations and immigrant invasions imperil whole countries and civilizations. He observes that whole populations are dying because they have relinquished Judeo-Christian values.

47. The argument draws from the analysis made by Böhm-Bawerk and from which he concludes that "surplus value" manifests itself directly in the form of interest on the money market. See E. von Böhm-Bawerk, *Positive Theory of Capital*, first edition in 1889, re-edited by Libertarian Press, South Holland, IL, 1959, p. 323.

48. See note 24.

49. Exodus 22:25–27; Leviticus 25:35–55; Deuteronomy 15:1–18.

50. Rousas John Rushdoony, op cit., pp. 473–481. In that passage, Rushdoony recalls the declarations of John Calvin on the subject of interest.

51. For a detailed but user-friendly presentation of the mechanism, see G. Edward Griffin, *The Creature from Jekyll Island*,

American Media, 3rd Edition, 1998. For an evaluation of the Federal Reserve from a Christian point of view, see Tom Rose, "90 Years and Going Strong? An Evaluation of the Federal Reserve: Its Motivation and Founding," in *Chalcedon Report, Banking on the Future*, August 2002, pp. 12–15.

52. On free banking, see the following references: Lawrence H. White, *The Theory of Monetary Institutions*, Blackwell Publishers, 1999. Larry J. Sechrest, *Free Banking: Theory, History, and a Laissez-Faire Model*, Quorum Books, London, 1993. George A. Selgin, *The Theory of Free Banking*, Rowan and Littlefield Publishing, Totowa, New Jersey, 1988; from the same author, *Bank Deregulation and Monetary Order*, Routledge, London and New York, 1996.

53. Ludwig von Mises, *The Theory of Money and Credit*, translated from the German by H. E. Baton, Jonathan Cape, London, 1934, re-edited by Yale University Press in 1953, and by Liberty Funds: Indianapolis, Indiana, in 1981. Consider the following statement from p. 480: "The eminence of the [100%] gold standard consists in the fact that it makes the determination of the monetary unit's purchasing power independent of the measures of governments. It wrests from the hands of the 'economic tsars' their most redoubtable instrument. It makes it impossible for them to inflate." Brackets and their content added by the author.

54. The Swiss pastor-economist André Biéler wrote a thesis in which John Calvin's theological anthropology and sociology are summarized. In his book, the relationships between the Church and civil governments are depicted by Calvin as being in perpetual tension but not in conflict. The role of the Church is to "criticize" the work of the government in view of the Word of God but always in a constructive fashion. Calvin's worldview can be easily drawn from Biéler's work. See André Biéler, *La pensée économique et sociale de Calvin*, Librairie de l'Université, Georg & Cie S.A., Genève, 1961. See in particular pp. 184–305.

55. See references at the beginning of the essay, in note 2.

The Ways of the World vs. The Ways of God

by Andrea Schwartz



We are all products of our times. Although we like to think otherwise, unless we evaluate our practices and traditions from

a Biblical perspective, we are likely to be using the methods of secular society and adapting to the ways of the world. We are expressly told in Scripture that although we are *in* the world, we are not to be *of* the world. In fact, Jesus' prayer for us to the Father was: "*I do not ask that you take them out of the world, but that you keep them from the evil one*" (John 17:15).

When it comes to parenting children, the prevalence of humanistic thinking in our day is more influenced and directed by the world of child psychology than it is by Scriptural mandates. What's more, because the concept of discipline is often reduced to corporal punishment, many professing Christian parents have ignored or abandoned Biblical methods in the training of their children.

What Is Discipline?

R.J. Rushdoony, in his *Institutes of Biblical Law*, devotes an entire section to this subject. He states,

An important and basic aspect of church law is discipline; it is also a very much-misunderstood subject in church, school, and family life. To illustrate this misunderstanding, the case of a pious couple with an erring and seriously delinquent daughter can be cited. Complaining because of her behavior, her unmarried and pregnant condition, and her contempt of their authority, the parents insisted that they had "disciplined" her regularly. She had been deprived

of various privileges, and had been frequently slapped and spanked when younger. All of this was true, but the fact remained that the child had grown up radically undisciplined. The parents had confused, as all too many people do, chastisement or punishment with discipline, and the two are markedly different. Discipline is systematic training and submission to authority, and it is the result of such training. Chastisement or punishment is the penalty or beating administered for departure from authority. Clearly, *discipline* and *chastisement* are related subjects, but just as clearly they are distinct.¹

In addition, the pendulum can, and often does, swing to extremes.

If You Only Have a Hammer, All You See Are Nails

There are parents who resort to chastisement and punishment as the primary (and sometimes only) tools in their toolbox. They mistakenly think that with enough force they can make their children good. However, as I always remind those I mentor, whereas you can control your children's speech and behavior to a point, you cannot control their thinking. It is the job of parents to inform their thinking with the law-word of God as the basis.

Granted, force and coercion often are the quickest route to achieving one's end. But they only work up to a point. If they are the only tools utilized, children are apt to come to the conclusion that *might makes right*, or *money makes right*, or *age makes right*. When those particulars change, you are left with someone who only has had those tools modeled for them. On the contrary, the systematic education in all aspects of

life from a Biblical world and life view makes use of all the tools of teaching, correcting, admonishing, chastising, rewarding, and punishing. The law-word of God provides instruction for parents in the nurture and admonition of the Lord, exhorting them not to exasperate in the process.

Fathers, do not provoke your children to anger, but bring them up in the discipline and instruction of the Lord. (Eph. 6:4)

Fathers, do not provoke your children, lest they become discouraged. (Col. 3:21)

Parenting by Humanistic Methods

Then there are parents who are intimidated by the critics of the Bible and refuse to utilize the means laid out in Scripture. Instead of applying the law of God even to the least of infractions, they employ worldly principles that only lessen the authority of the parents and fail to bring about the result of godly disciplinary actions.

When a child damages or breaks something, the principle of restitution is rarely invoked. If the child repeatedly demonstrates defiance and rebellion after appropriate instruction, parents will fail to use the rod of discipline as the Bible instructs. Instead, they do a version of our ungodly prison system and issue a "time out" or "send them to their room," or "ground them." In other words, their methods are environmentally informed rather than Biblically informed.

Rushdoony discusses the pagan roots of the prison system and the humanism behind it:

It came to be believed that imprisonment could have a saving effect on man, that punishment in the form of a loss of liberty would lead to reformation ...

Punishment next gave way, in the humanist ideology, to rehabilitation, and prisons began to be converted into rehabilitation centers. Thus, in California, one class of prisons is known as a "correctional facility." The "old doctrine ... that the purpose of the criminal law is to exact from the criminal a retributive suffering proportionate to the heinousness of the offense" has given way to "the effort ... to combine deterrence and public protection with restoration of the offender to a more self-sustaining role in the community." This opinion reveals certain basic errors. *First*, criminal law is invested with a religious and messianic role, a duty to save criminals. This is asking of the law more than law can deliver. *Second*, it misinterprets history. Retribution is seen as exacting suffering; this was true of humanistic law, but not of biblical law, wherein retribution or vengeance is the prerogative of God and His instruments and involves giving justice where justice is due (Luke 18:1–8). *Third*, this opinion is individualistic, not social, and it concentrates on the person of the criminal, not the victim. Thus, Bennett notes, "The current trend in the disposition of offenders is unmistakably toward individualized penal treatment administered within the framework of a flexible criminal code." Salvation is personal, and the law now concerns itself with saving the person of the criminal.

This personal frame of reference has led to the newer emphasis on mental health, on psychiatric treatment as the answer to criminality.²

And isn't this exactly what parents are emulating when they fail to utilize the guidelines of Scripture? How many default to the inherent goodness of their children and write off bad behavior because their age makes them not responsible for their actions?³ By using

deprivation or isolation as the means by which to inform the conscience of children, in the absence of clear Biblical teaching and consequences, we not only do them a disservice, but the society as a whole suffers.

Rushdoony's comments fly in the face of modern psychological theory when it comes to bad behavior in general, let alone in children.

[W]e have seen that the [Biblical] principle is life for life, i.e., a punishment proportionate to the crime. This crime has no reference to the criminal or his mentality but only to the nature of the act. If death is the penalty for animals on the principle of life for life, then this is certainly true for men. Thus, on this principle, biblical law has no plea of not guilty by reason of insanity. Neither is there any privileged status before the law for a minor.⁴

Common Cop-outs

Churches that isolate children by removing them at the time of the sermon are asserting that children are incapable of understanding the truths of God. However, those who encourage children to be in attendance but allow for them to play or read or color or be disruptive in lieu of paying attention to what is being taught, are also delinquent in their view of little ones. Parents must prepare their children for instruction and attentiveness by modeling the behavior in their homes on a regular and consistent basis.

By missing the key ingredients of teaching with the purpose of understanding, and requiring feedback to make sure they have internalized the instruction, it is possible to concentrate on the wrong things. Many prioritize academic achievement, artistic ability, or athletic prowess over and above the importance of character. If a child exhibits arrogance, defiance, or disrespect, rest assured there is little fear of the Lord in

that child. Whatever gains are accomplished in these other areas, they end up being undercut when the foundations have not been laid.

Thus, a child should be instructed at the earliest age that God's law requires his parents to administer certain consequences for behavior. And these consequences can be pleasant or unpleasant. If a child obeys with an attitude of cooperation and respect, there should be rewards (a smile, a hug, an extra benefit). If the child is contrary, obstinate, or disrespectful, the appropriate consequence (a look, a spanking, and the elimination of a benefit) should be employed. But in both cases, there needs to be time spent in understanding the "why" of each. It is imperative that children are able to identify which commandment of God was violated in order to truly repent. Likewise, restitution should be enforced when it comes to damaging or taking something that does not belong to them. And if a child bears false witness about another, the Bible's mandate in terms of perjury are important to instill and enforce.

