

FAITH FOR ALL OF LIFE

Faith for All of Life
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Contributing Editors
Lee Duigon
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Chalcedon Founder
Rev. R. J. Rushdoony
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was the founder of Chalcedon and a leading theologian, church/state expert, and author of numerous works on the application of Biblical Law to society.

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For circulation and data management contact Rebecca Rouse at (209) 736-4365 ext. 10 or chaloffi@goldrush.com

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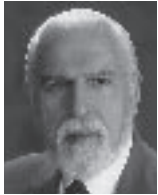
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Inflation

(Reprinted from *Roots of Reconstruction* [Vallecito, CA: Ross House Books, 1991], 641-644.)

Chalcedon Report, No. 37, September 2, 1968

R. J. Rushdoony



After World War II, an American in Shanghai, the Rev. D. R. Lindberg (one of our Newsletter family) walked downtown one morning and witnessed an amazing sight. Wealthy Chinese sat on the sidewalks and even in the streets, weeping and sobbing uncontrollably. Scattered around them were large piles of paper money, in denominations up to \$5,000. A government order, in view of rapidly growing inflation, had declared the bills of \$5,000 and under to be invalid, and their wealth and life savings had just been abolished. They had gone from store to store, bank to bank, hoping to realize something, and they had failed. However, the money, if accepted, would have done them little good. A little later, this American paid \$25 million for a new suit; exactly a week to the day later, a small dime store mouth organ for his son cost \$50 million, and such was the distrust of all paper money that it took two American paper dollars to buy one Chinese silver dollar. This is inflation, the breakdown of paper money. Millionaires find themselves unable to buy a slice of bread with their millions, and, in some instances, have starved to death.

Inflation is one of the results of managed money, and managed money is the cornerstone of socialism. In fact, socialism is impossible without managed money. Managed money is the deliberate, state-controlled debasing or counterfeiting of money as the basic form of social planning. Paper money,

Inflation is one of the results of managed money, and managed money is the cornerstone of socialism. In fact, socialism is impossible without managed money. Managed money is the deliberate, state-controlled debasing or counterfeiting of money as the basic form of social planning.

and coins of baser metals passing in the place of silver or gold, is managed money, whereas gold and silver coinage, which constitutes real wealth, is valid money. For money is not merely a medium of exchange: it is a form of wealth, and if the medium of exchange is a controlled and counterfeit one, wealth is progressively confiscated and destroyed. As a result, the first and basic step in any socialism, in any statist confiscation of private wealth, is to require people to accept a counterfeit or debased money, a mere representation of wealth, in exchange for their very real wealth, their labor, goods, and properties. Managed money is the basic form of socialist planning. The state produces the managed money and begins to spend it for social planning. With this managed money, the state can further its welfare programs, its progressive controls and expropriations, and its total programs of planning and socialization, because, as the producer of managed money, it is the biggest buyer on the

market. The state buys real wealth in the form of labor, goods, and properties and gives managed money, counterfeit wealth, in exchange. The paper value of the people's wealth increases for a time, and prosperity seems to prevail, until the process reaches the point of increasing confiscation as the money rapidly inflates and becomes worthless.

But a runaway inflation not only destroys the creditors, the middle classes, and all with savings, it also destroys the state which permits it. It leads to a collapse of the civil government which promoted it. Previously, runaway inflation has repeatedly occurred. Will it again be the route to disaster?

Managed money, or socialism, is a parasitic economy. The state feeds on the people's wealth, and the people eat up their own future, and their country's future, with a debt economy and growing areas of socialization. Socialization produces temporary benefits to some, but socialization, as a parasite economy, must rob and confiscate in order to give. Instead of creating new wealth, it destroys existing wealth.

As a result of this progressive confiscation and destruction of wealth, the country begins to falter and to move towards economic collapse and catastrophe. A savage struggle for survival then begins. The socialist, interventionist, or welfare economy then faces a grim choice: who shall survive, the people or the state? Increasingly, in the modern world, the socialist answer is that the people must be sacrificed to preserve the state. To stop deficit

spending and return to hard money would create a depression, which would hurt but would save both the state and the people, although at a cost, but this would involve abandoning socialism. This the state will not do, because to sacrifice socialism now means to sacrifice the state, which now sees itself as identical with socialism.

As a result, the state turns to what Wilhelm Roepke and Hans Sennholz have described as repressed inflation. Repressed inflation, according to Roepke in *Economics of the Free Society*, “consists fundamentally, in the fact that a government first promotes inflation but then seeks to interdict its influence on prices and rates of exchange by imposing the now familiar war-time devices of rationing and fixed prices, together with the requisite enforcement measures.” In other words, the cure for the disaster bred by the growing controls of money, men, and property is total controls! This is like saying that the cure for tuberculosis in one lung is its presence everywhere in both lungs.

Roepke noted that repressed inflation is more deadly than open inflation and “ends inevitably in chaos and paralysis.” And it is repressed inflation which we are steadily getting, as the federal government moves to control steel, copper, and aluminum prices, and to limit private spending by taxation, while continuing and increasing its own deficit spending. On May 9, 1959, Arthur Upgren, in the Minneapolis *Star*, stated that the U.S. would “go bust” by 1970 because of the breakdown of money. In a paper on the subject, “Why the United States Is Most Likely to Have a Financial Collapse in 1970,” Upgren offered as his answer to the pending crisis more money management. But more money management means simply more socialism. Briefly, such answers in effect declare that the only way to

escape economic law is by means of the totalitarian law of the state.

This then is the course being progressively taken, more money management, which means more socialism, and thus progressive confiscation. This means chaos and disaster. It means the breakdown of money also. But, most of all, it means the end of socialism. The socialist states of the world are all parasites. As parasites, they have lived off their people first, and then off the United States. Now, as repressed inflation begins to work to gut the American social order, the socialisms of the world will collapse with this breakdown of American free enterprise. When the host body dies, the parasite also dies. The desperate attempt of socialism to survive by sacrificing its people fails to work; without outside help, socialism dies. A socialist world cannot exist.

Thoughtful men will naturally seek to protect themselves by investing in land, gold, silver, and other historic hedges against inflation, but the counter-hedges of socialism against self-protection are greater than ever before. And, while survival is important, it is not enough. Socialism is finished: it is destroying itself, and although the worst lies ahead, the certainty of socialism’s collapse is nonetheless inescapable, and it must be a basic premise of all thinking concerning the future. The central concern even now must be reconstruction, the creation of new institutions dedicated to liberty, education to that end, and the assurance that the fresh air of liberty is ahead, past the days of chaos. The wise, therefore, will recognize that the breakdown of money, socialist money, is overtaking us, and that there is no security in counterfeit currency. Before they sit weeping, like the Chinese of Shanghai, surrounded with their worthless money, they had better dedicate themselves and their

wealth to the cause of liberty before it is too late. As Sennholz has pointed out, our managed money today is the poorest form of investment for the future. In the long run, an investment in liberty offers better returns.

The above was written two and a half years ago and filed away. Today, there is no reason to change a word of it.

The news accentuates our crisis. For some years now, people have profited by inflation. They are now geared to what Gary North calls “the economics of addiction.”

A news report of Saturday, August 24, 1968, is headed “Brink of Credit Disaster” (Oakland, CA, *Tribune*, p. 1) and states that “Over one-third of all American families are on the brink of serious financial trouble” because of heavy indebtedness. And most other Americans are also very much in debt and cannot take a real crisis. The reason is that “a consumption ethic has replaced the work ethic.”

The demand by all these people in debt will be for more easy money, more paper, in order to pay off good debts with bad money. The people have a vested interest in more inflation; their prosperity depends on it. The federal government also has a vested interest in more inflation; its power depends on it.

When *over* one-third of all American families face financial disaster or very serious trouble, according to the American Association of Credit Counselors, can anyone imagine an administration doing anything but inflating? Virtually all the politicians of these days seem primarily interested in power, not the future, and the road to political power is now inflation. After them, the flood.

The foundations are being destroyed. It is high time to rebuild, to rebuild on a solidly Christian foundation. ■

We're Being Watched

Mark R. Rushdoony



How do you view the progress of the Kingdom of God? I do not mean its eventual progress, or its eternal victory, but right now, in this very day. Many people feel it is an expression of spiritual discernment to be discouraged, believing that it represents a sensitivity to the horrors of the sin we see.

I believe that attitude is not only a false spiritual sensitivity, it can itself be a sinful assumption that Christ is not fully in charge of His Kingdom.

We would do well to remember the prophecies to Zechariah, who wrote just over five centuries before the Incarnation of Jesus Christ. He belonged to a small detachment of Jews who had, after the Babylonian Captivity, returned to Jerusalem, where they camped around the rubble of its complete destruction in their grandparents' day. The Persian king had allowed the return of a small remnant with a Davidic king, Zerubbabel, under his authority. Joshua was there as a high priest with no temple.

The situation was very discouraging. The mass of rubble was itself impenetrable. Only the beginnings of a temple inferior to that of Solomon's were visible. The old Jerusalem was forever gone, its glory days past. Evil seemed triumphant, and the future seemed to offer no real hope of any significant progress in the rebuilding of the city, much less its prominence as a seat of power. We can hardly blame them for walking by sight, because nothing visible to the human eye or discernable to human reason offered any cause for optimism.

Jesus Christ is still the power of time and history. As He stood in the bottom watching Zechariah, He stands with us, watching. We only reveal our ignorance of who He is and what He has promised when we decry the state of things. If we believe in Him, our duty is "Go ye therefore ..." Faith is an assumption, and we are called to assume that Jesus Christ is Lord, that He is with us, and that all is well with His providential plan.

In their understandable despondency, Zechariah received a vision. The vision was of a man on a horse standing among myrtle trees in bottom land (1:8). "The man" was also identified as "the angel of the Lord," an expression used to refer to Jesus Christ in Genesis 16:7 and 22:11. Christ Himself was in the trees. He had horses, which were then only used as engines of warfare, but all were standing quietly in the trees. No attack, and no quick victory, was forthcoming. Zechariah could, however, see that God Himself was watching.

The vision included promises that God's purposes would be fulfilled. The temple would be built; a line stretched on Jerusalem, indicating a wall would be built to defend it (Zech. 1:16); it would prosper once again; and it would be used as a means of great comfort, a reference, certainly, to the work of Jesus Christ (v. 17). In fact, there was no

quick resolution. God did not charge out of the trees, but Jerusalem, its temple, and its wall were rebuilt. Jerusalem, then, did become a blessing, though by the route of a crucifixion.

Jesus Christ was present and watching Zerubbabel, Joshua, and Zechariah in the most discouraging of times, just as He is observing His church today. He assures us of this in Matthew 28:18–20:

18) **And Jesus came and spake unto them, saying, all power is given unto me in heaven and in earth.**

19) **Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost:**

20) **Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world. Amen.**

So much is in these words, they are rightly called the Great Commission, but to help bring Zechariah's vision of the Lord into better view, let us note just a few.

First, Jesus Christ has been given all power in both heaven and earth; His is not a mere spiritual authority, but one that is sovereign over time and eternity. His power and lordship control history as well as heaven. *Second*, our commission to teach and baptize receives its authority directly from the power and authority of Jesus Christ; it is not dependent on how our senses and reason assess the current scene. *Third*, we are to teach obedience in "all things" as the will of Jesus Christ; the "simple gospel"

is a reduction of our message to the world, not its refinement. Then, *fourth*, we are to remain aware that Christ is always with us and will be until the end of history. This later point was exactly the purpose of Zechariah's vision, to remind the prophet and us that God is present and watching.

In Christ's own words we are told what Zechariah saw is still true. What we must never forget is that this presence is not of a mere spiritual solace in the midst of triumphant evil. Paul told the Corinthian Christians that Jesus Christ "must reign, till he hath put all enemies under his feet" (1 Cor. 15:25). Christ will not always be an observer, as He was in Zechariah's vision, for Paul also said the end of history would come only "when he shall have delivered up the kingdom to God, even the Father; when he shall have put down all rule and all authority and power" (v. 24). Christ must put down all authority and power that is not submissive to His own. If we fail to *acknowledge* that Jesus Christ is present, watching, we refuse His own promise. If we fail to *act* in terms of His promise that He is with us and is the power of time and eternity, we fail in our commission.

Later, in another vision (chapter 6), Zechariah saw the same horses he had seen standing in the trees with Christ. This time they were harnessed to chariots, which were weapons of offensive war. These chariots were sent throughout the earth. Zechariah no doubt anticipated dramatic judgment, particularly the chariot that went to the north, toward Mesopotamia, the land that still held many of God's people captive.

Instead of judgment, the scene observed only "quieted" God's Spirit. Zechariah was likely disappointed. Instead of witnessing judgment, Zechariah was told to make crowns and put them on the head of the high priest

Joshua, who was said to represent "The Branch," a messianic name for the Messiah, who would be both a high priest like Joshua and a Davidic king.

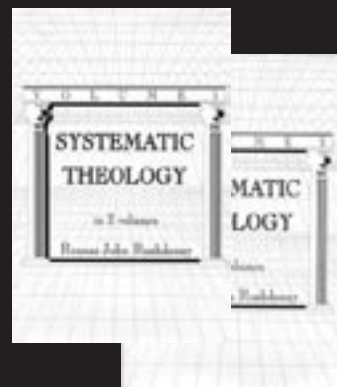
When we are tempted to wonder, "Why does not God do something?" we must remember what He *has done*, is doing, and *will do*. Jesus Christ *has* become our Mediator, the promised Branch, who has built the permanent temple, His covenant people, the church. Jesus Christ has promised us that He *is* now among us, just as Zechariah saw Him viewing the trials of the people of his day, and Jesus Christ will reign until He puts His enemies under His authority and hands the Kingdom to the Father.

Yet another word to Zechariah (4:6) taught him that, "Not by might, nor by power, but by my spirit, saith the LORD of hosts." The might of Babylon had been overthrown, as would be the might of Persia, Alexander and his successors, and Rome. Even the might of the apostate Davidic kings was overthrown (Ezek. 21:27). Today the might of ecclesiocracies, denominations, and apostate ecumenical organizations may all soon be cast down, as might the power of presidents, legislatures, and international political and economic power brokers.

The power of history is the power of God's Spirit, and this is with us "until the end of the world. Amen."

Jesus Christ is still the power of time and history. As He stood in the bottom watching Zechariah, He stands with us, watching. We only reveal our ignorance of who He is and what He has promised when we decry the state of things. If we believe in Him, our duty is "Go ye therefore ..." Faith is an assumption, and we are called to assume that Jesus Christ is Lord, that He is with us, and that all is well with His providential plan. ■

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Wisdom the Principal Thing

Christopher J. Ortiz



Take a glance around the room where you're sitting. What do you see? If you're in your home, you see what you're accustomed to seeing. If you're somewhere else, you see whatever the owner of that space has filled the room with. Do you see anything else? Look hard. Anything? Don't be afraid to say "no"—this is not a trick question. However, if you look with Biblical eyes, you will see something much greater—you will see the incalculable abundance God has hidden in this world. If you allow the Bible to change your view of creation, you will realize how you may be living far below your God-given potential; and you will discover one of Christianity's most paralyzing defects.

The Children of This World Are Wiser

The Scripture declares, "[T]he children of this world are in their generation wiser than the children of light" (Luke 16:8). The Greek term for wiser used here is *phronimos*, and it means "prudent, sensible, and practically wise."¹ It's the same word used in Matthew 7:24 when our Lord considers a man wise "which built his house upon a rock." It's this *practical* wisdom that is often lacking among the "children of light," and it's due largely to the fact that we don't accept the created order in the same way as the "children of this world." Whereas the non-Christian will build his house upon a rock because it will simply better resist a storm, the Christian will build his house upon the sand and then pray for God to stop the wind.

I'm going to say something radical—something you wouldn't expect a Christian writer to say. I'm going to suggest an obvious yet controversial reason why the children of this world are often wiser in their generation than the children of light. They are wiser because they are nonbelievers! That's right. The atheist's greatest advantage is that he is an atheist. Don't stop reading yet. Let me explain.