On the Job Training

In my children's read-aloud storybooks,⁵ I chronicle some of the events in my household with my children when they were growing up. I changed the names, but the circumstances recounted were real. As my husband and I were learning Biblical law, we endeavored to apply it to the circumstances of family life even though we knew we were far from being experts. When we weren't certain how to proceed, we sought out advice from more seasoned Christian parents, who demonstrated good fruit in their parenting. And we continued to be students of the Word, recognizing that we would get better with practice but that we'd apply what we did know.

There are numerous times where resorting to the ways of the world would

have been easier and less time-consuming. But that would just mean that I would be postponing important lessons that we all needed to learn. Aside from the benefit my children received, I was preparing for my all-important role as a Titus 2 woman, ready to teach younger women how to love their children by treating them like true children rather than illegitimate ones.⁶

And have you forgotten the exhortation that addresses you as sons?

“My son, do not regard lightly the discipline of the Lord, nor be weary when reproved by him.

For the Lord disciplines the one he loves, and chastises every son whom he receives.”

It is for discipline that you have to endure. God is treating you as sons. For what son is there whom his father does not discipline? If you are left without discipline, in which all have participated, then you are illegitimate children and not sons. Besides this, we have had earthly fathers who disciplined us and we respected them. Shall we not much more be subject to the Father of spirits and live? For they disciplined us for a short time as it seemed best to them, but he disciplines us for our good, that we may share his holiness. For the moment all discipline seems painful rather than pleasant, but later it yields the peaceful fruit of righteousness to those who have been trained by it. (Heb. 12:5–11)

God Keeps His Promises

Although the concept of God as a faithful promise keeper is often only discussed in the positive, it is important for children to learn, without a doubt, that He is faithful to administer His judgments as well. This does not

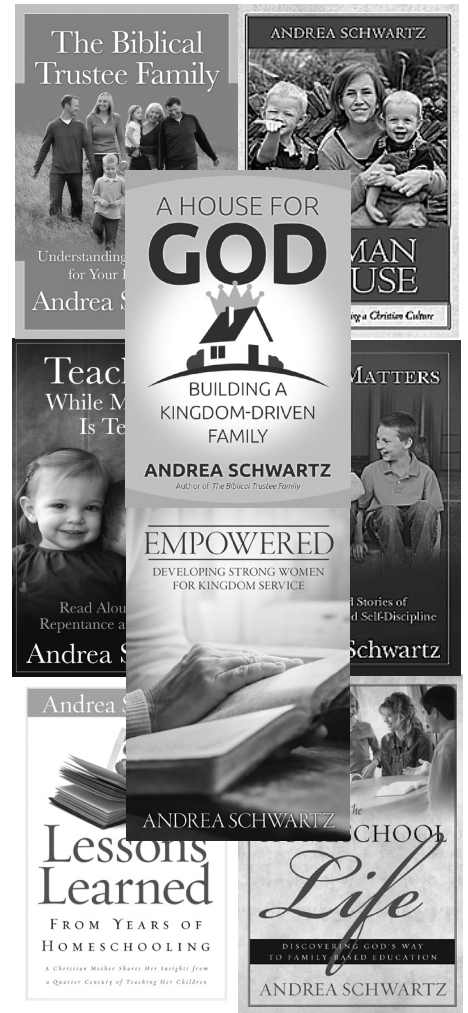
eliminate the reality of God’s mercy, but it is important for children to learn at a very young age that God’s Word does not return to Him void (Isa. 55:11). That is why from the earliest of ages, regardless if they seem to understand or not, it is important that the full counsel of God is proclaimed to them. Catechizing children is a great way to steer the daily conversations of family life into the important doctrines of the Christian faith.⁷ Assume they understand, persist in your instruction, and before long you will see that they do!

The task of parenting is not for the weak of heart. However, if the ways of the world are used rather than the ways of the Lord, the results look a lot like the collapsing humanism surrounding us. As Christians, we are here to provide the Kingdom alternative. 🏰

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1. R. J. Rushdoony, *Institutes of Biblical Law* (Phillipsburg, NJ: Presbyterian & Reformed Publishing, 1973), pp. 765–766.
2. *Institutes*, pp. 516–517.
3. A number of parents have told me that their pediatrician claimed it is pointless to discipline a child until the age of four, because they cannot discern right and wrong

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Arriving at an Informed Faith

by Ben House



The year was 1974 when I first became aware of the man with the funny names. Neither “Rousas,” nor “Rushdoony” were

words I had ever heard. Had it not been for the middle name of John, I might have doubted whether or not he was a real person. While C. S. Lewis’ Peven-sie children entered Narnia through a wardrobe, I entered a far different world through an American history class. The world I entered into—by design and plan, as I now understand it—is called Calvinia.

The world of Calvinia I stepped into had only slight connections with the world I had grown up in. That world was a small east Texas town where I was a member of the local Methodist Church. While much of the preaching I heard was weak, the worship services had fortified me with the weekly reciting of the Apostles’ Creed and Lord’s Prayer, along with many solid hymns in the Wesleyan and evangelical tradition. After hearing some evangelistic and revival preaching in other churches, I had experienced salvation and had come to personally know Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior, to use the phrase common to many of us.

I was a Christian, but terms like Protestant Reformation, Calvinism, Reformed, theology, soteriology, eschatology, apologetics, and others were a new language that I discovered in Calvinia. Along with that, I became aware of the words to describe the foes within this new universe. There were Arminians, Pelagians, Semi-Pelagians, Deists, Evolutionists, Naturalists, Rationalists, Higher

Critics, and others who I was being warned to be wary of or to avoid totally.

More terms would appear, more opponents, more ways of talking and thinking, but for a time, it was all a muddle. In Acts 8:30, Philip asks the Ethiopian eunuch who was reading Isaiah, “Do you understand what you are reading?” The Ethiopian answered, “How can I, unless someone guides me?” I was in the same boat, or the same chariot (Acts 8:31). The language, the culture, and the underlying worldview of Calvinia was beyond anything in my experience in church or school.

There were guides who then helped me learn the fundamentals of this new way of thinking in this life-changing universe. There was, first of all, my history teacher, Professor Henry Wood. While grumbling and lazy students often accused him of interjecting religion into his class, I quickly realized that he was primarily teaching about the actual history of colonial and early America. An earlier mentor had told me to take Mr. Wood’s class because he taught about Calvinism. She added, “And you will need to understand that to understand American literature.” She was right, but Calvinism explained much more than some of the participants in America’s history and literature.

Mr. Wood not only taught about Calvinism, but he embraced it—with zeal. Also, he really liked the man with the funny name, along with others, like C. Gregg Singer, Gordon Clark, and one simply called Spurgeon, and especially one who seemed to be a major leader of them all—John Calvin. He shared quotes from them all and used

them to supplement his lectures. He introduced them and others to me. They became my guides and mentors for Calvinia.

These guides were authors, some still living at the time and others who had been dead for ages. Their messages were sent to me in books, many coming from a place called Presbyterian and Reformed Publishing Company; and deciphering the message of the books was always a challenge. One major breakthrough came from a man with a woman’s name—Lorraine Boettner. His book *The Reformed Doctrine of Predestination* became the boot camp, the training ground, for me. Once read, there was no turning back. I have never left Calvinia after that book.

This journey to Calvinia, or this process of becoming Reformed, had many phases and angles. It all centered around redefining who God is. When I entered that world, I thought I had already found and figured out God. I then learned that it was I who had been found and much of what I figured out about God was wrong or inadequate. My views of God, based on misleading or incomplete understanding, underwent a revolution. I had tried to know God by being the judge in a courtroom or the scientist subjecting God to a microscope. The Sovereign, Omnipotent, Omniscient God was not to be a subject of my defining. The miniscule pedestal I was standing on to examine God collapsed as I began to see myself for what I was and wasn’t and caught a glimpse of who God is—as revealed in Scripture.

The book that I had thought was a self-help manual, filled with encouraging quotes, opened up to be the key to

understanding far more. It was the very Word of God.

Doctrine became life; church life became central; and all areas of life begin whirling around a series of central concepts concerning God, the Word, and how we should then live.

I was a college student at the time: A freshman when I first began reading the man with the funny names, a sophomore when I first embraced Calvinia, and a junior and senior as I began parallel studies of history and literature in college classes, all the while trying to connect and sometimes reject what I was learning in the classroom in comparison with what I was learning from the Bible.

The Mission of Calvinia

The world of Calvinia unveiled a sober truth: My life in the classroom of God's universe would never end. The vision revealed in Calvinia would be all consuming. Every area of life and thought would be called to account for interpretation and use for the furthering of a Kingdom not of this world, but to be implemented in this world. ("Thy will be done on earth, as it is in heaven" was and is still resonating in my mind.)

The mission would be impossible without the help of others. Reading would not just be a pastime, but a duty. But knowing what to read and who to read would be a major necessity. Rushdoony, the man with the funny names, was to be a key to both who and what to read. But I had to somehow get beyond the texts of the books he authored. The pictures of him on the back flaps of some of his books showed a rather stern-looking, unsmiling man, bearded like an Old Testament prophet. Intimidating, to say the least, Rushdoony from both his books and pictures appeared distant, aloof, highly cerebral, and unapproachable. Then I begin hearing voices. (Don't stop reading; I will

explain immediately.)