By referring to the nonbelievers as "children of this world," our Lord is revealing the source of their lives. They are "of this world," and therefore all their expectation and effort is directed toward the world that is given to them. Nonbelievers don't take God into account, so they approach all of life's problems from an atheistic perspective; and how do nonbelievers get out of financial difficulty when they don't have God to deliver them? How do nonbelievers maintain a healthy lifestyle when they don't have faith? It's simple. Since they are children of this world, they look to the principles found in the world to remedy their personal problems or obtain their desired goals. God is never considered, and this works to their advantage.

However, because Christians do take God into account, through ineffective teaching or doctrines, they often fall into the trap of mysticism. By this I mean that they expect their lives to develop by a series of miraculous provisions. Ancient Israel experienced her first real culture shock when she crossed the Jordan River into Canaan and the manna dried up, the pillar of fire dissipated, and water no longer flowed from a rock. Miraculous provisions would

now give way to the rigorous work of dominion.

Israel would need a serious renovation of her thinking to prosper in the Promised Land. She was accustomed to bread falling from the skies, but she was about to enter "a land whose stones are iron, and out of whose hills thou mayest dig brass" (Deut. 8:9). In other words, the riches of Canaan were hidden deep in the mountains, and a passive miracle mentality would not unearth a single ounce of brass. They would need to prepare themselves for work.

The Unjust, but Wise, Steward

This parable of the unjust steward in Luke 16 deals with eternal implications, but the simple point that the ungodly are often more adept at utilizing their God-given wisdom than the righteous is a correct one. In other words, since the unbeliever does not take God into account, he will seek to exhaust the wisdom found in this world in order to prosper and alleviate difficulties.

For example, non-Christians write some of the best-selling books on finances, relationships, leadership, and self-improvement. Only in the last couple of decades have we seen capable Christian titles on any of these seemingly "unspiritual" subjects. Often, the Christian versions are just that—Christian versions! They're only baptized copies of what the non-Christians have already produced.

Because non-Christians approach problems without God in mind, they are left only with what the world and their own minds provide. They can't pray because they don't believe there is a God to hear them. They don't consult

a pastor because a pastor is an expert in a faith they don't share. So, they think. They labor. They work tirelessly to uncover principles and technologies found in the world around them. In doing so, they actually go much further than the average Christian because the Christian often stops short of wisdom's best gifts by kicking the problem up for God to sort out.

The "children of this world" are wiser in their generation because they embrace the world as it's given to them. They understand cause and effect. They know what motivates other people. They become shrewd in dealing with others and skillful in exploiting God's bountiful creation. The unjust steward of Luke 16 wisely reduced the outstanding payments of all his master's debtors. He reasoned, "[W]hen I am put out of the stewardship, they may receive me into their houses" (v. 4). Although the Scripture doesn't say, we can assume his plan worked.

It was a simple strategy that comprehended the power of money and perception. The debtors would obviously take advantage of the offer to pay off their obligations at a reduced rate of 50 percent or greater. And since people buy from *people*, not companies, the debtors would credit the benevolence to the unjust steward, not the master. The unjust steward would gain a town full of friends now *indebted* to him for relieving their debts!

God Hides Wisdom in the World

Wisdom is the key to successful living. There is no lasting success without it. In fact, many people have described wisdom as "skillful living," and you can find such wisdom in virtually every area of study. When people seek for information on improving their lives, they are typically seeking wisdom. But wisdom is not something we can see. Wisdom is invisible. In simplest terms, *wisdom is*

Whereas the non-Christian will build his house upon a rock because it will simply better resist a storm, the Christian will build his house upon the sand and then pray for God to stop the wind.

the mind or thinking of God hidden for man to discover.

Proverbs is rightly described as the Bible's "Book of Wisdom." When compared to the Psalms, Proverbs stands as a very practical and illuminating series of brief maxims (wise sayings), whereas the Psalms are extended portions of songs, stories, and prophecies. The average reader can mistakenly view the Psalms as "spiritual," while deeming Proverbs as a "hands-on" book. Yet according to Proverbs, wisdom is the *voice of the Spirit*:

Wisdom crieth without; she uttereth her voice in the streets: She crieth in the chief place of concourse, in the openings of the gates: in the city she uttereth her words, saying, How long, ye simple ones, will ye love simplicity? And the scorners delight in their scorning, and fools hate knowledge? Turn you at my reproof: behold, I will pour out my spirit unto you, I will make known my words unto you. (Prov. 1:20–23)

Although the language used here is descriptive, the obvious implication is that not many people actually "hear" wisdom's voice. We know, therefore, that the so-called "uttering of her voice" is not literal. Wisdom is silent to the physical ear. This is why the Bible says, "He that hath ears to hear, let him hear"

(Matt. 11:15). Wisdom's frequency is at a spiritual level, and it requires seeking minds and hearts to hear it:

Yea, if thou criest after knowledge, and liftest up thy voice for understanding; If thou seekest her as silver, and searchest for her as for hid treasures; Then shalt thou understand the fear of the LORD, and find the knowledge of God. (Prov. 2:3–5)

Wisdom is a "hidden treasure," and humanity is known for going to extremes to find hidden treasures. Imagine if you knew that fifty feet underneath your house was a vast amount of gold worth millions of dollars. Would you go to work the next day? Would you put off digging it up until you had some free time? Or would you tear down your house to dig? I think so.

This is the mentality God wants us to have regarding wisdom. It's also the mentality that non-Christians often have for wisdom. Although they don't recognize that the wisdom is coming from God, they do recognize that it's available, and they exhaust themselves in "digging it up" so that they might use it for their own ends.

The Lord Giveth Wisdom

The Bible has a unique way of conveying the truth to our minds and hearts. One of the most common errors we make in our interpretation of Scripture is not recognizing the unique manner in which the Biblical writers used language. I already noted the way Solomon described wisdom, like a person crying out in the marketplace. This is not to be taken literally, although what it's describing is very literal. Wisdom, in a very real sense, is crying out to us simple ones to forsake our simplicity and pursue after her. Whenever you find yourself on the other end of a bad decision, there you have wisdom "laugh-

ing at your calamity” (Prov. 1:26). Not literally, but kinda!

The point is that wisdom is all around us. It permeates the world because all of reality is a reflection of the mind and thinking of the God who created the world. Many theologians have rightfully said that as Christians we must “think God’s thoughts after Him.” As Christians, we must do so intentionally. This is what separates us from the children of this world.

We also don’t literally “dig” up wisdom from the ground. But our diligent pursuit of knowledge and understanding, our laboring in thought and contemplation, are very much like searching for a hidden treasure. The visual description the Bible provides us is intended to help us better understand what we’re doing. It also helps us to understand what God Himself is doing in response to our seeking. As in all things, God rewards the diligent seeker (cf. Heb. 11:6):

For the LORD giveth wisdom: out of his mouth cometh knowledge and understanding. He layeth up sound wisdom for the righteous: he is a buckler to them that walk uprightly. (Prov. 2:6–7)

God is the giver of wisdom—it comes from His mouth. Again, this is not in a literal sense. *People are often listening for a voice when they should be diligent in learning*; and that’s what Solomon is trying to tell us. By hiding the commandments within us, inclining our ear to wisdom, and applying our heart to understanding (Prov. 2:1–2), we are engaging in the *spiritual* process of gaining wisdom. It’s as we mull over the Scriptures and look for insight that we come to a better understanding of how God wants us to live. It’s as we mull over the writings of others in specific areas that we also glean the insights that they labored for. Socrates once said, “Employ

your time in improving yourself by other men’s writings so that you shall come easily by what others have labored hard for.”

No matter what the source—believer or nonbeliever—all true wisdom comes from God, and the means to obtaining that wisdom is always the same: diligent pursuit. Therefore, non-Christians can easily, and often do, obtain great wisdom in what they do because they are persistent in their labors. The “experts” themselves are building off the discoveries and insights of others while taking their area of study into new directions. If they’re diligent at it, they become “gurus,” and the world beats a path to their door.

The children of light can be wiser in their generation than the children of the world. After all, they are children of “light,” right? Why then are Christians often left in the dark in certain areas? Why aren’t we the ones being sought out for wisdom in finances, economics, medicine, film, science, philosophy, and politics? I’ll tell you why. It’s because we’re too spiritual for our own good. Even more, our idea of being “spiritual” is a far cry from the Biblical concept of spirituality. We’ve identified spirituality with being “other worldly,” and this has led otherwise brilliant people to engage in strange spiritual exercises. Worse yet, the subjective (i.e., “internal”) idea of Christian spirituality so prevalent today has taken Christians “out of the game” and left the world for the wicked to possess.

Wisdom: God’s Technology

Q: What is creation?

A: Creation is God’s making everything out of nothing by His powerful word in six days—and all very good.²

Since I am a six-day creationist—believing God created the world in six

days some six thousand years ago—I embrace the truth contained in the catechism’s brief answer. However, I italicized above the only portion I believe needs more explanation. The passage used to support the catechism’s definition of creation is found in the book of Hebrews:

Through faith we understand that the worlds were framed by the word of God, so that things which are seen were not made of things which do appear. (Heb. 11:3)

When the writer of Hebrews says that what we see is “not made of things which do appear,” the Puritans described this as “out of nothing.” This is true at face value, but our idea of “nothing” is that nothing means nothing, i.e., *no thing!* But is that true? Did God make everything out of nothing? Or did God use something, even if that “something” is found within Himself? I realize this is a bit abstract, but stay with me.

If we read this same passage in another Bible translation, we get a better idea of what the writer is attempting to convey. For example, the New International Version reads:

By faith we understand that the universe was formed at God’s command, so that what is seen *was not made out of what was visible*.

Whatever is “not visible” is called “invisible,” and something that is invisible does not qualify as “nothing.” In other words, God created *visible* things with *invisible* means. Faith understands that God used His own resources of wisdom, knowledge, and understanding to create a universe that is sensible to man. This is clearly taught in both Old and New Testaments:

The LORD by WISDOM hath founded the earth; by UNDERSTANDING hath he established the heavens. By his KNOWL-

EDGE the depths are broken up, and the clouds drop down the dew. (Prov. 3:19–20, emphasis added)

He hath made the earth by his power, he hath established the world by his WISDOM, and hath stretched out the heavens by his DISCRETION (NIV: understanding). (Jer. 10:12, emphasis added)

God used wisdom, knowledge, and understanding when He created the world. These are *invisible* qualities, but they are not *nothing*. They are very real, and very present, in our world. In fact, they are present for us to discover and use to “recreate” our world in God’s image. I’m getting ahead of myself here, but the fundamental point is that wisdom was a central part of the creative process. In another passage, Solomon is even more descriptive of wisdom’s role in the foundation of the universe:

The LORD possessed me in the beginning of his way, before his works of old. I was set up from everlasting, from the beginning, or ever the earth was. When there were no depths, I was brought forth; when there were no fountains abounding with water. Before the mountains were settled, before the hills was I brought forth: While as yet he had not made the earth, nor the fields, nor the highest part of the dust of the world. When he prepared the heavens, I was there: when he set a compass upon the face of the depth: When he established the clouds above: when he strengthened the fountains of the deep: When he gave to the sea his decree, that the waters should not pass his commandment: when he appointed the foundations of the earth: Then I was by him, as one brought up with him: and I was daily his delight, rejoicing

always before him; Rejoicing in the habitable part of his earth; and my delights were with the sons of men. (Prov. 8:22–31)

These passages are often seen as a description of the preexistence of Christ. This is certainly true since He Himself is the living Word of God. He is the *logos*—the expression of God’s thought.³ This brings us to the New Testament’s endorsement of God creating all things by means of His invisible Word:

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. The same was in the beginning with God. All things were made by him; and without him was not any thing made that was made. (John 1:1–3)

What I want you to understand is that since God used wisdom, knowledge, and understanding to create the world, then the world itself is filled with wisdom, knowledge, and understanding. It’s that wisdom that we are to seek. In that sense, the world is drenched with God’s wisdom, knowledge, and understanding, and this is the source for all that man has ever created. Even in the realm of the exclusively spiritual, this same triad is described as the primary resource to understanding God’s will:

For this cause we also, since the day we heard it, do not cease to pray for you, and to desire that ye might be filled with the KNOWLEDGE of his will in all WISDOM and spiritual UNDERSTANDING. (Col. 1:9, emphasis added)

The unbeliever has a word for this hidden wisdom: *technology*. This is the universal term that describes all the principles that man extracts from the world. Technology is not a cell phone, an airplane, or a computer. Technology creates cell phones, airplanes, and computers. Nobody discovered a cell phone

under a rock. It is a creation comprised of a myriad of technologies that are themselves extracted from God’s world. What the world calls technology, the Bible calls wisdom. And it is proficiency in wisdom, knowledge, and understanding that enhances your productivity in God’s Kingdom:

See, I have called by name Bezaleel the son of Uri, the son of Hur, of the tribe of Judah: And I have filled him with the spirit of God, in WISDOM, and in UNDERSTANDING, and in KNOWLEDGE, and in all manner of workmanship, to devise cunning works, to work in gold, and in silver, and in brass, and in cutting of stones, to set them, and in carving of timber, to work all manner of workmanship. (Exod. 31:2–5)

Wisdom is God’s technology, and its power potential for creation and dominion is the reason for God’s insistence that we seek for it as a hidden treasure. This is what diligent unbelievers do anyway. Since they do not take God into account, they exhaust the world of its wisdom. In this sense, they are often wiser than their Christian counterparts. In this sense, their atheism is their advantage.

Am I suggesting we become atheists? God forbid. I’m simply stating that our approach to creation and what it offers must exceed that of the unbeliever as we work harder and wiser than our hell-bound counterparts.

Missing the Headline

The most powerful portion of an advertisement is the headline. This is where copywriters direct most of their creative energy because it’s supposed to contain the single most important benefit to the reader. Because of my background in advertising, marketing, and communications, I often read certain

portions of the Bible from that perspective. One example is in Genesis 2:

And the LORD God commanded the man, saying, of every tree of the garden thou mayest freely eat: But of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it: for in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die. (Gen. 2:16–17)

God told man that he could *freely* eat of every tree of the garden, and in advertising, there is no more powerful word than “free.” This great offer to man served as a headline—it informed man of the single greatest benefit to serving God—but man forsook it in order to reach for the warning label: *don’t touch the tree of the knowledge of good and evil*. This is a fitting metaphor for modern church history. While fundamentalism wrestles with the knowledge of good and evil, the wicked avail themselves of the abundance of wisdom hidden in the other trees.

The fact that God called His man to indulge in the other trees made the Creation Mandate essentially an *entrepreneurial* calling. God did not give man instructions as to what to do or make with what he would find in those trees, God only made them available. Man would have to occupy himself with the raw stuff of creation to develop the world’s vast potential. For this, man needed technology—or as we should say, man needed wisdom.

Wisdom is the principal thing; therefore get wisdom: and with all thy getting get understanding. (Prov. 4:7)

The purpose of wisdom—God’s technology—is that it serves as man’s primary means to dominion. No matter what field of expertise, man would have access to the limitless wisdom of God hidden in the trees. However, this wis-

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dom would not simply fall into his lap. He would have to labor for it. He would need to experiment with it. But despite his efforts, this wisdom would still be the result of God’s revelation:

Give ye ear, and hear my voice; hearken, and hear my speech. Doth the plowman plow all day to sow? doth he open and break the clods of his ground? When he hath made plain the face thereof, doth he not cast abroad the fitches, and scatter the cummin, and cast in the principal wheat and the appointed barley and the rie in their place? For his God doth instruct him to discretion, and doth teach him. For the fitches are not threshed with a threshing instrument, neither is a cart wheel turned about upon the cummin; but the fitches are beaten out with a staff, and the cummin with a rod. Bread corn is bruised; because he will not ever be threshing it, nor break it with the wheel of his cart, nor bruise it with his horsemen. This also cometh forth from the LORD of hosts, which is wonderful in counsel, and excellent in working. (Isa. 28:23–29)

God Himself created all things with wisdom, knowledge, and understanding (Prov. 3:19–20). Therefore, all of creation is filled with that very same wisdom, knowledge, and understanding, i.e., God filled the world with His own technology. He then placed man in the Garden to cultivate it for His glory. This left man with an entrepreneurial calling sidetracked by the entrance of sin and the reaching for the wrong tree. But, like so many other things, dominion is an inescapable concept, and the wicked soon took to the remaining trees abdicated by the righteous.

However, history is far from over, and there is so much more “hidden in the trees” for us to discover and develop, if we make wisdom the principal thing.

It’s wisdom that’s hidden in the room where you’re sitting. That’s what you’re supposed to “see.” God has technology readily available for you whether you’re writing a story or developing a product or service. Our only requirement is to respond to this great entrepreneurial calling by investing ourselves in our chosen fields of pursuit and exhausting all they contain. Certainly, we shall pray and recognize that God is the source for both the wisdom we extract as well as the strength and power by which we extract it. What’s important is that we begin immediately to see the world more Biblically and encourage our actions to follow suit. Get wisdom! ■

1. John R. Kohlenberger III, ed., *The Expanded Vine’s Expository Dictionary of New Testament Words* (Minneapolis, MN: Bethany House Publishers, 1984), 1234.
2. Douglas Kelly and Philip Rollinson, *The Westminster Shorter Catechism in Modern English* (Phillipsburg, NJ: Presbyterian and Reformed Publishing), 6.
3. *Vine’s*, 1241.

A Walk Down Old Paths

Rebecca Morecraft



As I read church history and meet Christians who sacrificed themselves and all they possessed for the honor and glory of

Christ and the preservation of Biblical truth, I am always moved to tears. Compared to those who refused to compromise the principles of God's Word—men and women like Athanasius, Huss, and the covenanters of Scotland—I feel I have done nothing for Christ and His Kingdom. Their stories stir my soul and fuel my resolve to live more faithfully.

Even though I grew up as a member of a Presbyterian church and learned much Biblical truth, I discovered most of these stories as an adult. Would my life as a Christian have been more consistently lived had I heard these as an impressionable child? I believe so. In the modern world, educating and inspiring our children with true stories from the past is rarer than when I was a child fifty years ago. Do our children even know how to distinguish true stories from fantasy? Which do they prefer? Are F/X and cartoon characters stealing the hearts and minds of the next generation of children who should be involved in Christian warfare against the man-centered "isms" of this evil world? Have we lost our children to Hollywood?

Sadly, modern-day "church-ianity" attempts to entertain our children into a shallow belief in a "god" who bears no resemblance to the God of Holy Scriptures, who thunders from heaven against all unrighteousness and rewards

faithfulness down through thousands of generations. I propose that we put the blame where it belongs: not on creative cartoonists and the entertainment industry, but on ourselves. We have often adopted the philosophy of modern-day humanistic education and its child-centered rather than God-centered approach. If, however, Christ and His glory are at the center of our teaching methodologies and if every subject is brought into focus from His vantage point using Scripture as our "spectacles" and grid, our children will learn that God, not man, is at the center of history. They will properly see events past, present, and future as "His-story."

How irrelevant church history may seem to some! Why teach our children about the Reformers and martyrs? In America's pluralistic, syncretistic society, would it not be easier for our children to learn simply to coexist with differing religious views?

Distinctive Christian beliefs are dangerous! Remember Columbine High School, where a young girl was shot at point-blank range for affirming her belief in God? Who can stomach the horrors of 9-11, when hundreds of unsuspecting lives were taken in an act of extreme violence? Perhaps it would be safer to teach our children to "go along so as to get along" in this violent world, to blend in, not speak out. According to a popular candidate for president, this is, after all, no longer a "Christian nation," nor should we want it to be one, he asserted, citing passages in the Old Testament where

God's law was spelled out as well as the Sermon on the Mount.¹ How frightening! How can this tide be stemmed?

Amazingly, the prevalent attitude of many, if not most, American Christians is just the same as this cult member who may be our next president! "Tolerance" requires that your religious preferences should be held privately and have nothing to do with politics, jurisprudence, or life's choices. The religion held in highest regard in our society is the religion of "Tolerance." In fact, if you are foolish enough to speak out against this "religion," your influence on others, your reputation as an intelligent person, and your general popularity will be greatly disabled or destroyed.

Apparently no one is listening anyway, so why speak out? John Calvin was asked a similar question once. He replied, "I would be less than a dog if I did not bark when my Master was under attack!" Such was the belief of the great men and women of antiquity who should inform and inspire our lives as Christians today. A study of the history of the church through the ages will reveal that God has continued to grow His church, not only despite persecution, but often as a direct result of it. The heresies that divided the church often acted to unify the *next* generation in a firmer understanding of the truth! The almost contradictory truth still abides: *The blood of the martyrs is the seed of the church.* God will never go back on His promises to His people. He will continue to grow His church until the whole earth gives back the song which

first the angels sang over Christ's cradle in Bethlehem: "Glory to God in the highest! Peace on earth to men!"

As we boldly speak the truth as fearlessly as the Reformers and martyrs did, God will use our witness, and our children's faith will be fed.

Dr. R. J. Rushdoony observes in his important book *The Foundations of Social Order*:

The life of a society is its creed; a dying creed faces desertion or subversion readily. Every creed, however healthy, is also under continual attack; the culture which neglects to defend and further its creedal base is exposing its heart to the enemy's knife. 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.²

Dr. Joe Morecraft, III, heartily agrees with Dr. Rushdoony and continues his thought concerning the importance of maintaining a Biblical creed. Dr. Morecraft references one aspect of Biblical Christianity's foremost tenets, among many others: that of the doctrine of the Trinity as a target for modern-day heresy, even as it was in the past:

Anti-Christian philosophies and theologies challenge our doctrine of the Trinity constantly, offering in its place a god created in the image of man. If we do not teach our children the full doctrine of the Trinity from the Bible and why we believe that the Creator of the universe is one God in three equal persons simultaneously, and [if we do not teach them] how to answer those who oppose that truth, when our children go to college and are faced with anti-trinitarian, intellectual critics, they will either be swept off their feet and into the abyss of skepticism and agnosticism, or they will be confused and compromised in their understanding of the Christian faith and its application to life.³

As we study history, we find the followers of Jehovah and His only-begotten Son, our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ, have struggled against "principalities and powers," pagan potentates, and a populace opposed to the rule of King Jesus from the time of the ancient pagans of Egypt, Assyria, Babylon, Persia, Greece, and Rome until present-day paganism in its modern garb. Even within the walls of our churches humanism has crept in and polluted sound doctrine and practice. Dr. Rushdoony comments on the necessity of many ecumenical church councils to preserve the purity of Biblical doctrine. He says that the language of these councils was *not* "the language of conciliation. The foundation of [their ecumenism] was not smoothing out differences and building bridges to the opposition but, on the basis of the uncompromising faith, to drive out the enemy and to allow him no entrance save conversion. The enemies were plainly termed 'wolves'; they had to become lambs before they could be approached peaceably."⁴

What an odious task this would seem to the modern Christian! The temptation is to throw up our hands and either compromise the Scriptures for more popular and seeker-friendly methodologies and belief systems, or to live lives of quiet desperation and defeat. But neither of these options is valid for a Christian convinced of the belief from God's Word that our Sovereign God reigns and uses His persevering people to do all His holy will! If we give our children over to the gods of humanism and compromised Christianity, we become as evil as those who sacrificed their offspring to Moloch! A noble train of martyrs stands before us, crying out, "For these principles I gave my life, and you would so easily

give up the precious truths for which I died?" Unbelievably tragic!

God help our resolve never to let the blood of the martyrs have been shed in vain! Let us hold high the standard handed us by those faithful men and women of the past who loved not their lives more than their Lord. May we honor our fathers and mothers of the faith, retelling their stories and teaching the truths they suffered and died to preserve. May we not be found faithless on that great judgment day, as we stand before our Lord, confessing self-centered, compromised, lazy lives, which we wasted, heedless of the generations yet to be born, those who could have revered the faith of their fathers had their fathers been faithful to live by its precepts and pass them on! "He lit a candle of faith in their hearts...Lord, make it shine through the coming generations Like a city that's set on a hill."⁵

We must redeem the time for the days are evil! We must not only love the great doctrines of the faith, we must pass on these truths and the stories of those who gave everything to preserve our *particular* Reformed faith for their future generations, to the glory of our great God. Embrace these stories yourselves and then tell them to your children and grandchildren in an engaging way, praying for the power of the Holy Spirit to light a flame of intense love for Christ through your words that will enlighten the darkness of this crooked and perverse generation through their witness and ours. May God grant us an unquenchable faith in the God of Scripture, the God of our fathers, even as the Reformers and the bright company of martyrs before us possessed. ■

Becky Morecraft is thankful to be married to Dr. Joe Morecraft, pastor of Chalcedon

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God Has a Bone to Pick

Martin G. Selbrede



The rapacious piranha fish of South America may have gotten a bum rap from oft-repeated but dubious stories of how

schools of these carnivorous creatures skeletonize a cow in only a few minutes. In a violent boil of flashing teeth and fins, the hapless animal is allegedly consumed so completely that nothing but the bones are left behind. More careful, less sensationalistic research may have exposed these notions as popular myths.

What is not a myth, regrettably, is how the Christian faith and the Bible have been skeletonized. How long did it take for the church to skeletonize the faith? It took more than a few minutes to reduce the faith to a skeleton; it took many decades, but the bones are no less white, no less denuded. The vicious reputation of the literal piranha fish of South America was rehabilitated by careful zoological research. Is there a logical heir to fill the gap left by this now-exonerated fish? The church at large, in light of its orchestrated actions against the sacred things charged to its care, has become a worthy nominee for that dubious honor.

It has been observed that a skeleton retains the shape of the original creature: the bones resist reshaping, bearing witness that something of substance once existed around the bare scaffolding. The shape is recognizable: nobody confuses a human skeleton with a cow's skeleton. We shall adopt for our purposes the human body as a symbol, a metaphor, for the original faith once delivered to the

saints, and examine the ways it has been reduced to a skeleton—a recognizable skeleton, but a skeleton nonetheless.

Sadly, we are so used to seeing skeletons walking about that we don't perceive how ghoulish our religious condition really is. The modern skeleton is identified as the whole human body, and this identification has become a matter of habit to us.

It is as if God had enrolled His people in His great university, with tuition fully paid. When He returns eight years later to see what we've learned so He can determine what degrees to award us, what do we proudly show our Lord? We show Him our really high scores playing *Grand Theft Doctrine*.

Skeletal Forms

To skeletonize the faith is to cut away pieces of it, on various grounds and pretexts, and leave something less than the whole behind. Various forms of dispensationalism involve an implicit skeletonizing of the Bible. Some dispensationalists draw a line at Acts 2, regarding what went before as irrelevant to the Christian era so-called. Others skeletonize a bit further (albeit a bit more consistently) at Acts 13. Were this process to persist in moving the demarcation line forward, we would have to conclude that an atheist is merely a Revelation 22 dispensationalist: everything from Revelation 22 backward simply isn't relevant to our age.

Red Letter Christianity presumes, in the name of purity, to direct us to the words printed in red ink found in our Bibles, to the end that we'd obey and follow Jesus and what He alone

said, setting aside the rest as relatively inconsequential compared to His words. This creates a skeleton in itself, leaving everything printed in black ink in something of a limbo, while this view's proponents preen themselves in the boast that they, unlike other Christians, are specifically focusing on and following what Christ said.

The insurmountable problem faced by Red Letter Christianity is that it violates its own program. There are things printed in red ink that this contingent *still* refuses to hearken to or obey. Jesus commanded the tithing of mint, anise, and cummin (Matt. 23:23) in addition to observing the weightier matters of the law. Our Lord commanded that insofar as the scribes and Pharisees sit in Moses' seat (viz. proclaim God's law from His Word), we are to observe and perform all that they proclaim (Matt. 23:3). Jesus was equally clear that we are to live by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God (Matt. 4:4). The red letters point beyond themselves to an abiding obligation in regard to the black letters.

In short, Red Letter Christianity creates an initial skeleton ("follow the words printed in red ink") and then *re-skeletonizes that skeleton*, creating a skeleton of a skeleton ("but don't follow everything printed in red!"). How voracious we are in tearing meat off the Biblical bones!

Similar amputations, for different reasons, have been animated by pietism and other approaches to Scripture, which rip and tear at the Bible's carcass with results no less enfeebling to Christendom.

Frankenstein Yet Lives

Ultimately, men have realized the fundamental uselessness of a skeletal faith. Once, for example, the law of God is discounted, we rush in to fill God's omission of instructions for living by teaching our human traditions, the precepts of men, instead. We stitch together dead tissue and staple it to the bones of the Bible in the process, creating a misshapen Frankenstein monster, and label the resulting amalgam "Biblical faith." We do this because, down deep, we instinctively reprehend skeletons. Better to make a patchwork faith, half Bible/half humanism, half iron/half clay, than to tolerate the silent witness of the skeleton we've created of the Scriptures.

But such Frankenstein monsters recognize they're in competition with the true faith, the normal, fleshed-out man. The monsters heap withering criticism on the normal man, upon true Biblical faith, labeling it as the monster that nobody should follow. That the enemies of God's law regard following it as "monstrous," using that exact word and others of like effect, wouldn't be difficult to document. Monsters can't abide the normal. Skeletonized Christianity must suppress the actual faith once delivered however it can.

There appears to be no locus of theology where this penchant for stitching dead tissue (humanistic glosses) onto the Bible's skeleton doesn't occur: from ethics, to eschatology, to apologetics, the church landscape is dotted with Frankenstein monsters, all of whom have one thing in common: they all regard the real monster as the skeleton clothed with the flesh that God originally placed upon it.

The enmity to Old Testament law in particular, and the impetus to replace that body of legislation, is something of a cruel joke, insofar as ours is an age that

is hungry to know "the mind of God." You want to know the mind of God, to read His EEG brainwave plots? Read the books of Moses: you'll be staring directly at the Almighty's EEG print-outs, the very transcript of His righteous character in the form of imperatives for us. It gets no more personal than that. The skeleton metaphor, thus, captures the other problem with modern conceits: the flesh is what made the creature a *living one*. But now zombies are mistaken for living men. The mind of God is the object of perpetual search because modern Christians have hacked it off the bones and discarded it.

Erring on Which Side?

Modern Christians are far more worried that they might observe a law that was repealed than they are of breaking a law still in force. "God forbid that I should obey one more commandment than I have to! Far better to obey too few of His laws than too many!" We rely on God's grace to cover such under-observance (which constitutes actual sin), but we regard with horror the allegedly legalistic problem of possibly obeying a law no longer in force (hardly a sin at all).

In short, we err on the side of recklessness. We don't err on the side of caution.

Can it be any surprise that such misshapen thinking marks those who follow the misshapen monsters that lurch around in the world of the church today, each zombie proclaiming its status as the one true way to understand what God intended?

Lessons in Camel Swallowing

Regardless what initials many Christians see stamped onto the spines of their Bibles—KJV, NKJV, NIV, RSV, ESV, etc.—from a functional point of view they all own the exact same Bible in our country: the New American Skeletonized Bible.

Despite agreement on the need to skeletonize the Bible, far too many Christians become agitated about which Bible version we're to use. But *why* do we get so agitated about Bible versions if we don't intend to obey 95 percent of what's written in them anyway? Why do we insist on having the right translation to disobey? How can the translation be remotely important when we're busy stitching dead tissue onto the bones to build new zombies of doctrine and practice anyway, having discarded the original flesh as offal?

But, if God's Words *are* meant to be obeyed, then the translation becomes important, even critical.

Merely having the "right" translation isn't enough, no more than the Jews' having the right "temple" didn't matter. The disciples pointed out all the stones of the temple to Jesus, and He was less than impressed: it's all coming down anyway, marked for destruction. Our modern habit of "pointing out the stones" of our institutions, our supposed ministerial successes, our books, our ministries, our achievements, only compounds our guilt. God isn't impressed.

But to have turned *God's Word* into a stone to point out Christ is the height of arrogance. Christians by and large pay mere collective lip service to the denuded skeleton of God's Word, thinking that sufficient, "pointing out the stones of the buildings" like the disciples did.

God desires obedience, not sacrifice—but obedience to what? A gutted, eviscerated, mummified, papier-maché shell of His Word, or the whole counsel of God? At this stage in church history, we're so far gone that we think more highly of those disobeying the KJV than those obeying the RSV. God sees it otherwise. Our concern for the translation, and our disregard for obedience, testifies to our love for straining out gnats and swallowing camels.

When you strip the flesh off and begin with a skeleton, you essentially end up with a build-it-yourself faith, one subject to the pastors' diverse whims to teach as they see fit. But each Christian leader will be held accountable for how he builds on the foundation that was laid. Christian leaders do *not* have the prerogative to lay new foundations. Skeletonizing the Bible is nothing less than the laying of new foundations to supplant God's own.