Gutenberg's printing press changed the world of information flow in the late fifteenth century. He was a contributor, unknowingly, to the Protestant Reformation due to the flood of books that event spawned. In subsequent ages, both improvements in technology and newer technologies have continued the process. The information highway was given a gigantic boost by the development of the cassette tape. Created in the early 1960s, this short-lived technological breakthrough boomed during the 1970s and 80s. Cassettes were small, easily transported, easily reproduced, and explosive in terms of impact. Taped messages had previously existed in huge reel to reel formats. But cassettes were cheap and handy. It was there that I first heard the slow, deliberate, calming voice of R. J. Rushdoony.

My love of history drew me to his series of ten tapes on world history. My awe for the man increased tenfold along with my desire to hear and read everything I could by him. Those ten lectures, given to a small gathering of people in the early 1970s, were packed with more information, insights, interpretations, and challenges than I had received in many of my college history studies. And the intimidating, lofty, unemotional image of Rushdoony vanished. He was warm, humorous, engaging, and human. Yet, when he would casually mention having read five or six biographies over some historical figure, I would realize why I would experience again the awe I had of him.

The Day of the Newsletters

Along with cassettes, there were publications that were increasing in number. (At one time, it was possible to keep up with all of the publications in a given area of interest.) In those days before the Internet, Calvinists had to search far and wide for good read-

ing materials. Rather than googling the topic of interest, you had to wait patiently for a magazine, a newsletter, or some other publication to arrive. Once a month, a fat envelope would show up in my mailbox coming from the far-off land of Vallecito (one of the primary towns in the land of Calvinia). It contained a newsletter called *The Chalcedon Report*, consisting of four pages, beginning with an article by Rushdoony. Over the years, a number of other names appeared and disappeared in the changing circumstances of this newsletter and foundation. Leaders of what was coming to be called the Reconstruction Movement contributed articles to the report. These included an economic commentary on the Bible written by Gary North and a series on apologetics written by Greg Bahnsen. Much later, Otto Scott began writing for the *Report* as well.

The newsletter began including more and more inserts. Around 1980, a series titled Position Papers became a regular feature of the mailing. These essays, authored by Rushdoony, covered the front and back of a page of print. While Christians, even those of us in Calvinia, were always hankering for some final word on a current event or news controversy, these Position Papers rose above the fray of the moment.

In other words, Rushdoony's Position Papers were not journalistic commentary. Plenty of such writings abound. There are good articles, well written and convincing, dealing with some front burner issues. A few years later, such writings are of interest to the history students, and they might shed light on on-going concerns, but they are dated. They can be compared to the computer manuals whose covers show some huge dinosaur of a computer that has long since been scrapped. Rushdoony was not writing about the 1980s

and 90s; rather, he was writing articles that are just as important today as when they were penned. As his readers often realize, his writings from decades ago are often so relevant that they appear to have been written in our own time.

Rushdoony's Position Papers referenced historical events, recurring political ideas, sociological patterns, theological issues, and economic factors. Whatever the topic, it was then filtered through his own vast, well thought-out, and informed Christian worldview. Scripture references are often included, but the works as a whole reflect a broad Scriptural perspective. Calvin, Van Til, and a few other theologians were sometimes referenced or quoted, but the entirety of the Position Papers was conditioned by Rushdoony's imbibing of the Reformed tradition and Van Tillian thinking which he had been cultivating for years.

As my collection of old *Chalcedon Reports* and Position Papers grew, I decided in the late 1980s to organize these materials. I put all of the Position Papers in order, punched holes in them, and then put them in a three-ring binder. Confession Time: I would carry this official looking notebook into meetings I had to attend and would read from it when the meetings grew dull. I learned to give the appearance of the interested listener while I was secretly reading Rushdoony. Looking back now, I admit ... that I should have read the Rushdoony articles even more diligently.

Rushdoony Lives

Rushdoony left the Christian world in February 2001 after having written a large stack of books over the course of his lifetime. Some were thin paperbacks, while others were weighty and hefty tomes. When the sad news came that he had died, most of us didn't realize that, in addition to the many books we already had from him, there was still

a whole library of writings to be published. It was like inheriting a massive intellectual trust fund. New books by Rushdoony continue to come off the press, but now more and more of the articles he wrote for newsletters are being reprinted and published in book form.

An Informed Faith is a packaged gift from Rushdoony to his readers (present and future). This three-volume set consists of the hundreds of Position Papers reprinted and put into order of categories. Rushdoony had an admirable and sanctified type of ADD (attention deficit disorder). He would write on one topic, then turn and write on a different one, only to follow that up with a completely unrelated subject. While many scholars have vast expertise in a limited subject area or two, the whole universe of history and thought was Rushdoony's mental parish.

These essays range in dates from around 1979 to 1999. But there is no evolution of thought in the sense that Rushdoony believed one thing in the early papers, but had moved in a different direction later on. He had a well-grounded set of core principles. The sources are brought out in some of his definitive works such as *The Institutes of Biblical Law*, *The One and the Many*, and *By What Standard*. The foundation never shifted, but as he read (voraciously), talked and listened to people (constantly), and reflected (deeply), he would take one idea after another and test it in the light of his Biblical worldview.

Enriching this set of books is a collection of indices that include Scripture references and historical references. Then there is a list of the books that Rushdoony mentioned or quoted (some favorably, some not so favorably). I have already purchased one book—*Renaissance Cavalier*—that Rushdoony quoted from. The multiple indices enable the

reader to find particular topics or people that Rushdoony wrote about.

Here is a set of books that really needs to be on the shelves, the desk, bedside book stand, or next to the easy chair of every Christian reader. I am currently reading through the books a few articles at a time. My son randomly opened one of the volumes last night and read Rushdoony's article titled "Kenosis," which he loved. Either method works. Open any volume anywhere and start reading. Or read the books through from beginning to end. Or look in the table of contents or index for a subject and read. It doesn't matter.

Rushdoony Has No Peer

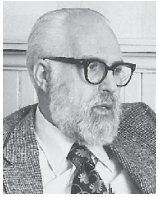
A final selling point: I feel like I ought to be a peer to Rushdoony by now. He was born about forty years before I was. But he would have been about my age when many of these papers were written. Like Rushdoony, I have been a reader, teacher, pastor, and writer. Plus, I have read quite a few books that have been published since his death in 2001. I ought to be able to hold my own against the man. But reading Rushdoony always reminds me of how much I still need to learn. He runs circles around me. He casually mentions people, ideas, and events I am often totally unaware of. But he is not just a master of trivia. He makes connections from his readings, discussions, and experiences. He links whatever the topic is to how it relates to Christian thinking and living.

Reading Rushdoony can be the equivalent to going to college. (Ironically, he wanted to start a university for many years, before turning his energies to the mission of the Chalcedon Foundation.) Enroll for a class with Rushdoony and you will be challenged to think, rethink, and apply. Take note of that last term—apply. Rushdoony never

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The Decrees of God

Taken from Rushdoony's *Good Morning, Friends*, Volume 1, pp 30-32

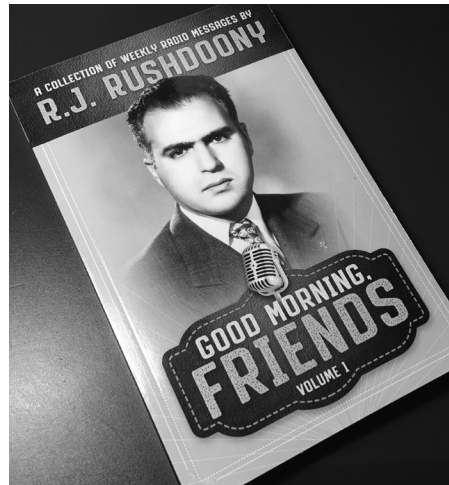


Good morning, friends. This morning I'd like to talk about the decrees of God. What are they? When we say that God decrees something, what do we mean? The Shorter Catechism answers it like this:

A. 7. The decrees of God are his eternal purpose, according to the counsel of his will, whereby, for his own glory, he hath foreordained whatsoever comes to pass.

At first glance, this seems to be something very remote from our lives, but it actually has a meaning and application which reaches down into every fiber and nerve of your life and mine.

Simply stated, it tells us this, that the Lord is God, that God rules over all things, and not chance. You and I sit down frequently and try to plan our lives. We figure on so much time for work, and so much time for play. We budget and plan our finances, and decide that a certain sum will have to be set aside monthly for set payments, leaving us a specific sum of money for other purposes. We earnestly and sincerely try to plan our lives, but of course the trouble is that they don't plan well. Unexpected things happen, events which we cannot control, and neither our time nor our money prove our own. Illness or extra expenses wipe out all our planning, and sometimes years of hoping. Then we start planning and hoping all over again. It has its value; it gives us minor victories which would be impossible without planning, but we always



Expect Volume 2 of *Good Morning, Friends* to arrive in early 2018.

know that we can never control every factor in our lives or in our work and world. We plan, but events outside our control continually compel us to alter and adjust our planning.

If God's planning were like our planning, then most of God's creation would have to be outside His control and moving under chance. It would make chance more important than God, because God's plans would be liable to change if events overruled His planning. We know that this is not so: there is no chance in this world. As James, the brother of our Lord, declared at the Council of Jerusalem, "Known unto God are all his works from the beginning of the world" (Acts 15:18). God's planning is perfect planning: it leaves nothing to chance, and neither man nor events but only God controls the course of the plan.