Who's Afraid of the Big Bad Skeleton?

We testify concerning His Word, that it is *not* a dead skeleton mounted in a theological museum—a Biblesaurus—but rather that it is living and active, sharper than any two-edged sword. True, too many Christians are dead-set on dulling the blade, primarily *because* His Word has two edges and can cut the wielder as well as the target.

The skeletons of the church, however, continue to show us how much we have wasted away. To paraphrase another theologian: that the Word of God is nowadays presented to you as a skeleton, I blame on those who take pleasure to see it become and remain a skeleton.

It is crucial to recognize that humanism has no fear whatsoever of the skeletonized Bible, or of the various Frankenstein monsters or zombies parading around our land that are quite harmless to it. But humanism has launched a vicious, scathing attack to discredit the return of the *real deal*, the fully-fleshed-out Word of God, with both edges of the sword honed so fine it can cut between bone and marrow and soul and spirit. Humanists fear the applying of *that* Word to *every* sphere, field, discipline, and human endeavor, knowing that if permitted to continue, men everywhere would be rendered completely, thoroughly, and irrevocably

without excuse in any and every area of life and thought.

One way, then, that you can know that the faith and the Scriptures are being skeletonized is this: that the Bible isn't being applied to absolutely everything. To the extent God's Word is penned in, muzzled, contained, restricted, narrowed, dismissed, treated as optional, treated as inconsequential, you are confronting a skeleton and not the whole counsel of God. And you will surely find that something other than the original flesh has been riveted onto whatever bones remain of that skeletonized faith.

What is worse? The nineteenth-century liberal scholars who chipped away at chunks of the Bible, or twenty-first-century Christians who *have* the whole Bible but regard its relevance as skeletonized? Which might please Satan more: to remove pieces of the Biblical text through naturalistic scholarship, or to see people possessing the entire Biblical text and blowing off 95 percent of it as irrelevant?

How hypocritical for us to regard Marcion as a heretic for throwing out wholesale sections of the Bible as he developed his abbreviated canon. How can we condemn Marcion if we've thrown out (by branding it as irrelevant) far more of the Bible than Marcion ever dared to discount?

Who does this skeletonizing? The lay people? Or church leaders, seminaries (skeletonaries), who persist in playing taxidermy with the Bible? The laity think that skeletonizing the Bible is the path to liberty, but the Frankenstein monster the faith becomes when human traditions and the precepts of men supplant God's Word always enslaves His people. The supposed path to freedom from God leads to slavery to man.

In the previous issue of *Faith for All of Life* I referred to the *Psalms* One

Bait and Switch, whereby Christians are taught that David's reference to the *law of God* needs to be re-nuanced as a reference to the *word of God*. Thus adjusted, the reader is invited to flip forward to the New Testament (the *word of God*) and to disregard the law of God delivered through Moses, cutting off the reader from the actual source of blessings that David so carefully identified and directed the reader to. This mental game is another clever way that an enormous chunk of Scripture becomes not only skeletonized, but whereby the bones are gruesomely rearranged with the skull attached to the leg bones in a caricature of God's original revelation to His people.

All parts of theology have been skeletonized. Even postmillennialism itself has been skeletonized, to the extent it adopts the amillennial and premillennial idea of a final apostasy at the end of history. In contrast to this accommodationism, Warfield taught the real deal, and scholars like Boettner and Rushdoony revised their earlier thinking and discarded the skeletonized version of postmillennialism in favor of Warfield's recovery of the unimaginably glorious totality of God's victory through Christ and the Holy Spirit.

Marginal notes in the Bible have been a major engine for the skeletonizing of the faith. The Scofield Bible in particular, and others of like orientation, provides clear directions for how to slice-and-dice the meat off the bone of God's Word. One would think that you're getting something extra when you purchase a Bible with marginal notes. In actual fact, you get something far less than the Bible. In effect, you've been robbed.

Can These Bones Yet Live?

God asked Ezekiel, scanning the valley of dry bones, whether they can yet

Continued on page 32

Robert Lewis Dabney: Building a Sure Foundation

Richard G. Williams, Jr.



As I drive to and from my office each day, I often take a back road that brings me by a home built by the famed Presbyterian divine,

Robert Lewis Dabney. It, like Dabney, was built strong—of stone—and built to last. The house still stands sure and serves as a private residence today.

Dabney learned the trade of stone masonry as a boy working on the family farm, and he constructed this sturdy structure with his own hands. No doubt, as Dabney labored building this home, he recalled those days of his youth where he learned that firm foundations were built of stone. He recalled the instruction and guidance of his earthly father, as well as his heavenly one. Many of the Shenandoah Valley Presbyterians built houses of stone, which reveals as much about their theology as it does about their preference for building materials. The two go hand in hand. These Presbyterians took the long view and were not, as so many American Christians are today, looking for an escape. They believed that they and Christ's Kingdom would prevail and that they would ultimately take dominion. Therefore, they built their lives—down to the dwellings they occupied—accordingly.

Just a mile or two more down the road from this house is the Tinkling Springs Presbyterian Church where Dabney served as pastor from 1847 to 1853. Tinkling Springs is one of the oldest Presbyterian churches west of the Blue Ridge. Within the old stone grave-

yard of the church rest the dust of so many of the stout Scots-Irish pioneers to whom Dabney ministered, including the grandparents of the legendary Confederate cavalry general, Jeb Stuart.

Best known here in the Shenandoah Valley as Stonewall Jackson's chief of staff during Jackson's legendary Valley Campaign, Major Dabney was also Jackson's original biographer and is, of course, still renowned for his theological works and prolific writing.¹

Yet many students of history have misunderstood Dabney. He is most often depicted by moderns as little more than a defender of the Lost Cause and the "old regime." While Dabney did produce volumes of postbellum writings that defended the old South's agrarianism, social conservatism, and slavery, there is much more to consider of this deep thinker and theologian.

As noted by *Christian History and Biography*:

Robert Lewis Dabney (1829 [sic]–1898) was one of the greatest Protestant theologians of the 19th century. A Southern Presbyterian, he was a teacher, statesman, writer, and social critic, as well as theologian, and taught at Union Seminary in Richmond, Virginia. In the American Civil War he once served as Chief of Staff to the Confederate general "Stonewall" Jackson. Dabney's contributions have been dampened partially by his vigorous defense of the pre-Civil War South's institution of slavery; however, his work, especially his *Systematic Theology*, has been highly regarded by scholars from Benjamin Warfield to Karl Barth.²

Born on March 5, 1820, to pious parents, Dabney grew up on the family farm and mill on the South Anna River in Louisa County, Virginia. Dabney's parents, particularly his father, wielded much influence over their young son. In a letter to his own son, Dr. Charles W. Dabney, Robert Dabney wrote these words revealing just how much influence his own father had upon his life:

When I recall what the position of Christian meant, as occupied, for instance, by my parents, it seems to me as if that type of Christianity must have been in another sphere, and before the fall of man almost! With what careful seriousness, self-examination and prayer did they take their religious vows! How regular, deliberate and solemn were family prayers! How did the scriptural instruction of us children take the precedence of all the day, and of all other duties, lessons and amusements. How sacredly was the Sabbath improved! My father went about making the best of the sacred day just as seriously and systematically as any wise business man planning to put in the best work possible on some favorable day in the middle of harvest. He evidently acted on this clear, rational and conscientious conviction, "I have a great and urgent work to do for my own soul and others'; the one day in seven which a kind Heavenly Father has endeavored to secure for me, for this task, is none too much, if improved to the best. So I must make the most of it." I will remember his deliberate and careful preparation of himself in advance of communion days. It began about Friday, by reducing his concern with farm

matters to a minimum; spending the most of the two week-days in a private room, shut up with his Bible, Flavel's *Sacramental Meditations*, and such like books. One may know well how much the Lord's Supper meant to him, and what impulse and nourishment it was to his soul.³

How very foreign this sacrifice and devotion to God would appear to the vast majority of modern professing Christians today. Many would no doubt find such commitment a curious, if not unnecessary thing—even as they rush through their evening meal, skipping family devotions so as not to miss the latest episode of *American Idol*.

Robert was only thirteen when his father passed away, leaving a great void in the young man's life. But the father had left his son well prepared to assume the leadership role of the household. Robert interrupted his own education in order to keep the family's honor intact and pay off debts. Three years later, in June of 1836, Dabney enrolled at Hampden-Sydney College.⁴ Dabney was only able to stay until September of 1837 due to a lack of money. Nevertheless, Dabney's time there proved to be providentially beneficial. Though his parents had laid a sure foundation for their son's Christianity, Dabney had not yet come to true faith in Christ. But during a "religious revival" that swept through the campus the same month that Dabney left, he made a public confession of faith in Christ and "carried home at the close of his collegiate work the affection of his classmates and also a deep religious impression."⁵

Upon his return home he was received as a member of the Providence Presbyterian Church in Louisa County. While Dabney is remembered as an intellectual and a man of letters, it is important to note that he was also accustomed to strenuous manual labor and believed that the dual values of piety

and industry, taught him by his father, were essential to the dominion mandate:

Young Dabney now went to work on the plantation, for his widowed mother needed help. Some negro slaves belonged to the estate left by his father, but these were unable to carry all the burdens connected with farming operations. Moreover, the old mill that made flour and meal for the people of the community, forming a part of his mother's property, must be rebuilt. The tall, slender lad, not yet eighteen years of age, went into the rock quarry and with his own hands helped to give shape to the stones that were needed for the walls of the mill ... Then the fields called him again to the plow. Through the long summer days of 1838 and 1839 he was in the cornfields and wheatfields, toiling steadily with his own hands.⁶

Dabney continued to work on the family farm and supplemented his income with teaching in the community. By the autumn of 1839 he was once again ready to pursue his education and enrolled at the University of Virginia. Dabney often found himself looking with disdain at Virginia's privileged sons at the university, many of whom thought the physical labor that Dabney cherished was beneath them. Despite these conflicts and his abhorrence of some of the "decadence" he witnessed while in Charlottesville, Dabney earned a Master of Arts from Mr. Jefferson's University in 1842.

In 1844 Dabney returned to Hampden-Sydney and the school's Union Theological Seminary where he would complete his studies in May of 1846.⁷ A year later, he was pastoring at Tinkling Springs but would, once again, return to Hampden-Sydney to complete his theological studies and where he would also teach in the seminary and pastor in the campus church. It was here and during this time that Dabney's pen

became increasingly busy and where he honed his prolific writing abilities. Dabney's reputation grew quickly and, "He was soon to become one of the most efficient expounders of the Calvinistic system of theology that our country has ever known."⁸ So well respected was Dabney that, in 1860, he was offered the chair of church history at Princeton Seminary. He declined, seeing "his place of duty in Virginia."⁹

With war looming, Dabney wrote a widely publicized pamphlet titled "A Pacific Appeal to Christians" in January of 1861, which argued for preserving a state of peace. Though he sought peace, he unhesitatingly served the Confederate Army in whatever role his country needed him and by the summer was a chaplain with the 18th Virginia regiment. Stonewall Jackson often attended some of the services conducted by Chaplain Dabney, and the two soon became friends. This friendship led to Dabney's service on Jackson's staff.

Anyone familiar with Dabney knows of his fervent belief in the doctrine of providence and that it was a frequent topic of his sermons. This coupled with Dabney's service in the Confederacy provided for an illustration of Dabney's practical belief in "a special providence" as well as his sense of humor. Major Hugh Nelson was present during a service where Dabney exhorted the soldiers to face death fearlessly as providence had already determined the time and place of their deaths. Some time after that service, Nelson was present at the Battle of Malvern Hill and found himself "under one of the heaviest fires he had ever experienced." Jackson was also in the vicinity, and as the fire became heavy, ordered his staff to dismount and find shelter. Dabney "found a place behind a large and very thick oak gate post, where he sat bolt upright with his back against the post."

About that time, Nelson, whose views on providence did not completely agree with Dabney's, rode up and galloped directly toward Dabney where he coolly saluted the nervous chaplain and said:

"Dr. Dabney, every shot, and shell, and bullet is directed by the God of battles, and you must pardon me for expressing my surprise that you should want to put a gate post between you and special Providence."

Dabney, without hesitation, replied: "No! Major, you misunderstand the doctrine I teach. And the truth is that I regard this gate post as a special providence, under present circumstances."¹⁰

Dabney's service with Jackson was short-lived as sickness and fatigue forced him to return to Hampden-Sydney. Dabney continued to write, teach, and preach after the war and became one of the South's most unrepentant ex-Confederates. Dabney's last years were spent in Texas where he taught at Austin Seminary and later at the University of Texas. He was gathered home to his fathers and his Savior on January 3, 1898.

In eulogizing Dr. Dabney, B. M. Palmer described him as "a pillar of strength in the house of our God. How we shall miss him for defense in the great battle for truth! He was mentally and morally constituted a great polemic, with a massive intellect capable of searching into the foundations of truth, and with an intellectual as well as moral indignation against every form of falsehood."

Dabney knew that the foundation of truth was Christ—the Chief Cornerstone of his faith. He was taught this from his youth and had the blessing of seeing it lived out in the life of his parents, especially his father. Dabney demonstrated this truth in his own life—from the materials of which he built his home, to the way he lived his life, and the testimony he left. May our

house of faith be as rock-solid as his.

The following is a list of some of Dabney's major works:

- *Memoir of Rev. Dr. Francis S. Sampson* (1855), whose commentary on Hebrews Dabney edited (1857)
- *Life of General Thomas J. Jackson* (1866)
- *A Defense of Virginia, and Through Her, of the South, in Recent and Pending Contests Against the Sectional Party* (1867), an apologia for the Confederacy
- *Lectures on Sacred Rhetoric* (1870)
- *Syllabus and Notes of the Course of Systematic and Polemic Theology* (1871; 2nd ed. 1878), later republished as *Systematic Theology*
- *Systematic Theology* (1878)
- *Sensualistic Philosophy of the Nineteenth Century Examined* (1875; 2nd ed. 1887)
- *Practical Philosophy* (1897)
- *Discussions* (1890–1897), four volumes of his shorter essays, edited by C. R. Vaughan
- *Penal Character of the Atonement of Christ Discussed in the Light of Recent Popular Heresies* (1898, posthumous), on the satisfaction view of the atonement

Many of these books are available from Sprinkle Publications, 320 Loewner Lane, Hinton, VA 22831. (540) 867-9618. ■

© 2008 Richard G. Williams, Jr., is the descendant of three Confederate soldiers and a ninth-generation grandson of the Reverend Roger Williams. His published works include *The Maxims of Robert E. Lee for Young Gentlemen* (Pelican, 2005), *Christian Business Legends* (Business Reform Foundation, 2004), and *Stonewall Jackson: The Black Man's Friend* (Cumberland House Publishing, 2006). His most recent book is the basis for the recently released documentary about Stonewall Jackson: *Still Standing: The Stonewall Jackson Story* (see

www.stonewallfilm.com). Visit his website at www.SouthRiverBooks.com.

1. Dabney's wife and Jackson's second wife were first cousins.
2. "Robert L. Dabney" *Christian History and Biography*, Issue 19, July 1988.
3. R. L. Dabney in a letter to his son, Dr. Charles W. Dabney, on February 8, 1885. Charles Dabney served as President of the University of Tennessee from 1887–1904.
4. Founded in 1775, Hampden-Sydney is the tenth oldest college in the United States and one of only two four-year, all-men's liberal arts colleges in the United States.
5. Henry Alexander White, *Southern Presbyterian Leaders* (Neale Publishing Company, 1911), 382.
6. *Ibid.*, 383.
7. The seminary was later moved to Richmond, Virginia, and is currently the Union Theological Seminary and Presbyterian School of Christian Education.
8. White, 385.
9. *Ibid.*
10. "Seven Days Around Richmond." *Reminiscences of The Army of Northern Virginia* by J. William Jones. *Southern Historical Society Papers*, Vol. IX. Richmond, Va., Oct., Nov., and Dec. 1881. Nos. 10, 11, & 12.

What's Wrong with Un-Christian Fantasy for Young Readers?