What does this mean for us? It raises, of course, some questions about

how to reconcile God's decree and human freedom and responsibility. Such questions we cannot answer: we do not have the mind to grasp all their implications. But this one thing we know, that to believe in a God who is in full control gives meaning to every moment and every act in our lives. Nothing that happens to us is senseless or meaningless. The world is not out of hand, or God out of the driver's seat. He is in full and absolute control. This means that there is a purpose to all things which faith and patience can discern and trust in.

Every one of us suffers things and undergoes trials and tribulations which sorely try our spirits. It would make life senseless and cruel if we could believe no more than that these things were meaningless and chance acts. But if we can believe, as we are asked by Scripture to believe, that all these things are a part of God's decree and have a meaning in terms of Him, then we know that nothing is senseless or wasted in our lives or in all creation. Then we know that there is an eternal purpose in and behind all things, and our strength is in trusting in God and His workings. It enables us to say, although I do not know why these things have happened to me, I believe in the love and purpose which stands behind them and brought them to me. Because the Lord planned this, I know that His purpose is to His eternal glory and to my strengthening and fulfilling in Him. With Paul we can say, "We know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose" (Rom. 8:28). 🙏

The Story Never Lies

by Suzannah Rowntree



I was 300,000 words into writing the first draft of *Outremer*, a historical fantasy series set during the 200-year history of the medieval

Crusader states, when I realized something had gone wrong.

The story I had written was deeply pessimistic.

How could this have happened? I hold a lot of theological positions, but none with quite the same energy as my postmillennial eschatology. My first novel, *Pendragon's Heir*, applied postmillennialism to the medieval Arthurian legends. I was proud of how I'd infused this bleak story with hope and encouragement. In *Outremer*, I planned to work similar themes into the equally tragic history of the Crusader states.

And yet somewhere in the transmission from mind to page, that vision got lost. The final quarter of the story confirmed my suspicions: *Outremer* ended on a whimper. There was a resolution, but it was *trivial*, neither crushing enough to be a grand tragedy nor eucatastrophic enough to be a comedy.

If I was going to be honest with myself, *Outremer* wasn't postmillennial at all. It didn't even have the tragic grandeur of premillennialism. Its structure much better resembled amillennialism.

Maybe the history itself was to blame.

"God Wills It!"

The Crusader states of the medieval Levant were founded in the euphoric aftermath of an extraordinary military

campaign known today as the First Crusade. Following appeals from the Eastern Roman Empire, Pope Urban II urged the knights of France to undergo a mass pilgrimage to the Holy Sepulcher at Jerusalem. Their mission: to serve Christ by liberating the people of the Eastern Church and the shrines and relics of the Holy Land from the oppression of the heathens.

It was the first time that knights—then a byword for rage, lust, violence, and rapacity—had been encouraged by the Church to think of themselves as knights for Christ, valuable believers whose everyday occupation was something through which they could serve God. The results were electrifying.¹ In 1096 thousands of laymen, nobles and commoners, took arms and travelled east.

All of them recognized that success depended on God, not on themselves. The Turks they faced commanded immense resources of land and manpower, and the crusade faced mounting danger, even as it was whittled down by starvation, disease, war, and desertion. Three separate times—at Dorylaeum in Asia Minor in 1097, Antioch in 1098, and Ascalon in 1099—they faced annihilation at the hands of a well-fed, well-equipped, and numerically superior foe. On one occasion as the starving pilgrims were trapped inside Antioch by an immense Turkish army—which had already managed to penetrate the wall—a meteor fell from the sky into the Turkish camp, starting a fire which panicked the intruders into retreat.

After such deliverances, the cru-

sader battle-cry "God wills it" seemed a description of obvious fact.

The First Crusade was marred by episodes of brutality, significantly the bloody massacre of the Arabs in Jerusalem with which it culminated. But in the immediate aftermath of the crusade, the Frankish pilgrims acknowledged their responsibility to guard what they had liberated. So, a mere three hundred knights, together with their entourages, settled in Palestine under the leadership of Godfrey of Bouillon. Other states were founded in Tripoli, Antioch, and Edessa.

Thus, began the Latin Kingdom of Jerusalem. It would last 192 years.

A Loss of Nerve

For the next century the Kingdom of Jerusalem prospered, fueled by lucrative trade routes, a booming pilgrimage industry, and constant injections of money and manpower from the West. Local Greek, Syrian and Armenian Christians welcomed the Frankish newcomers and worshipped alongside them in harmony.² Muslim prisoners of war were enslaved,³ but local Muslim peasants spoke well of the justice of their Frankish overlords.⁴

In the 1180s, the Kurdish conqueror Saladin, criticized for his wars against fellow Muslims, vowed to force the Christians out of Palestine, then follow them to Europe to impose Muslim rule there.⁵ In 1187 Saladin succeeded in provoking the Frankish army into crossing the dry hills of Galilee at midsummer to offer him battle. At Hattin, within sight of Lake Tiberias, he crushed the larg-

est army ever fielded in the Kingdom of Jerusalem. Moving quickly, he then captured Acre, Jerusalem, and all but a handful of fortresses along the coast.

Europe responded with the Third Crusade in 1190, but the campaign stagnated until the arrival of Richard the Lionheart in 1191. Richard was a brilliant general, and over the next two years he defeated Saladin twice, first at the siege of Acre and then at the battle of Arsuf. Turmoil in his French lands eventually forced him to leave, but Saladin died shortly after Richard's departure, leaving a power vacuum which once again fractured the Muslim world. Jerusalem remained in the hands of the Saracens, but thanks to Richard, the fertile coastal lands of Palestine remained Christian.

Many factors contributed to the Kingdom's decline through the next century. They included dynastic problems, financial strain as major trade routes moved north to the Black Sea, infighting between different Christian factions, and the rise of an aggressive military junta, the Mamelukes, in Egypt. However, the most significant factor seems to have been a crisis of nerve. As defeat followed defeat, the Franks of Palestine began to suspect that God had become their enemy. They noticed what appeared to be the superior piety showed by the Muslims. They knew God must be punishing them for their sins, but depended on increasingly Biblically illiterate leaders to coach them into godliness.⁶ Trapped in a cycle of sin and judgment which they did not know how to escape, the final crusader strongholds at Acre and Beirut fell in 1291.

Discerning Historical Truth

Initial success followed by judgment, mounting fear, apostasy, and more judgment: this was the tragedy of the Crusader Kingdom of Jerusalem. Historical fantasy of the kind I attempt-

ed in *Outremer* is rigorously historically accurate, so despite my postmil credentials, I wasn't going to alter it in an attempt to construct an imaginary happy ending. More to the point, the primary purpose of Christian art is discernment,⁷ and above anything else I wanted to discern God's purpose and will in the history of the Crusader states. Why did God bless this deeply flawed endeavor so richly? Why, after sustaining them so long, did He ultimately spit the crusaders out of their promised land, exposing so many native Christians once again to the rigors of Muslim rule? More than anything else, I wanted to know how this apparent failure might have contributed to the advance of God's Kingdom on the earth.

Clearly God brought covenant sanctions against His people in the Frankish East. Possible reasons may include the worship of relics: the Holy Land was called the Holy Land because the whole thing—land, shrines, relics, tombs, churches, and hermitages—was believed to have absorbed the holiness not just of Christ but also of the thousands of saints who had lived there. The earthly Jerusalem has often been a temptation to idolatry; perhaps that's why Providence has so rarely entrusted it to Christian hands. Another reason might have been simple violations of justice: covenant-breaking, fornication, murder, theft, war crimes, slavery.

The crusades accomplished much good. Local Christians welcomed them with jubilation, and peace treaties between the crusader states and their Muslim neighbors guaranteed protection for Christians living in Muslim lands (as well as for Muslims living in Christian lands). After forcing the Turks to retreat to Mesopotamia from the very shores of the Bosphorous in 1097, the crusaders absorbed the warlike energies of the Muslim world for another two

hundred years. Not until 1453 did the Turks finally capture Constantinople and open Europe to invasion.

The other thing the crusader states absorbed was huge quantities of the money and best blood of Europe. With their fall, these resources were freed up for the coming age of exploration. As the Turks consolidated their grip on the markets and trade routes of the eastern Mediterranean, Portuguese sailors pioneered new routes to Asia via the Cape of Good Hope. And Columbus dreamed of crossing the sea to Cathay with a new crusade to catch Islam in the rear.

So, the Crusader states served their purpose and passed from history. Despite the tragedy I saw hope in this story, because there's always hope in the judgments of God. I knew that firsthand from my first novel, which contained a similar story. So why did I fail to communicate the same thing in *Outremer*?

Encountering Islam

One of my intentions with *Outremer* was to provide a sort of fictional apologia for the way that I viewed Muslims. Much in the history bore out my perspective. When the First Crusade conquered Palestine, their chroniclers recorded local Christians flocking to greet them with joy in a land filled with cities so ruinous that the Muslim garrisons abandoned them rather than try to defend them.

By contrast, when Saladin reconquered the same cities a hundred years later, he marveled at the beauty and richness of the Christian cities: from a rocky hill devoid of trees after the First Crusade, Jerusalem had become "a garden of paradise" under Crusader rule.⁸ Where Christian chroniclers shied away from detailed descriptions of sex or violence for the sake of decency, Muslim chroniclers devoted pages of semi-pornographic fantasy to the gory sights of

the battlefield of Hattin or the fate they expected to inflict on Frankish women enslaved after the surrender of Jerusalem.⁹ Meanwhile, at least one Muslim traveler marveled at the contentment of Muslim peasants living under Christian rule.¹⁰ Clearly even crusader Christianity was preferable to Islam.