Lee Duigon

“Of course there must be lots of Magic in the world,” he said wisely one day, “but people don't know what it is like or how to make it. Perhaps the beginning is just to say nice things are going to happen until you make them happen ...”
—Frances Hodgson Burnett, *The Secret Garden* (1911)¹

Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and cometh down from the Father of lights,
with whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning.
James 1:17



Visit the young readers' section of your local bookstore, and you'll probably be amazed by the plethora of fantasies. There are still plenty of more or less “realistic” novels, mainly dealing with sexual issues and assorted teenage angst; but it certainly looks like fantasy is king in this market.

In this sea of fantasy, islands of Christianity are few and far between. This seems strange when you consider that among the most famous young readers' fantasies are those written by C. S. Lewis (*The Chronicles of Narnia*) and J. R. R. Tolkien (*The Hobbit*, *The Lord of the Rings*), which are widely—we cannot say universally—recognized as “Christian fantasies” written by “Christian writers.”

But the bulk of it is anything but Christian. Whether the fantasy world described in a novel is openly antagonistic to God and His Word, or simply oblivious to Him, some of these books are bound to fall into young Christian readers' hands. The booming popularity of fantasy practically guarantees it.

What's wrong with un-Christian fantasy? How, if you deem it necessary, might you convince your twelve-year-

old to stay away from it—or at least equip him to recognize its faults? And given the powerful allure of imaginative fiction, is it possible to offer your child “Christian fantasy” in its place?

Fantasy Families

Even Christians, in our deeply secularized society, have been taught to compartmentalize their lives, creating many tidy little areas in which they find no place for God. A few have boiled it down to the point where the only compartment left for God is in the church on Sunday morning. And for many, “entertainment” and “recreation” have become God-free zones, as typified by remarks like, “Heck, it's only a movie.”

Bearing this in mind, let's look at some of the features that most of today's young readers' fantasies have in common.

1. The protagonists of these stories are teens or children, and they almost always have disturbed family situations.

To some extent, this is hard to avoid. To make a young teen the hero of a story, he or she must be able to act independently of his family, especially the parents. Normal parents can't be expected to allow their children to go out on life-threatening adventures. The author must somehow get around that obstacle.

But in most fantasies, the authors resort to demeaning the protagonists' families. In J. K. Rowling's *Harry Potter* series—the best-selling fiction series of all time²—Harry's parents are dead and he lives with his aunt and uncle, the Dursleys. Rowling depicts them as hopelessly stupid, ignorant, incompetent, and ineffectual, not to mention bigoted. Living at the Hogwarts School of Magic for most of the year, Harry isn't seriously inconvenienced by his foster parents. On those rare occasions when they have the opportunity to interfere with his activities, he easily outsmarts them.

The hero of *Tunnels*, a new book by Roderick Gordon and Brian Williams, lives with a “rather strange and dysfunctional family,” according to a review in *teenreads.com*,³ featuring a mother who's a TV zombie and “a kind but spacey father.” *Gossamer*, by Newbery Medal winner Lois Lowry, centers on a boy who has been “uprooted from his abusive home,”⁴ while the hero of Philip Womack's *The Other Book* is out from under his family because he lives at “a strict boarding school” that used to be a medieval manor until it was destroyed by another boy's “power-mad father.”⁵ And let's not leave out the gem of them all, Philip Pullman's *His*

Dark Materials trilogy, in which the heroine's mother and father can't seem to make up their minds whether to kill her or protect her: they are a pair of highly volatile characters.⁶

Providing the young protagonist with the freedom to undertake a death-defying quest is dictated by the needs of the story; but these authors go farther than they have to in order to accomplish this. We are left with a gallery of autonomous, powerful *children*—a frightening thought. An author who has written “Christian fantasy” comments:

To me, the most corrupting idea—and one that is really fostered today—is the notion that the universe revolves around you, the individual. This form of self-centered narcissism is rampant throughout our culture, and it is basically the original Satanic pride. Those who see themselves as gods cannot bring themselves to kneel before Jesus Christ, because to do so is to violate their core self-image. Hedonism, sexual abuse, greed and even violence stem from the belief that your momentary desire is the only thing that truly matters.⁷

We see quite a lot of this in un-Christian fantasy.

Power Apart from God

2. Magical power (or any kind of power) exists apart from the will of a sovereign God and can be exercised by anyone who learns its secrets.

Here most fantasy makes a radical departure from the Bible. St. Paul's teaching, “For there is no power but of God: the powers that be are ordained of God” (Rom. 13:1), has made no impression on these authors.

In *His Dark Materials*, Philip Pullman endows certain man-made objects with awesome powers—a “golden compass,” a “subtle knife,” and an “amber spyglass.” Wielding these artifacts, a boy and a girl can divine “the truth,”

open up passages to parallel universes, and probe the innermost secrets of the cosmos. Although made by man, these gadgets have an agenda of their own—nothing less than rebellion against God, who, in Pullman's view, never created anything. If this sounds like idolatry to you, give yourself an “A” for discernment.

To a medieval man, an ordinary flashlight would have seemed like magic: he would have either feared it or coveted it, or both. But we know a flashlight isn't magic. It's just a rational application of discoverable, understandable elements and principles built into the universe by God when He created it.

“Magic” in fantasy usually involves a *supernatural* application of power. Magic circumvents the laws of nature and allows the mortal human being who uses it to function as a god. This is why some Christian thinkers have always been averse to fantasy.

“When men forsake God, fantasy replaces reality,” R. J. Rushdoony writes. “*Imagination* here includes rational thought which is apostate and hence guilty of fantasy because it begins with man rather than God ... whereby man acts on the belief that sin can succeed and that God can be mocked. It included also the dangerous realm of fantasizing and reshaping the world after our imagination, which is what all sin attempts to do.”⁸

Rushdoony is not suggesting that we should never use our imaginations. He isn't even saying we shouldn't write or read fiction. The real danger here is *magic* as a replacement for God and magical thinking that makes man his own god.

Worlds without God

3. There is no God active in the fantasy world.

As much as *Harry Potter* fans may argue that J. K. Rowling's viewpoint

is “basically Christian,” nowhere in these books does the author or any of her characters give God the glory or acknowledge that their magical power comes from Him.

A fantasy writer might have depicted it as a great feat of “magic” when Moses struck the rock with his staff and out poured a cascade of clean, fresh, badly needed water. When he did so, Moses said, “Hear now, ye rebels; must we fetch you water out of this rock?” (Num. 20:10).

But of course it was God, not Moses, who produced the water; and Moses sinned by speaking as if he were a magician. God punished him for it by not allowing him to cross over into the Promised Land.

His Dark Materials is unusual in being a three-volume rant against God. The usual practice is simply to ignore God. In this, fantasy novels resemble virtually everything else in our culture that falls into the category of “entertainment.” And in this, “entertainment” resembles much of our business, our politics, our interpersonal transactions. A secularized society produces not only un-Christian fantasy novels, but un-Christian thought and action in every sphere of life.

4. There is no immutable moral law in the fantasy world: the characters determine good and evil for themselves.

If there is no God, there simply can't be an immutable and transcendent moral law. The presence of such laws implies the existence of God, for such laws can only proceed from Him.

Philip Pullman comes closest to taking this to its logical conclusion. His protagonists are free to lie, cheat, or steal whenever they think it necessary. Harry Potter and his sidekicks are a little better behaved—although the last time I read a Harry Potter book, the only way I could tell which characters were sup-

posed to be the good guys and which were supposed to be the villains was by the author's identifying them as such.

Where, in the fantasy world, do good and evil come from, if not from God? In Lois Lowry's *Gossamer*, for instance, they come from magical entities who determine the content of sleeping humans' dreams:

"Finally, Littlest One and Thin Elderly infuse John's and the woman's dreams with enough peace, love, and positive energy to enrich their souls and ward off negative thoughts, and the result is pure magic."⁹

Christians think you get those benefits from prayer, study of the Scriptures, sound and godly preaching, and communion with the Holy Spirit. But in most fantasy worlds, there's no God to pray to.

There's one more problem with all this fantasy, analyzed ably by Greg Clarke in *The Theologian*:

It seems to me that a real evil in all this is found outside the books themselves. The merchandising these days surrounding any children's entertainment is overwhelming ... [I]t is in this area that harm may be done. Some of the games and toys push the magical dimension of Harry Potter beyond the story and into the everyday activities of children ... They bring activities such as spell-casting and alchemy into the realm of play in a manner that might encourage some children to look further into such activities ... It might be introducing some strange ideas about how the world operates that may be hard to shake in later life.¹⁰

Linda Harvey, of Mission America, takes the criticism farther than that. Her newly published book, *Not My Child*, blames the proliferation of occult-laden fantasy (among other causes) for an "explosion of radical pagan practices ... among American children."¹¹

So we are talking about books—and

their spin-offs in the form of movies, video games, toys, etc.—that offer young readers a worldview minus God and with parental authority removed from the equation, and a vision of children, who often feel (and, with good reason, are) powerless, wielding awesome magical powers.

Is this really what we want Christian children to be reading?

Christian Fantasy

Theodore Beale has written a Christian fantasy trilogy featuring "Eternal Warriors" participating in "The War in Heaven." In an interview with WorldNetDaily, Beale tried to define Christian fantasy:

"Christian fantasy is fantasy fiction written from a worldview constructed around the idea that Jesus Christ is the Lord and Savior of humanity, and is built from the premise that the universe generally operates as it is described in the Bible. Christianity is the starting point, and it lays the basic guidelines for the setting, but it does not dictate the direction in which the tale is told."¹²

C. S. Lewis' *Chronicles of Narnia*, seven books written from 1950–1956, are still the most famous and widely read "Christian fantasy" for young readers. It must be pointed out that even in these, some Christians may find problems. For instance:

"It's all in Plato, all in Plato, bless me, what *do* they teach them at these schools?"¹³

Many of us do not want to get all that close to Plato, a pagan philosopher with a pagan point of view. Nevertheless, we will use some examples from *Narnia*, and from J. R. R. Tolkien's works, too, to show how Christian fantasy ought to differ from un-Christian fantasy.

1. Families should be at least normal, if not conspicuously loving and wholesome.

It will still be necessary for the Christian fantasy writer to put the young protagonists into situations in which they must act—but not as autonomous agents.

In the *Narnia* books, the children are separated from their parents by circumstances beyond their control; and when they arrive in the fantasy world of Narnia, they are anything but autonomous.

Instead, they are assigned missions by the Great Lion, Aslan—whom Lewis quite clearly identifies with Christ Himself. Those who deny this are being deliberately obtuse. The children have been removed from their parents' jurisdiction, but they remain under Christ's.

2. There should either be no "magic" at all in a Christian fantasy (in the usual sense of the word); or else whatever "magic" we find in the story is exercised by God Himself or by a deputy to whom He expressly delegates the power.

We come back to Moses, who "did" many things that looked like magic (especially to the pagan Egyptians). In reality, all Moses did was to proclaim the power of God. It was God who put the plagues on Egypt, parted the Red Sea, sent manna down from heaven, and all the rest.

There are two kinds of "magic" in *Narnia*. There is the "deep magic," which God has built into creation itself, and which Aslan as the Son of God has authority to use. And there is a lower kind, an evil kind of magic, which can be used by the White Witch and her avatars (which are *not* human) for evil purposes. Aslan can undo the Witch's magic, but she can't undo his. And on those rare occasions when mortal human beings attempt to use magic independently (see the example of Uncle Andrew in *The Magician's Nephew*), they can't control it and they inevitably come

to grief.

3. Even if God is not expressly mentioned in the story (and it's probably better that He should be), His existence and His lordship are implicit in the story.

This is how Tolkien is identified as a Christian writer. He never mentions God in either *The Hobbit* or *The Lord of the Rings* (he does in *The Silmarillion*), but God is seen as implicit in the story.

The good wizard, Gandalf, safely wields very powerful "magic." He can because he is a servant of God, who has given him the power. But the one-time greater wizard, Saruman, rebels against God and tries to set himself up as an independent power in the world. Saruman's humanistic use of magic turns out to be a poor, weak thing, totally unable to support his ambitions.

In Tolkien's tales the weak overthrow the strong, the foolish confound the wise, and even "base things of the world, and things which are despised" (1 Cor. 1:28)—like the wretched Gollum—become powerful weapons in God's service. One might very easily see in *The Lord of the Rings* a novelistic presentation of the first chapter of First Corinthians.

4. In any Christian fantasy, there must be immutable moral law, which the characters only break at their peril.

In Lewis' stories, Aslan must always be obeyed; promises must be kept; lying, cheating, stealing, and murder are never options open to the protagonists; and the obligations of kinship and friendship must be honored. So, in *The Voyage of the Dawn Treader*, the children have to help their cousin Eustace when he's turned into a dragon, even though he's an obnoxious little twerp who's no use to anybody; and it's a good thing they do, because after he repents, Aslan heals him and he's able to take his place beside the others.

In *The Hobbit*, Bilbo cheats—to save his life—in a riddle contest with the evil Gollum. The toxic moral effects of this cheating come back to haunt the protagonist and continue to ripple outward in *The Lord of the Rings*. In the latter, the hero Boromir surrenders to the temptation to do evil in a good cause, and almost brings that good cause to total ruin. By contrast, Philip Pullman's young protagonists get ahead in life by lying and cheating: his ethic is purely situational.

Conclusion

Is it possible to write fantasy in which God the Father (or Christ the Son) is the sovereign Lord who must be obeyed? In which the family is a source of strength for the characters, and not a source of shame or weakness? In which "magic" is dispensed with altogether, or else revealed as just another aspect of God's power? In which blessings fall on those who keep God's law, and curses on those who don't?

Lewis, Tolkien, and a few others have already made strides in that direction. As long as there is a demand for young readers' fantasy ("It's good because it makes children want to read" has always been a Harry Potter selling point), it would seem that there is a need for Christian writers to provide fantasy that is God-honoring, Christ-centered, and profitable to the development of the young reader's Christian worldview. ■

Lee Duigon is a Christian free-lance writer and contributing editor for the Chalcedon Report. He has been a newspaper editor and reporter and a published novelist.

1. Frances Hodgson Burnett, *The Secret Garden* (New York: Barnes and Noble Books, 2004), 221. Originally published in 1911, this classic children's fantasy shows that "magic" has long been included in the picture.

2. http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Harry_Potter

3. <http://www.teenreads.com/reviews/9780439871778.asp>. "Teenreads" provides reviews, descriptions, and synopses of dozens of new releases: an excellent resource.

4. <http://www.teenreads.com/reviews/9780385734165.asp>

5. <http://www.teenreads.com/reviews/9781599902012.asp>

6. See Chalcedon's review of this trilogy, <http://chalcedon.edu/articles/article.php?ArticleID=2811>.

7. Theodore Beale, http://www.worldnetdaily.com/news/article.asp?ARTICLE_ID=33951.

8. R. J. Rushdoony, *Institutes of Biblical Law*, Vol. 2 (Vallecito, CA: Ross House Books, 1982; 2001 edition), 546–547.

9. <http://www.teenreads.com/reviews/9780385734165.asp>

10. <http://www.theologian.org.uk/pastoralia/potter.html>

11. Linda Harvey, *Not My Child* (Chattanooga, TN: AMG Publishers, 2008), 7.

12. http://www.worldnetdaily.com/news/article.asp?ARTICLE_ID=33951

13. C. S. Lewis, *The Chronicles of Narnia: The Last Battle* (New York: HarperCollins, 2001 edition), 759.

A Review of *In Pursuit of the Almighty's Dollar: A History of Money and American Protestantism*

By James Hudnut-Beumler (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 2007)

Reviewed by Feler Bose



Certain theological explanations espoused by preachers or scholars raise the question of whether the explanation can be universally applied. For example, reading how a Christian should vote in the elections makes me ask whether these explanations are universally valid: most of the time, the explanation is only valid in countries with a sizable Christian population. The nice thing about Rushdoony's work is that he clearly explains the applicability of Scripture in all cases.

Regarding the topic of tithing, many preachers emphasize that the local church is the custodian of the tithe. However, where the local church is not a godly church, and finding a godly church might mean traveling many hours, it would make sense not to tithe to the local church. Hence, Rushdoony's analysis that the priests receive only 10 percent of the tithe and the Levites the rest is universally applicable.¹

In Pursuit of the Almighty's Dollar gives a fascinating look at how Protestant churches were financed from the 1800s and how churches tried to get people to give all their financial contributions (including the tithe) to the church.