But as I wrote about all this, I was faced with something I wasn't prepared for: the need to write realistic Muslim characters. Of course, I knew what was involved in constructing compelling characters. I must understand and empathize with their motivations. I must connect with them based on the one universal which all humans share: the shattered image of God. I must write them, as I write every character, with a keen sense of how I might sin as they sin. And so the question ceased being *how are Muslims different to me?* and became *how am I like them, even in the things I fear most?*

I began to read the testimonies of Muslim-background Christians as a way to ease myself into the empathy I so badly needed. As I did so, I became convicted of responding to Muslims not with the grace of the gospel but with fear. Then a Pakistani man told me how he never took Christianity seriously until he finally found Christians willing to look him in the eye. And this in a modern cosmopolitan city filled with an abundance of people of every kind of lifestyle.

But surely, I reasoned, if Christians fear Islam, they do it no more than the justice it deserves. Obviously many Muslims are peaceable people who do not follow their faith to what I believe is its logical end, but many do. As of 2017, terrorist attacks seem to occur on a monthly basis, all to the tune of the Muslim confession of faith. Meanwhile, I'd read harrowing tell-alls of life behind the burka from women living in Muslim

countries, more frightening than any HarperTeen dystopia. And all the time, our headlines solemnly inform us that this kind of violence has nothing to do with Islam and that Christianity has committed comparable atrocities.

I had begun writing *Outremer* with a good deal of pent-up frustration at this manifest untruth. If people weren't every bit as scared by Islam as myself after reading these books, it wouldn't be my fault.

Functional Idolatry

So I wrote all my worst fears into the story. *Outremer* was grimmer and darker than anything I'd written before, and for a while I congratulated myself on being All Grown Up Now. But little by little, the grimness and darkness in the story stifled that all-important message of hope.

I was listening to a podcast on Islam when Scripture verses concerning fear began to convict me. God had not given me a spirit of fear, but a spirit of power (2 Tim. 1:7). I was to fear God and serve Him alone (Deut. 6:13). Most sobering of all, the fearful would not enter the New Jerusalem but be cast into the lake of fire along with murderers and sorcerers (Rev. 21:8). For the first time, I began to apply the Word of God to my fear of Islam—and what it said horrified me.

I had put my faith in man, not in God. I had feared Islam, not God. I had not just become a pessimist: I'd become an idolater.

Scariest of all, I knew that imitation and emulation are basic facts of human worship. If our fears are our false gods, and if we become like what we worship, then was I too on the road to violence and oppression? I took a second look at my novel. I had my characters fighting Islam using weapons of power and violence. I thought about my reactions to some recent headlines. Too often,

my thoughts had been of retaliation or isolation.

I realized that "Islamophobia" was actually the perfect word to describe what I'd felt. Of course, those who use it mean that the Christian or conservative fear of Islam is irrational, a chimera, a mental disorder. There I disagree. I think it is entirely rational to fear Islam.

I also believe it's a sin.

The Covenantal Option

The story never lies, because the Story *is* the Gospel. Writing about my fears was not cathartic in the least; it only crippled my story. But I'm grateful for the experience, because it exposed my fear for what it was.

Jeremiah 17:5 exhorts us: "Thus saith the Lord: Cursed be the man that trusteth in man, and maketh flesh his arm, and whose heart departeth from the Lord." Repenting of idolatry meant putting my faith where it should be: in an all-powerful, covenantally faithful God.

No doubt God overcomes the wicked, and sometimes He does it through military victories. Self-defense is a Biblical concept, after all. But ultimately Islam will not be defeated through the use of raw power and violence. As the Crusades demonstrate, such things may win a modicum of peace for a little while, but ultimately, they will breed more violence. Rather Islam will be—it *is* being—won over through justice, mercy, and humility; through love and service of widows, orphans, and strangers; through God's blessings as Christians faithfully keep His covenant. 🏰

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.

Continued on page 26

The Case for Christ

Movie Reviewed by Lee Duigon



The only way to truth is through facts.” For award-winning *Chicago Tribune* crime reporter, and two-fisted atheist, Lee

Strobel, those were words to live by.

This movie by Jon Gunn is about how God used facts to haul Strobel out of atheism and into a committed belief in Jesus Christ our Lord. That which was, for Strobel, atheism’s sword and shield “against superstition and ignorance,” God turned to His own good purpose. Well, how many times do the Scriptures warn the sinner that he’ll fall into the pit he dug himself?

I feel a bond with Strobel, having interviewed him several years ago about his book, *The Case for a Creator*.¹ When I finally connected with him by phone, he said he was about to go skiing, but could give me fifteen minutes. We wound up talking for an hour and a half—two guys whom God’s grace had delivered from bondage to false pride—the kind of pride that looks at itself in the mirror and coos, “Oh, you’re so smart!”

The Lee Strobel (played by Mike Vogel) whom we meet at the start of the movie—which is based on his first autobiographical book, *The Case for Christ* (1998)—is a self-satisfied fat-head: not really a very nice person at all. His wife, Leslie (Erika Christensen), is also an atheist and very happy with their life. They’re raising their little girl to be an atheist, too.

Cheating with Jesus

The first crack in the façade comes one evening at a restaurant, when their

daughter chokes on a gumball and they can’t save her. Providentially—and that is meant literally—a nurse was on hand to save the child. She was there because, for no reason she could think of, she’d changed her plans for that evening and went to that restaurant instead of another.

The nurse, Alfie (L. Scott Caldwell), is a Christian, and she and Leslie become friends. Shaken by the experience, Leslie finds herself drawn back toward the Christian faith in which she was raised. Alfie lovingly encourages her, and Mr. Strobel doesn’t like it.

“You’re cheating on me—with Jesus!” he shouts at her. “I want my wife back!”

You’ve got to love this. As he sees it, his atheist convictions are based on “facts” and “science,” and are therefore the only conclusion available to a rational mind, whereas Leslie’s growing Christian convictions are “only feelings,” and therefore don’t count. Oh, no—he hasn’t got any emotional investment in his atheism: no “feelings” here! He’s only yelling at her because he’s so rational.

Gunn’s direction and Vogel’s acting make it real.

A Search for Facts

Without telling Leslie what he means to do, Lee embarks on a journalistic project to assemble “facts” that will “disprove” Christianity. He works very hard at this, interviewing historians and theologians all around the country. But unhappily for him, the facts seem reluctant to take his side of the argument. He also tries, unsuccessfully, to break up

his wife’s friendship with Alfie. Again, no “feelings” here—just pure rationality. Uh-huh.

Among the facts collected by Strobel are these.

There were many witnesses to the risen Christ, none of whom recanted, even in the face of lethal persecution.

The manuscript evidence for the New Testament is many times more abundant, and many times stronger, than the evidence for any other event in the ancient world.

The details of the Resurrection narrative—for instance, the prominence of women among the witnesses—are of a kind highly unlikely to have been invented by any first-century fiction-monger.

According to modern medical science, it would have been impossible for Jesus to have survived the crucifixion, thus ruling out any fakery in that department.

Psychologically, it is impossible for any group of individuals to have exactly the same hallucination.

These facts, and others, rock Strobel’s atheist beliefs to the core. This is not supposed to happen. It frustrates him, and he fights it—again, no “feelings” involved. Just cold, hard facts.

When Facts and Reason Lead You Astray

Meanwhile, he still has his job as a crime reporter to do, and he tries to keep on doing it. Out of this develops a wonderful, and very instructive, irony.

Investigating the shooting of a police officer by a petty criminal who may have been a police informant, Strobel

brings all his journalistic skills and ideals to bear. This is a man who has told his little girl, “We only believe in what we see.” So based on what he sees, and what he reasons from it, Strobel’s investigation sends an innocent man to prison, where he’s almost killed. Only afterward does Strobel discover that what he saw was incomplete, and thus misleading. In this case, what he could see proved to be a blind guide that led him into the ditch.

This was another opportunity for the script to lapse into heavy-handedness. Instead, it makes us think.

How far do we trust our reason, and the quality of the information upon which it’s based? “Facts” led Strobel to aiding in a miscarriage of justice; but another set of facts helped break down the wall of unbelief he’d raised around his soul.

A key factor in Strobel’s conversion, we see, is his wife’s persistent love. Once she starts moving back to Christ, her husband is really pretty mean to her. “She’s different,” he complains to an atheist friend, “and it scares the heck out of me.” He may even leave her if she keeps it up, he says. The friend comforts him, assuring him that Christianity is “a delusion” and that, if he’s patient with her, the phase will pass and she’ll “come back to the truth” of atheism.

Some viewers will be surprised by the atheists’ emotional intensity in their conviction that there is no God. I have had enough experience with atheists to confirm that this is so: most of them are quite emotional indeed, and their predominant emotion is anger. In Strobel’s case, his anger sprang from what he perceived as his father’s refusal to love him. I have personally known atheists who have carried that same burden all their lives. Strobel discovers, but only after his father’s death, that he’d profoundly misunderstood the man. But for others

the paternal rejection was only too real.

Facts, we see in this film, are important to the Christian. What we believe is true. After all, if facts didn’t matter, the book and the movie wouldn’t have been called *The Case for Christ*.

But love matters, too; and in spite of his struggle to resist its effects, Lee is powerfully moved by Leslie’s love. He confesses this to her, eventually.

Ultimately we are saved by God’s sovereign grace. Faith is the gift of God. Facts are strong, love is strong, but grace is stronger still. When Strobel finally utters a prayer, his first words are, “All right, God—you win.”

We can see these words coming, and can rejoice in them.

Can We Love Atheists?

Lee confesses to Leslie, “The evidence for your faith is more overwhelming than I ever could have imagined.” He, and the evidence, have been led full-circle back to Strobel’s words at the beginning of the story: “The only way to truth is through facts.” But we have also seen that there is more than that to being human and made in the image of God—much more.

The viewer will find it easy to be angry with the old Lee Strobel for his conceit, his close-mindedness, and his mean spirit. Those characteristics of atheists—and there are atheists who are much more obnoxious and provoking than Strobel ever was—nor do we dare suggest that the same characteristics are not to be found in Christians, too—can make it hard for us to feel compassion for them, and to love them as God does. But the Son of God came into the world to find those sheep who are lost, not the ninety-and-nine who aren’t. He came as a physician to heal the sick souls, not the healthy. And we are all, to one extent or another, lost sheep, sick souls. Only Jesus Christ can find us. Only Christ can heal us.

It is this message, expertly delivered by the film-makers, that makes *The Case for Christ* a movie we can stand up and cheer. 🙌

Lee is the author of the *Bell Mountain Series* of novels and a contributing editor for our *Faith for All of Life* magazine. Lee provides commentary on cultural trends and relevant issues to Christians, along with providing cogent book and media reviews.

1. <https://chalcedon.edu/resources/articles/case-for-a-creator-author-makes-prediction-belief-in-god-will-prevail-over-darwinism>

Rushdoony... Understand? cont. from pg. 3

and New Testaments.” We develop a dispensational theology in line with our modern perception of adjectives.

“New” does not refer to young here and “old” does not mean antiquated. The reference is to things “fresh” and “ancient.”³ The scribe of the Kingdom of Heaven, having studied the law of the King, understands it as the disciples had just indicated to our Lord. Their responsibility was to distribute that wealth in terms of the old, ancient, orthodox truths, but in new, fresh ways. One of the functions of a scribe, remember, was to study the case laws of Scripture as well as understand their applications over time, and then suggest how to apply them in “new” instances with a contemporary context:

Because the Kingdom of God is old, ancient as God is ancient, it has ever new applications. Methods, manners, men may change; but this underlying principle of Divine government abideth, rooted in the nature of God, and active in redeeming grace, and it blossoms fresh in every generation among the sons of men.⁴

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It seems, at times, that the ground around us is a wayside, or rocky, or choked by thorns. If we understand as the disciples did, however, we will see the certain and inevitable progress of His Kingdom. We are part of it, it is priceless, and we are to so value it that we think the things of this world nothing in comparison.

This is what Jesus told His disciples of their responsibility if they understood His Kingdom teaching. Do you understand? 🏰

1. The parable of the seed growing by itself is found only in Mark 4:26–29.
2. Alfred Edersheim, *The Life and Times of Jesus the Messiah*. Book III, Chapter XXIII.
3. See G. Campbell Morgan, *Studies in the Four Gospels*, “Matthew XIII. 51,52.” (Westwood, NJ: Fleming H. Revell Company, 1931) p. 178.
4. *ibid.*, p.179.

Schwartz... Ways of the World cont. from pg. 16

until then. This is unbiblical to the core.

4. *Institutes*, p. 231.
5. *Teach Me While My Heart Is Tender* and *Family Matters* are both available from chalcedonstore.com
6. Illegitimate children are often referred to as bastards. What is now a general pejorative term was originally rendered to comment on the undisciplined nature of one without the benefit of a father.
7. Let me recommend Rushdoony's *Good Morning, Friends* as an excellent family devotional.

House...Arriving cont. from pg. 19

wrote with the academic goal of just advancing a bit of scholarship among a scholarly cadre of experts. His vision of history, philosophy, and theology was concerned about changing the everyday life of the Christian in the pew, home, and workplace.

With the Christmas celebration upon us, there needs to be thousands of

pastors and laymen who are jumping for joy after unwrapping this beautiful set of books on Christmas morning. 🏰

Ben House is the Headmaster of Veritas Academy in Texarkana, Texas where he also teaches history and literature. He's the author of *Punic Wars & Culture Wars: Christian Essays on History and Teaching*.

Rowntree... The Story cont. from pg. 23

1. J. Riley-Smith, *The First Crusade and the Idea of Crusading* (Philadelphia, PN: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1986).
2. C. MacEvitt, *The Crusades and the Christian World of the East: Rough Tolerance* (Philadelphia, PN: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2007).
3. B. Kedar, “The Subjected Muslims of the Frankish Levant,” in J. M. Powell (ed.), *Muslims under Latin Rule 1100–1300* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton Legacy Library, 1990), pp. 135–174.
4. Ibn Jubayr, *The Travels of Ibn Jubayr*, trans. R. J. C. Broadhurst (London: Jonathan Cape, 1952), pp. 316–317.
5. T. F. Madden, *The New Concise History of the Crusades* (Washington, DC: Rowman & Littlefield, 2005), p. 69.
6. While reading a collection of letters [M. Barber (ed.), *Letters from the East* (Surrey: Ashgate, 2013)] from crusaders in the east, I noted that over the course of two hundred years, Scripture references and quotations in the crusader correspondence steadily declined in number and frequency.
7. M. Minkoff, *According to His Excellent Greatness* (Sugar Hill, GA: The Nehemiah Foundation for Cultural Renewal, 2015), states “The Christian artist's tool is not transgression, because he does not aim primarily at novelty. His tool is discernment.”
8. M. C. Lyons, and D.E.P. Jackson, *Saladin: The Politics of Holy War* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1982), p. 276.
9. See, for example, F. Gabrieli, *Arab Historians of the Crusades* (Oakland, CA: University of California Press, 1984), pp. 80–81, 96–97.
10. Ibn Jubayr, *The Travels of Ibn Jubayr*, trans. R. J. C. Broadhurst (London: Jonathan Cape, 1952), pp. 316–317.

Biblical Law

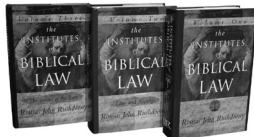
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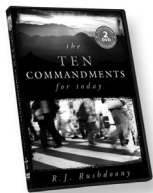
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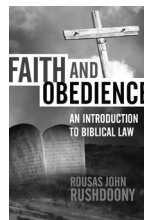


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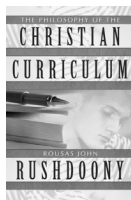
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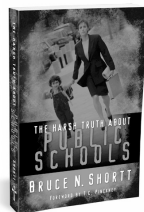


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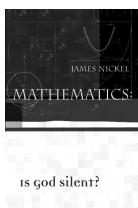
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book was instrumental in launching the Christian school and homeschool movements.

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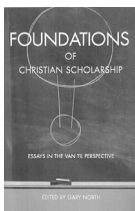


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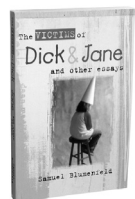


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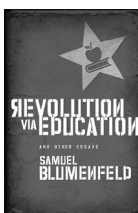


The Victims of Dick and Jane

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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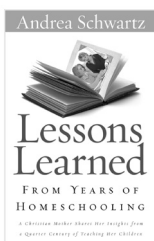


Revolution via Education

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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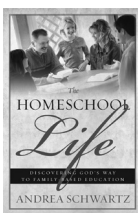


Lessons Learned From Years of Homeschooling

By Andrea Schwartz. After nearly a quarter century of homeschooling her children, Andrea experienced both the accomplishments and challenges that come with being a homeschooling mom. Discover the potential rewards of making the world your classroom and God's Word the foundation of everything you teach.

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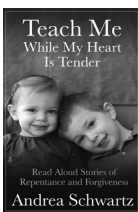


The Homeschool Life: Discovering God's Way to Family-Based Education

By Andrea Schwartz. This book offers sage advice concerning key aspects of homeschooling and gives practical insights for parents as they seek to provide a Christian education for their children.

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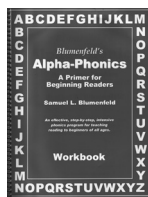


Teach Me While My Heart Is Tender: Read Aloud Stories of Repentance and Forgiveness

Andrea Schwartz compiled three stories drawn from her family-life experiences to help parents teach children how the faith applies to every area of life. They confront the ugly reality of sin, the beauty of godly repentance, and the necessity of forgiveness. The stories are meant to be read by parents and children together. The interactions and discussions that will follow serve to draw families closer together.

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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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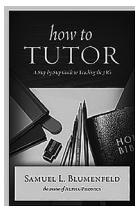
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The Alpha-Phonics Readers accompany the text of Sam Blumenfeld's *Alpha-Phonics*, providing opportunities for students to read at a level that matches their progress through the text. These eleven readers move from simple sentences to paragraphs to 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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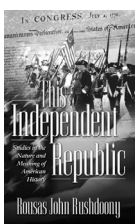
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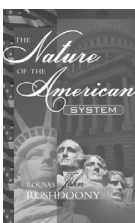


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By R. J. Rushdoony. Important insight into American history by one who could trace American development in terms of the Christian ideas which gave it direction. These essays will greatly alter your understanding of, and appreciation for, American history.

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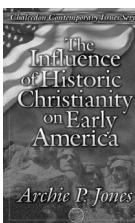


The Nature of the American System

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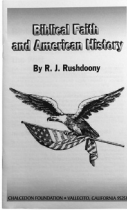


The Influence of Historic Christianity on Early America

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.