Tax-Financed to Voluntary-Financed Churches

Prior to the 1800s, local townships publicly financed the clergy from various established denominations. With

increasing competition from nonestablished churches and from people's desire to support clergy of their own choosing, the stage was set for the disestablishment of churches and for a move from public financing to private financing of churches. "For those portions of the ecclesiastical world accustomed to state finance—the Anglican, Reformed, and Congregational churches in the South, the mid-Atlantic states, New York, and New England—disestablishment was not a godsend delivered by political philosophy but a frontal challenge to their understanding of who ought to pay for religion and why" (pp. 8–9).

After the American Revolution, many of the Anglican churches were disestablished;² however, in some states the established churches were still financed by taxes (CT, MA). After privatization of religion in Connecticut, some churches still relied on "taxes" on their members. However, the tax monies were usually insufficient to fund the churches due to tax avoidance and a shrinking tax base, so the established churches had to find other means of support. For that reason the churches relied more heavily on other methods of financing, which included voluntary financing and a private club arrangement.

Clubs are financed through dues (membership fees); and in many clubs, different levels of membership with assorted levels of benefits can be purchased. Pew rentals became the dues paid to churches.³ Depending on how

much you paid, you would be either seated in the premium pews⁴ (near the front) or further back from the pulpit. Free pews were also available for the poor, the slaves, etc., and these were located in the back. Some denominations like the Methodists did not like this preferential seating method and had only free pews in their churches; but relying completely on voluntary financing did not always cover all expenses.

The author briefly discusses other forms of financing like pew ownership and subscriptions (pledges), but does not go into depth. Instead, he rushes on to discuss voluntary financing (free-will giving) in the second half of the first chapter. The lack of depth regarding tax financing and club-type financing is the main weakness of the book. However, for those interested in learning more about other forms of financing (including lotteries, stock holding, etc.), I recommend the book *Temples of Grace* by Gretchen Townsend Buggeln and a journal article by Kelly Olds called "Privatizing the Church."⁵

Voluntary Financing of Churches until 1920

Voluntary financing shapes the church as a charity rather than a club. The transition from a mixed form of financing to voluntary financing took time, as methods of fund-raising were refined to encourage the individual to support the church.

From the early to mid-1800s privatized churches had to compete for funds

from voluntary societies. These societies, “modeled on British reform societies, as pandenominational entities, also helped set the tone of church fund-raising, even as they became congregations’ chief competitors for funds” (p. 15).⁶

Due to this competition, churches systematized their appeal for funds. Initially, books and tracts on “systematic benevolence” were published to encourage giving to churches (p. 19). The idea was to set aside money as God prospered one, and then use that money to systematically distribute to needy causes. It would eliminate the need for itinerant agents of various causes from having to make regular emotional appeals. Moreover, the idea was to establish “a local agency in every man’s mind.” This local agency would be the church, and the clergyman would be the local agent who would receive the money and distribute as needed (p. 22).

From 1870 to 1920, the issue of stewardship was “discovered” and the tithe “reinvented.” Many churches struggled to pay decent salaries to ministers. Ideas of how to finance churches crossed the Atlantic. One writer saw older methods of financing, like pew rentals, festivals, fairs, etc., as “unworthy” and “exceedingly ‘questionable.’” The tithe as a way to finance churches received more focus in Christian publications (p. 51). Writers used various Scriptures from Leviticus, Deuteronomy, Genesis, and Malachi to support the tithe. In some parts of the country, churches did not even practice weekly giving (p. 55); therefore, weekly offerings were encouraged. Some of the literature focused on the tithe and the offerings going to the church; the funds were then to be disbursed by the church to other causes. Toward the late 1800s, churches started using the envelope to collect the tithes and offerings.

As the years passed, churches

emphasized stewardship (p. 60). The notion of stewardship was popular with the advocates of the Social Gospel. One author argued, “Most Christian men need to discover that they are not proprietors, apportioning their own, but simply trustees or managers of God’s property” (p. 62). Some of the advocates of stewardship also included tithing in their discussions. “As the years went by, the stewardship movement turned less and less on a God the owner / man the possessor philosophy and more on a conviction that the tithe was stewardship’s bottom line” (p. 71). One author, Julius Earl Crawford, focused on how Christians can become tithers. His innovation from those in the Social Gospel era was that he considered tithing as necessary for receiving the blessings from God. He did not see any shame in wanting to be financially prosperous and wrote about many people whose fortunes reversed when they put God first (p. 72).

However, after fifty years of preaching on tithing and stewardship, American Protestants were giving on average only 3 percent of their gross income to their churches; but that half century of effort had not “dimmed the clergy’s hopes that their people might yet be more generous” (p. 75).

Voluntary Financing of Churches from 1920 until the 1940s

The concept of stewardship did not create lasting changes in the people’s giving. Churches used three techniques to provide for church finances. The first technique was the “Every Member Canvass” where teams of lay people would go around and canvass church members to pledge for the church.⁷ The second technique was to use pledge cards to get people to support the church. One major innovation in using this technique was the inclusion of two separate pledges, one for the church and

the other for benevolences. “In some respects, this development represented the attainment of a 100-year-old dream for pastors; the separate appeals from agencies outside the local church were under congregational control at last” (p. 103). The third technique was the duplex weekly envelope. This allowed people to give weekly to the church and benevolences.

The Depression also resulted in a decline in giving to churches. In the rural South, farmers planted an acre for the Lord. Whatever proceeds came from the “Lord’s Acre” went to the church (p. 171). During the Depression, the foundations were laid for debate between two groups, which lasted long after the Depression. The debate centered on “*motives* for giving and those who were more interested in discussing the *means* for attracting gifts to the church” (p. 123, italics in original).

Voluntary Financing of Churches from 1945–1980

After World War II, the divergence within Protestantism (liberal, moderate, and conservative) resulted in different views about the purpose of the church and about the role of money. Stewardship meant responsibility. “Stewardship became less about ritual submission to God, the giver of all good things, than it was about human beings discharging the responsibilities laid before them” (p. 151). The majority of the literature on church financing focused on “technique rather than theology” (p. 155). Techniques included getting young children to pledge and getting adults to focus on the concept of loyalty. One technique to get high-income givers to give was to have their financial peers solicit them. Another technique focused on having food served before asking for pledges. In 1952, Ralph Seaman wrote a book titled *101 Ways to Raise Money for Your Church*, which seemed to embody that era.

One writer named W. E. Grindstaff reemphasized the idea of “storehouse tithing” against “promiscuous tithing.” This meant that the entire tithe must go to the local church. The church “is the rightful custodian of God’s money. The church and the church alone has the right to say how such money shall be used” (p. 163). By the 1960s, the idea of stewardship took on a wider meaning and was no longer solely connected with giving. One author suggested that people use their “wealth, influence, good looks, pleasant dispositions, and personalities to win others for Christ” (p. 171).

The more conservative denominations saw giving differently. Some saw tithing as limiting one’s Christian duty. They also saw supporting a church out of loyalty as idolatrous. These denominations saw the need for generous giving. Another branch of conservative Protestantism preached the “prosperity gospel” (p. 178). They saw money problems as a matter of faith.

In the 1970s, the literature on fund-raising reflected the communities that people came from. For example, a Missouri Synod Lutheran wrote with a theological focus, whereas an Episcopalian wrote from the technique perspective. The recession of the 1970s also substantially reduced the finances of many churches. Many churches survived on voluntary financing. However, foundations were supporting some of the older mainline denominations. To reduce inheritance taxes, wealthy older members were giving large gifts to these foundations. Many local churches also developed endowments (p. 185).

Voluntary Financing of Churches from 1980 to the Present

This era saw a vast migration to the Sun Belt and people moving to the suburbs. Low interest rates during this time (1990s and early 2000s) led to a

church building boom as the churches’ borrowing capacity increased. Ministers in the liberal and conservative churches continued to preach on tithing. Financing of Protestant Christianity today has mainly focused on pledges, special appeals, tithing, capital funds, funding for things outside of local church life, and fees for services when it comes to religious schools. In short, as the author of the book notes, “[Y]ou can have as much religion as you can pay for” (p. 199).

Conclusion

The book clearly shows that since the privatization of church financing, churches competed with other godly agencies for finances. Over time, churches tried to convince their members to support primarily the work of the church. Rushdoony writes in *Chalcedon Report* Number 43, “To limit Christ’s realm to the church is not Biblical; it is pietism, a surrender of Christ’s kingship over the world.”

While I have focused this review mainly on the financing aspect of the Protestant church, the book also has interesting chapters on church architecture and internal furnishings. One revealing chapter looks at the life of the minister’s wife and the struggles, expectations, anxieties, etc., the minister and his wife must deal with. The chapter on “Paying the Clergy” compares clergy salaries with those of other professions. The chapter also cites various studies that have been done on clergy salaries: for example, that getting a higher education in ministry results in negative income returns (p. 94) and that as “servant-leaders,” the clergy have found “themselves paid in many places accordingly—as servants” (p. 94). ■

Feler Bose has recently completed his PhD in Economics from George Mason University. He and his wife Caroline and son Theophilus reside in Fairfax, VA.

1. R. J. Rushdoony, *Institutes of Biblical Law: Vol. 3, The Intent of the Law* (Nutley, NJ: Craig Press, 1973), 510.
2. Data on the disestablishment of the Anglican churches is not readily available.
3. Pew rentals existed prior to the nineteenth century in Europe and the American colonies.
4. In those days sitting in premium pews meant that you could hear the sermon and during the winter were likely to be warmer than those who sat near drafty windows and doors.
5. Gretchen Townsend Buggeln, *Temples of Grace: The Material Transformation of Connecticut’s Churches, 1790–1840* (Lebanon, NH: University Press of New England, 2003) and Kelly Olds “Privatizing the Church: Disestablishment in Connecticut and Massachusetts,” *Journal of Political Economy*, 1994, Vol. 102, No. 2, 277–297.
6. This point seems similar to the tithe agencies Rushdoony writes about on page 26 of *Tithing and Dominion* (Vallecito, CA: Ross House Books, 1979).
7. This method is still used in some countries.

A Review of *Pagan Christianity?* *Exploring the Roots of Our Church Practices*

by Frank Viola and George Barna (Barna Books, 2008)

Reviewed by Steve Hays

Sensationalism

Frank Viola has penned a provocative book—with an introduction by George Barna. Viola is a one-time high school teacher who left the institutional church twenty years ago to become an “organic” church planter and promoter. He also moves in emergent church circles.¹ Barna, by contrast, has a far higher profile.² So the book is important due to its potential impact on the church as we know it.

Their agenda is to replace the “institutional” church with the “organic” church, which they associate with the New Testament church.³ The result is a reactionary book that suffers from all the strengths and weaknesses of a reactionary book.

Viola makes a number of valid points along the way. But he wants to do more than that. He wants to foment a revolution in the modern church. So he adopts the breathless tone of an investigative reporter who’s uncovered a scandalous revelation that the church authorities suppressed. It’s a bit too much like *The Da Vinci Code*.

It’s important that a reader be able to winnow the wheat from the chaff in a book like this. So this review will emphasize the areas in which Viola overstates his case.

Church History

Viola’s analysis of church history tends to fall into a stereotypical genre. The standard Protestant version of church history takes the position that

Their agenda is to replace the “institutional” church with the “organic” church, which they associate with the New Testament church. The result is a reactionary book that suffers from all the strengths and weaknesses of a reactionary book.

the postapostolic church began to make some basic mistakes in ecclesiology, soteriology, and sacramentology. These primitive errors got locked into place through tradition and dogma, as a result of which subsequent theologians continued to build on that faulty foundation. The Reformation tried to tear down this unscriptural edifice and return to the sources. I myself agree with this analysis.

Cults typically begin where Protestants leave off. They take this understanding of church history as their starting point, but then exaggerate it. In the standard, cultic version of church history, Constantine represents a fundamental break in church history. This marks the great apostasy of the church. Then God, at a much later date, raises up a prophetic figure to restore the long-lost gospel. Several restorationist movements in the nineteenth century followed this paradigm.

Sometimes the cultic interpretation of church history receives support from liberal theologians like Käsemann and von Harnack, who create a disjunction between the original charismatic phase of the church and the later shift to the institutional church. They pinpoint this declension from the original purity of the church in certain New Testament letters, which they redate to the second century A.D. in keeping with their naturalistic reconstruction of the Bible’s origin.

By contrast, Reformed theology has a doctrine of the remnant. God always has a people. In every generation, God preserves a faithful remnant. God always has a church. It may be an underground church rather than the established church, but there is no intermission in the life of the church.

Credit Where Credit Is Due

Before pointing out some of the specific weaknesses in Viola’s thesis, let’s review some of his sounder insights. His criticisms of Catholic sacerdotalism and sacramentalism are valid.⁴ The New Testament doesn’t require Christians to worship in a special sort of building. The New Testament doesn’t require us to donate 10 percent of our income to the church. The altar call is a theological innovation. The youth pastor is a twentieth-century tradition. The “sinner’s prayer” has become a third sacrament in fundamentalism, supplanting baptism as the rite

of initiation. We don't have to bow our heads and close our eyes when we pray. Head knowledge is insufficient to qualify a man for pastoral ministry. The authors also have a fine analysis of pastoral burnout.

At a generic level, Viola is trying to do what the Puritans and the Anabaptists tried to do, which was to reform Christian worship according to their conception of New Testament models. And Christians should always be self-critical of their traditions. We need to ask ourselves, "Why are we doing this, or doing it this way?"

Church Office

This book is vehemently anticlerical. Viola opposes any distinction between clergy and laity. And in order to do this, he must reject the principle of church office.

But his rejection is unscriptural. For church office is a feature of New Testament ecclesiology.⁵ This represents the regular ministry of the church. That stands in contrast to the apostolate, which was a unique, dominical calling. By the same token, it stands in contrast to the prophetic vocation, which was a charismatic calling during the age of public revelation.

There are scattered references to church office in the New Testament, but most of these don't tell you what a church officer is supposed to do, which is why the Pastorals are the *locus classicus* (1 Tim. 3:1–13; Titus 1:5–16). Instead of contesting the scriptural principle of church office, Viola should contest unscriptural conceptions of church office—such as we find in Roman Catholicism.

He justifies his anticlericalism by saying things like, "[L]isten to Paul's description of a first-century church meeting: 'Every one of you hath a psalm' (1 Cor. 14:26)" (p. 167). Ironically, this represents the sort of atomistic proof-

texting that he reviles in the eleventh chapter.

To begin with, the Corinthian church was hardly a model congregation. Paul had to spend much time correcting abuses. Second, the level of participation would depend on the size of the congregation. A megachurch, like the church of Jerusalem, which sometimes assembled in the Temple courtyard, couldn't be as participatory as a small house-church. Third, Viola is misinterpreting his proof-text.⁶ Fourth, he seems to be siding with Pentecostalism in the charismatic/cessationist debate, but that's a point of ongoing dispute.⁷ Fifth, even if we grant the Pentecostal position, that doesn't eliminate the need for a traffic cop.⁸

Ordination

Because he repudiates church office, Viola also repudiates ordination. But Jews ordained their rabbis, and this carried over into the New Testament as well.⁹

Instead of contesting the scriptural principle of ordination, Viola should simply contest unscriptural conceptions of ordination. In a high-church tradition like Catholicism, ordination is a constitutive rite. It confers certain abilities on the ordinand. It empowers him to pronounce absolution or transubstantiate the communion elements into the true body and bread of Christ. It qualifies him to discharge his clerical duties.

But Protestant ordination, correctly understood, is not a constitutive rite. Rather, it's a rite of passage. It presupposes that the ordinand is already qualified to perform his duties. The function of ordination is not to confer special abilities on the ordinand, but to confer public recognition on the ordinand. Like a college diploma.

In that respect, ordination is secondary. All things being equal, a min-

ister should be ordained, but it doesn't qualify him to be a minister. Yet even Pentecostal denominations ordain their ministers.¹⁰

Professional Clergy

Because Viola opposes church office, he also opposes full-time, salaried clergymen. But Paul was not opposed to remunerating a pastor for his services (1 Tim. 5:17–18).

Viola justifies his anticlericalism by saying things like:

Jesus' approach to affecting lives was interactive and hands-on. His lectures were few and far between and always led to implementing the point of the lesson in the trenches of life. (p. 256)

The early Christians did not build Bible schools or seminaries to train young workers. Christian workers were educated and trained by older workers in the context of church life. They learned "on the job." Jesus provided the initial model for this "on-the-job" training when He mentored the Twelve. Paul duplicated it when he trained young Gentile workers in Ephesus. (p. 249; cf. p. 200)

There are several problems with this analysis. First of all, Jesus did quite a lot of "lecturing" in the Gospels. And that's just a sampling. Second, Paul was a rabbi by training. Third, we need to make allowance for the fact that the New Testament church had a limited talent pool to draw upon. After all, it began with 120 members (Acts 1:15). Fourth, there's a big difference between the "tutelage" of a modern mentor and having Jesus or an apostle as your private tutor. Fifth, the New Testament was written to men and women living in the first century. So they already had a cultural preunderstanding of what it meant. But what was common knowledge for a first-century Christian is hardly common knowledge for a twenty-first-

century Christian. You and I can't just step back into the first century A.D. or the tenth century B.C.

Viola also flirts with a quasi-charismatic view of divine guidance, which he sets in opposition to the institutional church. But this, too, is unscriptural. In the Book of Acts, signs and wonders coexist with elders or deacons. And, in James 5:14–16, divine healing is institutionalized. The *elders* are to pray for the sick.

By the same token, Viola opposes sermon preparation on the grounds that “there is a world of difference between the Spirit-inspired preaching and teaching described in the Bible and the contemporary sermon” (p. 86). But this assumes a charismatic model of preaching. And even if we shared his quasi-charismatic outlook, his disjunction is still debatable.¹¹

Faith and Reason

One of Viola's seminal errors is his unscriptural grasp of the relation between faith and reason:

The teaching of the New Testament is that God is Spirit, and as such, He is known by revelation (spiritual insight) to one's human spirit. Reason and intellect can cause us to know about God. And they help us to communicate what we know. But they fall short in giving us spiritual revelation. The intellect is not the gateway for knowing the Lord deeply ... In the words of A. W. Tozer: “Divine truth is in the nature of spirit and for that reason can be received only by spiritual revelation ... God's thoughts belong to the world of spirit, man's to the world of intellect.” (p. 206)

This is theologically erroneous. What is more, Viola's anti-intellectualism is the source of his jaundiced views on Christian education. But in Scripture, the fundamental distinction is not between spirit and intellect, but between regenerate and unregenerate reason. The

Much of his book is an exercise in guilt by association. Viola takes a traditional practice. He then attempts to discredit this practice by claiming that it suffers from a pagan pedigree. Strictly speaking, this is known as the genetic fallacy.

spiritual impediment is *ethical* rather than *intellectual*. The unregenerate can grasp revealed truth, but they are hostile to it. Regeneration creates a mind that's more receptive to revealed truth.

Guilt by Association

Much of his book is an exercise in guilt by association. Viola takes a traditional practice. He then attempts to discredit this practice by claiming that it suffers from a pagan pedigree. Strictly speaking, this is known as the genetic fallacy.

It's legitimate to point out that certain dogmas may have an unscriptural origin. But Viola is very indiscriminating in his targets. He applies guilt-by-association to art, music, architecture, and attire. Yet there's nothing intrinsically evil in the fact that early church architecture, to take one example, was influenced by Greco-Roman models. Unlike dogma, much of this is a matter of indifference.¹² It's not as if Romanesque architecture is forbidden in Scripture.¹³

This goes to a deeper problem. Viola lacks a doctrine of common grace. Not everything that unbelievers do is evil. Due to natural revelation and common grace, unbelievers can produce various things that are good.¹⁴

Ironically, his tactic could be turned against his own book. For example, he makes heavy use of Will Durant in

his historical analysis. But Durant was deeply invested in the Far Left causes of the day, so Viola should consider the possibility that Durant was skewing church history to further his political agenda.¹⁵

Likewise, Viola commends two or three figures who are associated with the local church.¹⁶ But some evangelicals regard the local church as a cult.¹⁷

Incoherence

There are some glaring inconsistencies in Viola's indictment of contemporary Christendom. On the one hand, he attacks tradition because it's too tradition-bound. On the other hand, he attacks historical novelties like Sunday school, youth pastors, Bible colleges, the altar call, and so on. So is his objection that Christians should stop doing something because it's too traditional or because it's too innovative?

He praises Moody as one of the “greatest Bible expositors in church history” (p. 216 n. 106), while just a few pages before he faults Moody for his patronage of Sunday school and Bible colleges (pp. 211–213). And in another chapter he laments the “staggering influence of Moody” (pp. 69–71).

On the one hand, he says things like, “We have abandoned those church practices that were acceptable and normative in the New Testament” (p. 265). On the other, Viola tells us that “[t] here is no blueprint or model that we can tease out of the New Testament by extracting verses and trying to imitate them mechanically. The church of Jesus Christ is a biological, living entity!” (p. 238).¹⁸

On the one hand, he offers a mystical or biological view of church governance:

If that church is planted well, those believers will know how to sense and follow the living, breathing headship of Jesus Christ in a meeting. They will

know how to let Him invisibly lead their gatherings ... [T]hey will minister out of what Christ has shown them—with no human leader present! (p. 234)¹⁹

And because the church is organic, it has a natural expression—as all organisms do. For that reason, when a group of Christians follow [sic] their spiritual DNA, they will gather in a way that matches the DNA of the triune God ... the native instinct to gather without ritual, every-member functioning ... the internal drive for participatory gatherings. (p. 263)²⁰

On the other hand, he appeals to scholars when it suits his purpose:

Seminarians and Bible college students alike are rarely if ever given a panoramic view of the free-flowing story of the early church with the New Testament books arranged in chronological order. As a result, most Christians are completely out of touch with the social and historical events that lay behind each of the New Testament letters. (p. 229)

Thanks to recent biblical scholarship, we can now reconstruct the entire saga of the early church. (p. 239)

There is a strong consensus among evangelical scholars that the early church did not have a clergy, did not meet in sacred buildings. (p. 264)²¹

But when he appeals to academic scholarship, that undercuts his appeal to mystical guidance. This constitutes a tacit admission that a twenty-first-century Christian lacks the background knowledge to properly interpret the Bible. Hence, we *do* need experts who specialize in the field of Old Testament and New Testament studies. That's where the value of a formal Christian education comes into play.²²

On the one hand, Viola opposes a professional clergy because it's too elitist. On the other, he opposes a professional

But when he appeals to academic scholarship, that undercuts his appeal to mystical guidance. This constitutes a tacit admission that a twenty-first-century Christian lacks the background knowledge to properly interpret the Bible.

clergy because it leaves a pastor vulnerable to financial extortion in case the congregation doesn't like his preaching (implying it's not elitist enough).²³ But this objection cuts both ways. As we've seen in the Catholic sex scandals, it's a problem when a clergyman is only answerable to his superiors. In a polity where the pastor is directly accountable to his parishioners, a pastor can't get away with as much.

Church Architecture

In his opposition to church architecture, Viola says:

To use the Old Testament as a justification for the church building is not only inaccurate, but it is self-defeating. The old Mosaic economy of sacred priests, sacred buildings, sacred rituals, and sacred objects has been forever destroyed by the cross of Jesus Christ. (p. 27)

That's overstated. For one thing, the apostles continued to frequent the temple. For another, the architectural symbolism of the tabernacle and temple is primarily *cosmological* rather than *Christological*. So it doesn't prefigure the first coming of Christ. Rather, it alludes to Eden, on the one hand, while it prefigures the eschatological new Eden, on the other.²⁴ It's important for us to distinguish between various elements of the Mosaic cultus. Likewise, there's nothing typological about an Old Testament

choir that I can see. Why would choirs be obsolete under the new covenant?²⁵

This doesn't mean that Christians are under any sort of obligation to worship in a sanctuary or cathedral. We're not. But Viola acts as if whatever is not commanded is forbidden. He fails to appreciate that many things are simply permitted.²⁶

Practicalities

In his knee-jerk opposition to developments that he deplores, Viola leaves many loose ends. But what's his alternative?

For example, he deplores the turn the church took under Constantine. But the main thing Constantine did was to decriminalize the Christian faith. He put an end to state-sponsored persecution of the Christian faith. Does Viola think that was a mistake? Does he think Christianity should be outlawed? But if Christianity were illegal, it would be illegal for Viola to publish *Pagan Christianity!*

Viola rightly opposes the altar call and the sinner's prayer as a substitute for baptism. However, a certain percentage of adult converts were already baptized as infants or children.

So what does Viola think should be done in that case? Is the prior baptism still valid? Or should the adult converts be rebaptized?

Viola says,

The early Christians did not divide themselves into various denominations. They understood their oneness in Christ and expressed it visibly in every city. To their minds, there was only one church per city (even though it may have met in many different homes throughout the locale). If you were a Christian in the first century, you belonged to that one church. (pp. 249–250)

But even in New Testament times there were schismatic groups. Moreover,

many nineteenth-century restorationist movements took this same position. Yet a successful movement inevitably becomes institutionalized. Over time it becomes just one more denomination—or cult.

Conclusion

Viola's book would be more useful if he were more modest in his ambitions and if he offered some correctives or voluntary alternatives to the status quo. But because he wants to replace the institutional church with the "organic" church, he overplays his hand. There's a cumulative process of error in his analysis because he frequently begins with a false premise and then carries it through to its logical but erroneous extreme. The reader must spend far too much time threshing the grains of wheat from the heaps of chaff. ■

Stephen Hays doubled-majored in history and classics at Seattle Pacific University and is currently both a student and teacher's assistant at Reformed Theological Seminary. He resides in Charleston, SC.

1. Since Viola is the principal author, I'll generally refer to him in the course of this review. See <http://www.ptmin.org/biography.php> for a biography.
2. "To date, Barna has written 39 books, mostly addressing leadership, trends, church health and spiritual development. They include best-sellers such as *Revolution, Transforming Children into Spiritual Champions, The Frog in the Kettle*, and *The Power of Vision*. His most recent book is *Revolutionary Parenting*. Several of his books have received national awards. He has had more than 100 articles published in periodicals and writes a bi-weekly research report (The Barna Update) accessed by more than a million people each year, through his firm's website (www.barna.org). His work is frequently cited as an authoritative source by the media. He has been hailed as 'the most quoted person in the Christian Church today' and has been named by various media as one of the nation's most influential Christian

leaders," (<http://www.barna.org/FlexPage.aspx?Page=AboutGeorge>).

3. *Institutional church* "refers to a religious system (not a particular group of people). An institutional church is one that operates primarily as an organization that exists above, beyond, and independent of the members who populate it. It is constructed more on programs and rituals than on relationships. It is led by set-apart professionals ('ministers' or 'clergy') who are aided by volunteers ('laity'); "The term *organic church* does not refer to a particular model of church. (We believe that no perfect model exists.) Instead, we believe that the New Testament vision of church is organic. An organic church is a living, breathing, dynamic, mutually participatory, every-member functioning, Christ-centered, communal expression of the body of Christ"; and regarding the *New Testament church*: "We believe that a return to the spiritual principles, the organic practices, and the spirit and ethos of the first-century church, along with the teachings of Jesus and the apostles, should guide our practice of the church in our day and time" (<http://www.ptmin.org/pcobjections.htm>).

4. At the same time, Viola targets paedobaptism. But paedobaptists are used to fielding stock objections to infant baptism. So his attack would be unconvincing to any astute paedobaptist.

5. By "office" I simply mean a permanent position, with specific duties, held by successive incumbents. By "successive," I don't mean *apostolic succession*.

6. "As in 7:2 and 11:21, 'each one' does not mean every single individual ... Paul presents a hypothetical scenario, 'suppose that when you assemble,' rather than a real description of what is happening," David Garland, *1 Corinthians* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 2003), 657.

7. For example, O. Palmer Robertson, *The Final Word: A Biblical Response for Tongues and Prophecy Today* (Edinburgh: Banner of Truth Trust, 2004).

8. "In the very free charismatic service of 1 Corinthians 14, Paul repeatedly calls for an introduction of 'order' and 'edification,'" Roger Beckwith, *Elders in Every City: The*

Origin and Role of the Ordained Ministry (Waynesboro, GA: Paternoster Press, 2003), 17. "In Corinth, where there was not even an effective eldership either, we know from 1 Corinthians 14 that the result was great disorder," Beckwith, 56.

9. Beckwith, chapters 6–7.

10. "The charismatic movement has been led by experience of the free exercise of charismatic gifts not to dispense with outward ordering but to emphasise it, so that church life may not degenerate into chaos. There are few Christian circles in which the ordained ministry is as authoritarian as it often is in the charismatic movement," Beckwith, 16.

11. "Do the worshipers *bring* a pre-chosen, pre-prepared choice of psalm or hymn, their item of teaching, or something disclosed? In our view some of these gifts are by definition *brought* in the sense that teaching arises out of processes of reflection over a time span, even if an event may also trigger some more sudden insight ... It is essential to allow for a distinction in translation and meaning between those gifts which can hardly be other than spontaneous (e.g., tongues), those which are likely to require sustained biblical reflection (e.g., item of teaching), and those which resist exclusion from either category (prophetic speech, something disclosed). Wolff's attention to tradition in Paul is confirmed elsewhere in this epistle," Anthony Thiselton, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians: A Commentary on the Greek Text* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2000), 1134–1135.

12. For example, "In the actual construction Solomon decorated it [the Temple] with many well-known Phoenician motifs; cherubim, palm trees, open flowers (1 Kings 7:29–36)," Daniel Block, "Other Religions in Old Testament Theology." *Biblical Faith and Other Religions*, ed. David Baker (Grand Rapids, MI: Kregel, 2004), 47–48.

13. At one point Viola says, "Von Simson shows how the metaphysics of Plato shaped Gothic architecture. Light and luminosity reach their perfection in Gothic stained-glass windows. Numbers of perfect proportions harmonize all the elements of the building. Light and harmony are images of

heaven; they are the ordering principles of creation,” p. 29 n. 135. But one could say the very same thing about the tabernacle and temple. They used reflective materials. They used numerological symmetries. And they represented a microcosm of the world. Cf. G. K. Beale, *The Temple and the Church’s Mission: A Biblical Theology of the Dwelling Place of God* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2004), chap. 2; Vern S. Poythress, *Redeeming Science: A God-Centered Approach* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway Books, 2006), 286f.; “Tabernacle” *Dictionary of the Old Testament: Pentateuch* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2000), 816–818.

14. “Good,” not in the sense of righteous, but excellent.

15. In preparation for this book review, I asked a leading church historian what he thought of Durant. He expressed a very low opinion of Durant’s scholarship.

16. Watchman Nee, Stephen Kaung, T. Austin-Sparks (p. 216 n. 106).

17. See <http://www.open-letter.org/>; <http://www.apologeticsindex.org/l40.html>.

18. Viola can’t tell the difference between figurative and literal statements. The church isn’t *really* a “biological, living entity.” That’s picture language. And Scripture uses a variety of metaphors for the church.

19. I don’t know on what basis Viola presumes to impute this general ignorance of seminarians or Bible college students.

20. This is yet another example of how Viola gets carried away with metaphors. He uses a genetic metaphor that goes beyond Scripture—then presses the implications of this metaphor as if it were a literal description of the church.

21. I question his assertion regarding a scholarly consensus about the absence of clergymen in the early church.

22. It’s possible for a smart, studious layman to know whatever his pastor knows—by reading the same books. But that requires a certain aptitude and diligence. And that’s quite different from “spiritual revelation.”

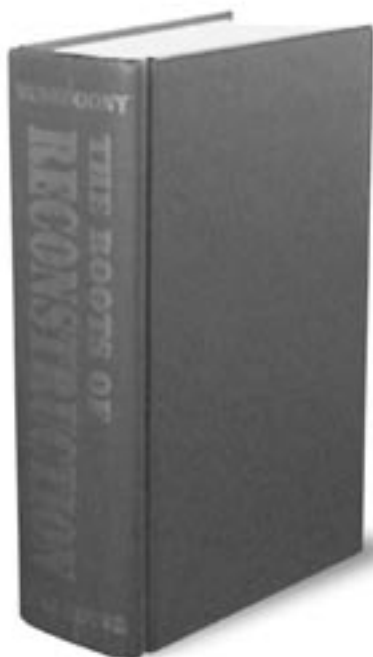
23. That also depends on how the polity is structured. A pastor can be paid by the denomination rather than by the congregation. That would afford him a degree of financial insulation.