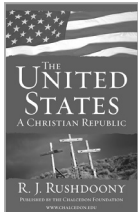
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Biblical Faith and American History

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.

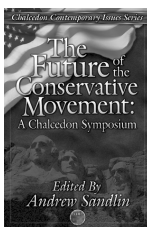
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The United States: A Christian Republic

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.

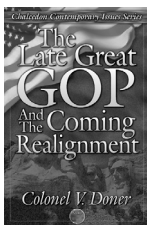
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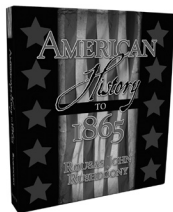
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The Late Great GOP and the Coming Realignment

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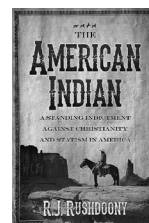


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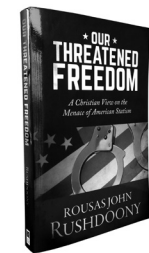


The American Indian:

A Standing Indictment of Christianity & Statism in America

By R. J. Rushdoony. America's first experiment with socialism practically destroyed the American Indian. In 1944 young R. J. Rushdoony arrived at the Duck Valley Indian Reservation in Nevada as a missionary to the Shoshone and the Paiute Indians. For eight years he lived with them, worked with them, ministered to them and listened to their stories. He came to know them intimately, both as individuals and as a people. This is his story, and theirs.

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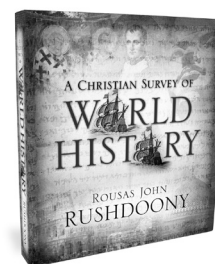


Our Threatened Freedom:

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R. J. Rushdoony reports on a mind-boggling collection of absurdities by our legislators, bureaucrats, and judges—from making it against the law for a company to go out of business, to assigning five full-time undercover agents to bust a little boy who was selling fishing worms without a license. Written some thirty years ago as radio commentaries, Rushdoony's essays seem even more timely today as we are witnessing a staggering display of state intrusion into every area of life.

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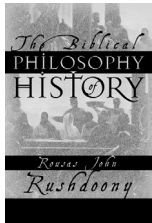
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By R. J. Rushdoony. For the orthodox Christian who grounds his philosophy of history on the doctrine of creation, the mainspring of history is God. Time rests on the foundation of eternity, on the eternal decree of God. Time and history therefore have meaning because they were created in terms of God's perfect and totally comprehensive plan. The humanist faces a meaningless world in which he must strive to create and establish meaning.

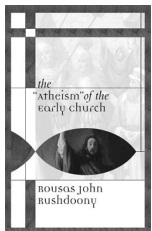
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By Otto Scott. In this study, Otto Scott writes about one of the "holy" fools of humanism who worked against the faith from within. This is a major historical work and marvelous reading.

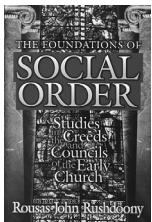
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The "Atheism" of the Early Church

By R. J. Rushdoony. Early Christians were called "heretics" and "atheists" when they denied the gods of Rome, and the divinity of the emperor. These Christians knew that Jesus Christ, not the state, was their Lord and that this faith required a different kind of relationship to the state than the state demanded.

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By R. J. Rushdoony. Every social order rests on a creed, on a concept of life and law, and represents a religion in action. The basic faith of a society means growth in terms of that faith. The life of a society is its creed; a dying creed faces desertion or subversion readily. Because of its indifference to its creedal basis in Biblical Christianity, western civilization is today facing death and is in a life and death struggle with humanism.

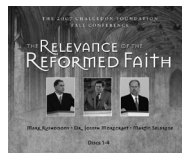
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The Death of Meaning

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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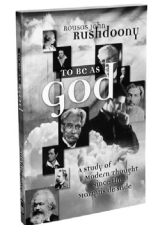


The Word of Flux:

Modern Man and the Problem of Knowledge

By R. J. Rushdoony. Modern man has a problem with knowledge. He cannot accept God's Word about the world or anything else, so anything which points to God must be called into question. This book will lead the reader to understand that this problem of knowledge underlies the isolation and self-torment of modern man. Can you know anything if you reject God and His revelation? This book takes the reader into the heart of modern man's intellectual dilemma.

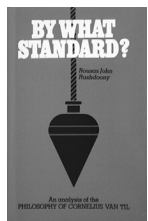
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By R. J. Rushdoony. This monumental work is a series of essays on the influential thinkers and ideas in modern times such as Marquis De Sade, Shelley, Byron, Marx, Whitman, and Nietzsche. Reading this book will help you understand the need to avoid the syncretistic blending of humanistic philosophy with the Christian faith.

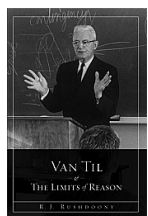
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By What Standard?

By R. J. Rushdoony. An introduction into the problems of Christian philosophy. It focuses on the philosophical system of Dr. Cornelius Van Til, which in turn is founded upon the presuppositions of an infallible revelation in the Bible and the necessity of Christian theology for all philosophy. This is Rushdoony's foundational work on philosophy.

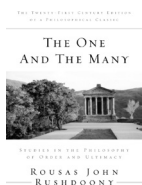
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Van Til & The Limits of Reason

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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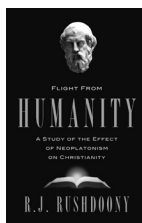


The One and the Many: Studies in the Philosophy of Order and Ultimacy

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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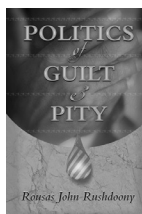


The Flight from Humanity: A Study of the Effect of Neoplatonism on Christianity

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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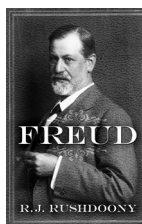


Revolt Against Maturity

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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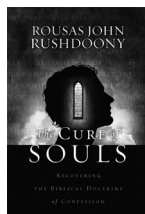


Freud

By R. J. Rushdoony. For years this compact examination of Freud has been out of print. And although both Freud and Rushdoony have passed on, their ideas are still very much in collision. Freud declared war upon guilt and sought to eradicate the primary source of Western guilt—Christianity. Rushdoony shows conclusively the error of Freud's thought and the disastrous consequences of his

influence in society.

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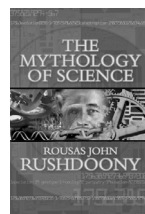


The Cure of Souls: Recovering the Biblical Doctrine of Confession

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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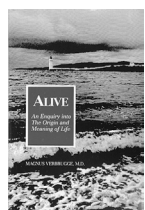
Science

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

devotion to the myth of evolution.

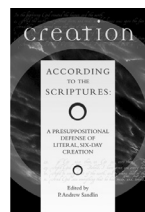
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Alive: An Enquiry into the Origin and Meaning of Life

By Dr. Magnus Verbrugge, M.D. This study is of major importance as a critique of scientific theory, evolution, and contemporary nihilism in scientific thought. Dr. Verbrugge, son-in-law of the late Dr. H. Dooyeweerd and head of the Dooyeweerd Foundation, applies the insights of Dooyeweerd's thinking to the realm of science. Animism and humanism in scientific theory are brilliantly discussed.

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Edited by P. Andrew Sandlin. Subtitled: *A Presuppositional Defense of Literal Six-Day Creation*, this symposium by thirteen authors is a direct frontal assault on all waffling views of Biblical creation. It explodes the "Framework Hypothesis," so dear to the hearts of many respectability-hungry Calvinists, and it throws down the gauntlet to all who believe they can maintain a consistent view of Biblical infallibility while abandoning literal, six-day creation.

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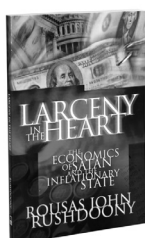
Economics

Making Sense of Your Dollars: A Biblical Approach to Wealth

By Ian Hodge. The author puts the creation and use of wealth in their Biblical context. Debt has put the economies of nations and individuals in dangerous straits.

This book discusses why a business is the best investment, as well as the issues of debt avoidance and insurance.

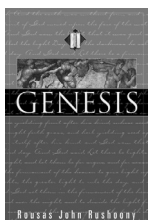
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Larceny in the Heart: The Economics of Satan and the Inflationary State

By R.J. Rushdoony. First published under the title *Roots of Inflation*, the reader sees why envy often causes the most successful and advanced members of society to be deemed criminals. The author uncovers the larceny in the heart of man and its results.