24. See footnote 7.

25. It’s ironic that Viola is so opposed to choirs since choirs are a form of lay participation in the service, and our authors lobby for a participatory style of worship.

26. For example, Viola launches a ferocious assault on church steeples, which—in his fanciful typology—is a throwback to the tower of Babel. But church steeples are simply a form of signage—like the Golden Arches—to identify a building as a church. Likewise, Viola attacks the pulpit. But the basic function of a pulpit is to make the speaker visible to the audience. He also attacks clerical collars. But this is no different than any other uniform, such as a policeman’s.

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Morecraft ... A Walk cont. from page 12

Presbyterian Church in Cumming, GA. They have been married for 39 years and have four children and seven grandchildren. Becky loves to sing with her sister, Judy Rogers, to read and write. She is grateful to her parents and grandparents for teaching her to love the Lord at an early age and to appreciate her heritage.

1. http://obama.senate.gov/speech/060628-call_to_renewal/
2. R.J. Rushdoony, *The Foundations of Social Order* (Vallecito, CA: Ross House Books, 1998), 181.
3. Joseph C. Morecraft, III, *The History of the Reformation in the West*, unpublished lectures, Atlanta, GA, 79–80.
4. Rushdoony, *The Foundations of Social Order*, 19–20.
5. Judy Rogers, “Candle of Faith,” from her album, *Arise! Shine!*, www.judyrogers.com.

Selbrede ... God Has a Bone cont. from page 15

live, whether or not God can put flesh back on the bones. God knows that they can, and God wills that it shall be so, that His counsel shall stand forever, and that all the Frankenstein monsters that theologians have brought to false life will one day be banished.

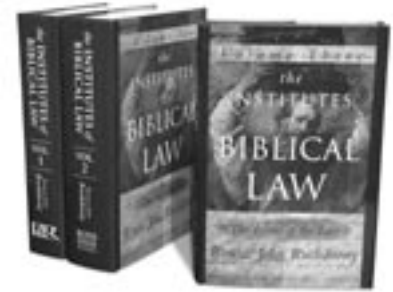
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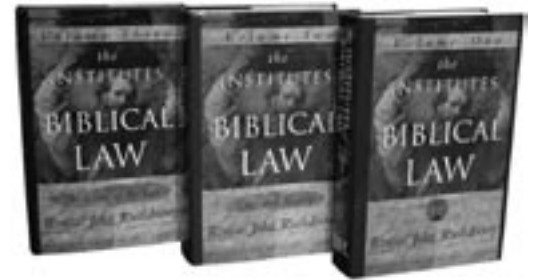
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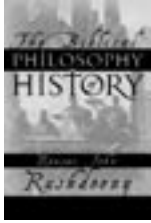
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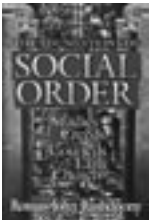
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By R.J. Rushdoony. Every social order rests on a creed, on a concept of life and law, and represents a religion in action. The basic faith of a society means growth in terms of that faith. Now the creeds and councils of the early church, in hammering out definitions of doctrines, were also laying down the foundations of Christendom with them. 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.

Paperback, 197 pages, index, \$16.00

Philosophy



The Death of Meaning

By Rousas John Rushdoony. For centuries on end, humanistic philosophers have produced endless books and treatises which attempt to explain reality without God or the mediatory work of His Son, Jesus Christ. Modern philosophy has sought to explain man and his thought process without acknowledging God, His Revelation, or man's sin. God holds all such efforts in derision and subjects their authors and adherents to futility. 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 reproved.

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. There is only one foundation. Without Christ, meaning and morality are anchored to shifting sand, and a counsel of despair prevails. This penetrating yet brief volume provides clear guidance, even for laymen unfamiliar with philosophy.

Paperback, 180 pages, index, \$18.00



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. Man, once he makes himself ultimate, is unable to know anything but himself. Because of this impasse, modern thinking has become progressively pragmatic. 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.

Paperback, 127 pages, indices, \$19.00



To Be As God: A Study of Modern Thought Since the Marquis De Sade

By R.J. Rushdoony. This monumental work is a series of essays on the influential thinkers and ideas in modern times. The author begins with De Sade, who self-consciously broke with any Christian basis for morality and law. Enlightenment thinking began with nature as the only reality, and Christianity was reduced to one option among many. It was then, in turn, attacked as anti-democratic and anti-freedom for its dogmatic assertion of the supernatural. Literary figures such as Shelly, Byron, Whitman, and more are also examined, for the Enlightenment presented both the intellectual and the artist as replacement for the theologian and his church. Ideas, such as "the spirit of the age," truth, reason, Romanticism, persona, and Gnosticism are related to the desire to negate God and Christian ethics. Reading this book will help you understand the need to avoid the syncretistic blending of humanistic philosophy with the Christian faith.

Paperback, 230 pages, indices, \$21.00



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.

Hardback, 212 pages, index, \$14.00



The One and the Many

By R.J. Rushdoony. Subtitled *Studies in the Philosophy of Order and Ultimacy*, 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.

Paperback, 375 pages, index, \$26.00



The Flight from Humanity

By R.J. Rushdoony. Subtitled *A Study of the Effect of Neoplatonism on Christianity*.

Neoplatonism is a Greek philosophical assumption about the world. It views that which is form or spirit (such as mind) as good and that which is physical (flesh) as evil. But Scripture says all of man fell into sin, not just his flesh. The first sin was the desire to be as god, determining good and evil apart from God (Gen. 3:5). 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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Humanism, the Deadly Deception

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Psychology

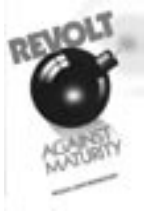


Politics of Guilt and Pity

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."

Hardback, 371 pages, index, \$20.00

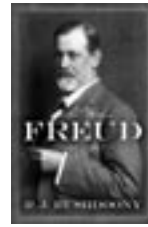


Revolt Against Maturity

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.

Hardback, 334 pages, index, \$18.00



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 to Western guilt — Christianity. Rushdoony shows conclusively the error of Freud's thought and the disastrous consequences of his influence in society.

Paperback, 74 pages, \$13.00

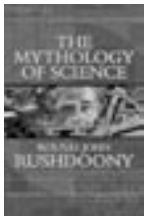


The Cure of Souls: Recovering the Biblical Doctrine of Confession

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.

Hardback, 320 pages with index, \$26.00

Science



The Mythology of Science

By R.J. Rushdoony. This book points out the fraud of the empirical claims of much modern science since Charles Darwin. This book is about the religious nature of evolutionary thought, how these religious presuppositions underlie our modern intellectual paradigm, and how they are deferred to as sacrosanct by institutions and disciplines far removed from the empirical sciences. The "mythology" of modern science is its religious devotion to the myth of evolution. Evolution "so expresses or coincides with the contemporary spirit that its often radical contradictions and absurdities are never apparent, in that they express the basic presuppositions, however untenable, of everyday life and thought." In evolution, man is the highest expression of intelligence and reason, and such thinking will not yield itself to submission to a God it views as a human cultural creation, useful, if at all, only in

a cultural context. The basis of science and all other thought will ultimately be found in a higher ethical and philosophical context; whether or not this is seen as religious does not change the nature of that context. "Part of the mythology of modern evolutionary science is its failure to admit that it is a faith-based paradigm."

Paperback, 134 pages, \$17.00



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.

Paperback, 159 pages, \$14.00



Creation According to the Scriptures

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. It is a must reading for all who are observing closely the gradual defection of many allegedly conservative churches and denominations, or who simply want a greater grasp of an orthodox, God-honoring view of the Bible.

Paperback, 159 pages, \$18.00

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. Wealth is a tool for dominion men to use as faithful stewards.

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

By R.J. Rushdoony. In this study, 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 reader is shown how envious man finds any superiority in others intolerable and how this leads to a desire for a leveling. The author uncovers the larceny in the heart of man and its results. See how class warfare and a social order based on conflict lead to disaster. This book is essential reading for an understanding of the moral crisis of modern economics and the only certain long-term cure.

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Christianity and Capitalism

By R.J. Rushdoony. In a simple, straightforward style, the Christian case for capitalism is presented. Capital, in the form of individual and family property, is protected in Scripture and is necessary for liberty.

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A Christian View of Vocation: The Glory of the Mundane

By Terry Applegate. To many Christians, business is a "dirty" occupation fit only for greedy, manipulative unbelievers. The author, a successful Christian businessman, explodes this myth in this hard-hitting title.

Pamphlet, 12 pages, \$1.00

Biblical Studies



Genesis, Volume I of Commentaries on the Pentateuch

By Rousas John Rushdoony. *Genesis* begins the Bible, and is foundational to it. In recent years, it has become commonplace for both humanists and churchmen to sneer at anyone who takes Genesis 1-11 as historical. Yet to believe in the myth of evolution is to accept trillions of miracles to account for our cosmos. Spontaneous generation, the development of something out of nothing, and the blind belief in the miraculous powers of chance, require tremendous faith. Darwinism is irrationality and insanity compounded. Theology without literal six-day creationism becomes alien to the God of Scripture because it turns from the God Who acts and Whose Word is the creative word and the word of power, to a belief in process as god. The god of the non-creationists is the creation of man and a figment of their imagination. They must play games with the Bible to vindicate their position. Evolution is both naive and irrational. Its adherents violate the scientific canons they profess by their fanatical and intolerant belief. The entire book of Genesis is basic to Biblical theology. The church needs to re-study it to recognize its centrality.

Hardback, 297 pages, indices, \$45.00



Exodus, Volume II of Commentaries on the Pentateuch

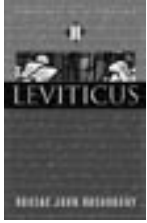
Essentially, all of mankind is on some sort of an exodus. However, the path of fallen man is vastly different from that of the righteous. Apart from Jesus Christ and His atoning work, the exodus of a fallen humanity means only a further descent from sin into death. But in Christ, the exodus is now a glorious ascent into the justice and dominion of the everlasting Kingdom of God. Therefore, if we are to better understand the gracious provisions made for us in the "promised land" of the New Covenant, a thorough examination into the historic path of Israel as described in the book of Exodus is essential. It is to this end that this volume was written.

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Much like the book of Proverbs, any emphasis upon the practical applications of God's law is readily shunned in pursuit of more "spiritual" studies. Books like Leviticus are considered dull, overbearing, and irrelevant. But man was created in God's image and is duty-bound to develop the implications of that image by obedience to God's law. The book of Leviticus contains over ninety references to the word holy. The purpose, therefore, of this third book of the Pentateuch is to demonstrate the legal foundation of holiness in the totality of our lives. This present study is dedicated to equipping His church for that redemptive mission.

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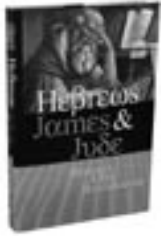
The great problem in the church's interpretation of Scripture has been its ecclesiastical orientation, as though God speaks only to the church, and commands only the church. The Lord God speaks in and through His Word to the whole man, to every man, and to every area of life and thought. ... To assume that the Triune Creator of all things is in His word and person only relevant to the church is to deny His Lordship or sovereignty. If we turn loose the whole Word of God onto the church and the world, we shall see with joy its power and glory. This is the purpose of my brief comments on Romans."

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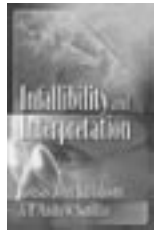
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following the Enlightenment's humanism, of reason. They affirm Biblical infallibility because the God Whom the Bible reveals could speak in no other way than infallibly, and because the Bible in which God is revealed asserts that God alone speaks infallibly. Men deny infallibility to God not for intellectual reasons, but for ethical reasons—they are sinners in rebellion against God and His authority in favor of their own. The authors wrote convinced that only by a recovery of faith in an infallible Bible and obedience to its every command can Christians hope to turn back evil both in today's church and culture.

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Keeping Our Sacred Trust

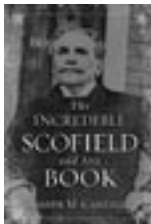
Edited by Andrew Sandlin. The Bible and the Christian Faith have been under attack in one way or another throughout much of the history of the church, but only in recent times have these attacks been perceived *within* the church as a healthy alternative to orthodoxy. This book is a trumpet blast heralding a full-orbed, Biblical, orthodox Christianity. The hope of the modern world is not a passive compromise with passing heterodox fads, but aggressive devotion to the time-honored Faith "once delivered to the saints."

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By R.J. Rushdoony. "The doctrine of the infallibility of Scripture can be denied, but the concept of infallibility as such cannot be logically denied. Infallibility is an inescapable concept. If men refuse to ascribe infallibility to Scripture, it is because the concept has been transferred to something else. The word infallibility is not normally used in these transfers; the concept is disguised and veiled, but in a variety of ways, infallibility is ascribed to concepts, things, men and institutions."

Booklet (now part of the author's *Systematic Theology*), 69 pages, \$2.00



The Incredible Scofield and His Book

By Joseph M. Canfield. This powerful and fully documented study exposes the questionable background and faulty theology of the man responsible for the popular Scofield Reference Bible, which did much to promote the dispensational system. The story is disturbing in its historical account of the illusive personality canonized as a dispensational saint and calls into question the seriousness of his motives and scholarship.

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By Mark R. Rushdoony. God's will and man's will are both involved in man's salvation, but the church has split in answering the question, "Whose will is determinative?"

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Christianity and the State

By R.J. Rushdoony. You'll not find a more concise statement of Christian government, nor a more precise critique of contemporary statism. This book develops the Biblical view of the state against the modern state's humanism and its attempts to govern all spheres of life. Whether it be the influence of Greek thought, or the present manifestations of fascism, this dynamic volume will provide you with a superb introduction to the subject. It reads like a collection of essays on the Christian view of the state and the return of true Christian government.

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By Edward A. Powell and R.J. Rushdoony. God's Kingdom covers all things in its scope, and its immediate ministry includes, according to Scripture, the ministry of grace (the church), instruction (the Christian and homeschool), help to the needy (the diaconate), and many other things. God's appointed means for financing His Kingdom activities is centrally the tithe. This work affirms that the Biblical requirement of tithing is a continuing aspect of God's law-word and cannot be neglected. This book is "must reading" as Christians work to take dominion in the Lord's name.

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Salvation and Godly Rule

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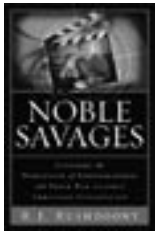
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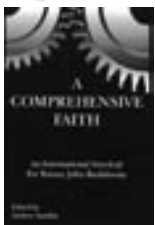
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Edited by Andrew Sandlin. This is the surprise *Festschrift* presented to R.J. Rushdoony at his 80th birthday celebration in April, 1996. These essays are in gratitude to Rush's influence and elucidate the importance of his theological and philosophical contributions in numerous fields. Contributors include Theodore Letis, Brian Abshire, Steve Schlissel, Joe Morecraft III, Jean-Marc Berthoud, Byron Snapp, Samuel Blumenfeld, Christine and Thomas Schirrmacher, Herbert W. Titus, Owen Fourie, Ellsworth McIntyre, Howard Phillips, Joseph McAuliffe, Andrea Schwartz, David Estrada-Herrero, Stephen Perks, Ian Hodge, and Colonel V. Doner. Also included is a forward by John Frame and a brief biographical sketch of R. J. Rushdoony's life by Mark Rushdoony. This book was produced as a "top-secret" project by Friends of Chalcedon and donated to Ross House Books. It is sure to be a collector's item one day.

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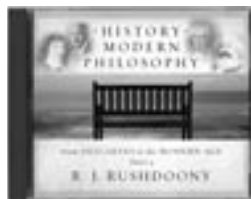
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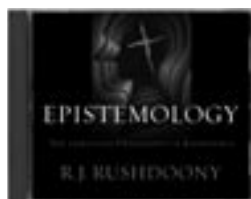
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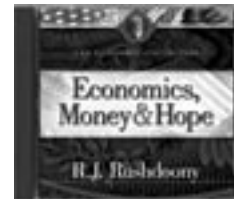
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