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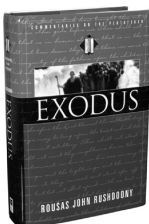
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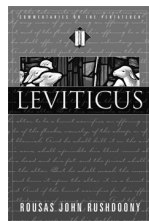
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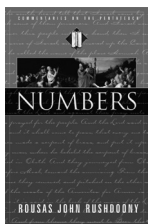
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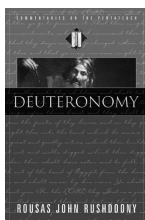


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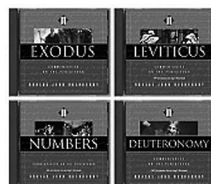
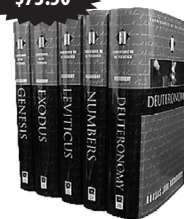
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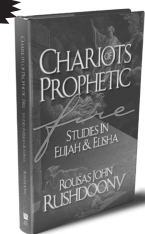
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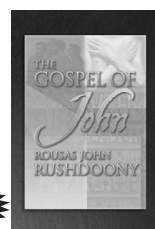
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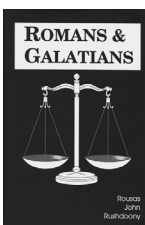


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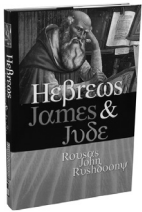
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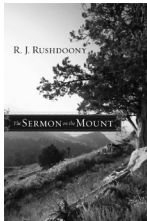


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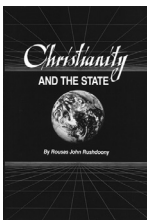
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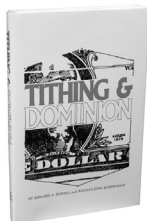


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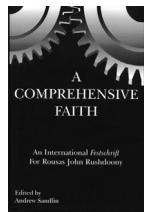


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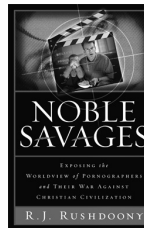
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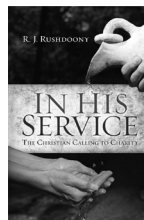
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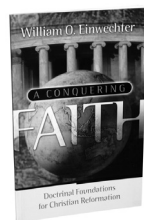
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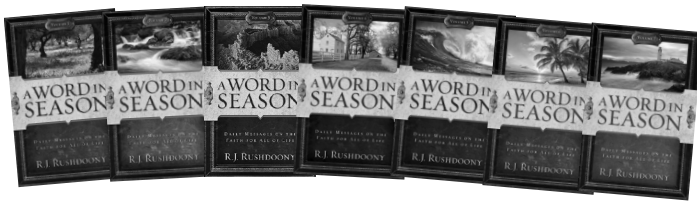
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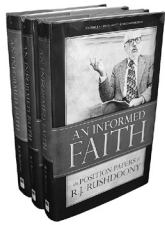
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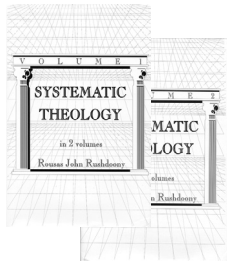


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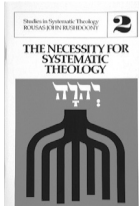
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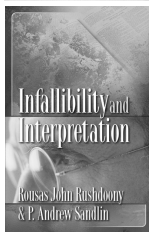
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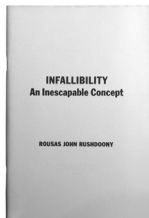
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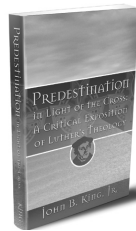
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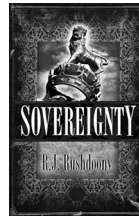
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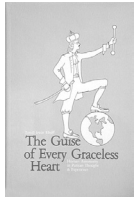
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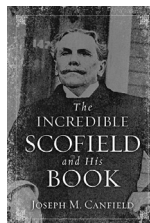
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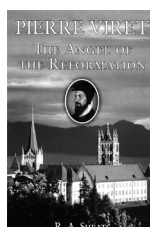
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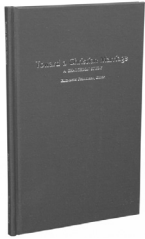


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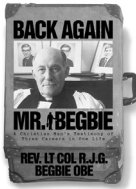


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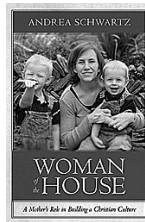


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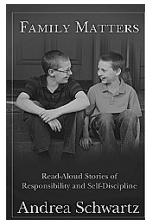
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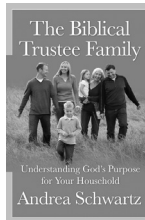
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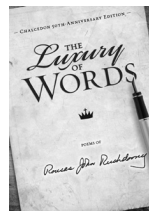
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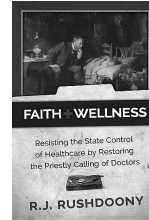
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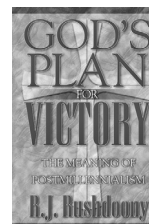
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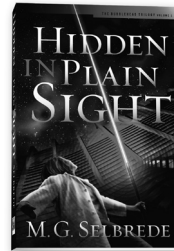
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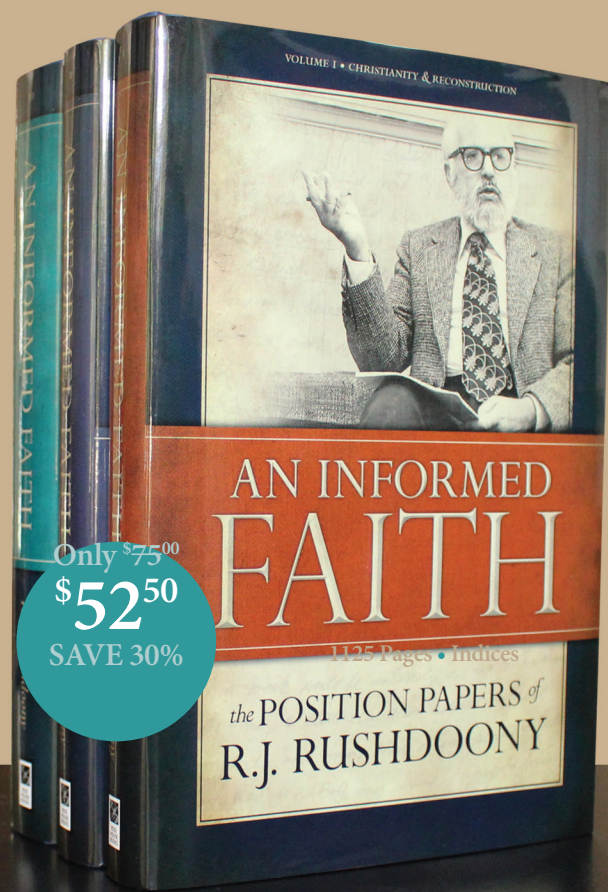
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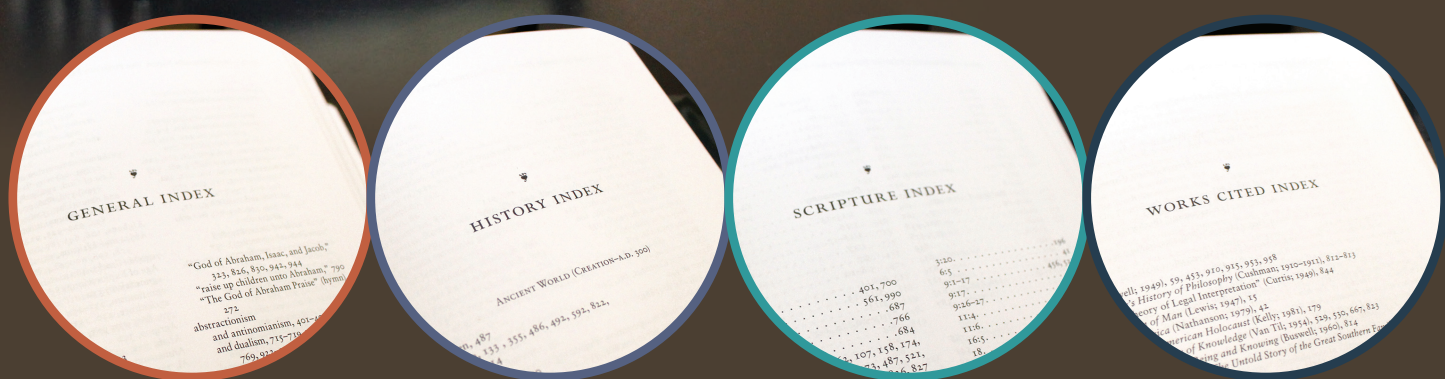
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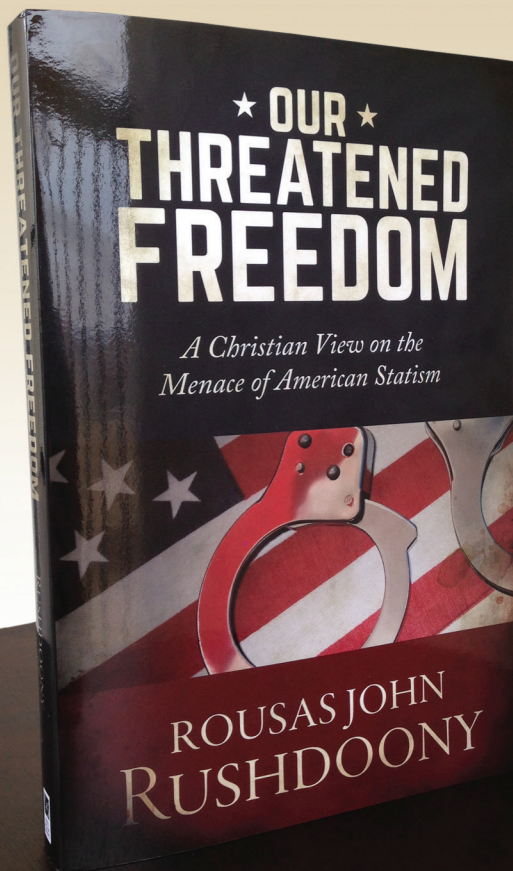
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