

FAITH FOR ALL OF LIFE

Faith for All of Life
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PROCLAIMING THE AUTHORITY OF GOD'S WORD OVER EVERY AREA OF LIFE AND THOUGHT

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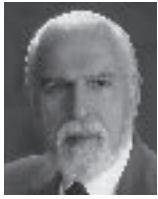
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Government and Dominion

(Reprinted from *Sovereignty* [Vallecito, CA: Ross House Books, 2007], 149-153.)

R. J. Rushdoony



Saint John Chrysostom (c. A.D. 347–407) is famous for his golden-tongued oratory, and also for his resistance to imperial power.

He is less well known for his works of charity. In his day, the Christians at Constantinople numbered c. 100,000. According to J. G. Davies, the Christians held “themselves responsible for the maintenance of fifty thousand poor folk.” In addition to the support of the clergy, three thousand widows and virgins were supported. The funds for the varied works of the church came from the tithes and offerings of the faithful; there were also receipts from lands and properties bequeathed to the church, and the emperor gave an allowance to the church. The poor-fund had Chrysostom’s especial attention and concern.¹ At the same time, Chrysostom served as a judge, a function assumed early in church history in terms of Paul’s command in 1 Corinthians 6:1–6.² These hearings were held on Mondays so that peace might be reestablished between the contending parties by and after the decision and before the following Sunday.³

All this was by no means unusual. Christians took seriously Paul’s command that Christians must judge or govern the world (1 Cor. 6:2–3). They early established their own courts of law, schools, welfare work, hospitals, and more.

W. H. C. Frend, in surveying the history of the church to A.D. 604, mentions in passing some of the activities Christians had instituted. Many of these were things common to Jewish life, in

obedience to Biblical law. The apocryphal *Book of Tobit* gives us evidence of this. Tobit counsels his son to give alms faithfully, to pay all workmen promptly, to eat his bread with the hungry and the needy, and to clothe the naked. “See that thou never do to another what thou wouldest hate to have done to thee by another” (Tobit 4:16). The apostate emperor, Julian, recognized that pagans were attracted to Christianity by its community life: “No Jew ever has to beg, and the impious Galileans support not only their own poor but ours as well.”⁴ Hermas wrote of the Christian duty to care for widows and orphans, to relieve distressed believers, to practice hospitality, to reverence the aged, to practice justice, and to preserve their brotherhood. All the early literature stressed such responsibilities.⁵ Prisoners seized by raiders were ransomed. The church, like the Jewish synagogue, acted as a trustee for widows and orphans, and Cyprian compared the clergy with the Levites of the Old Testament in their responsibilities.⁶ The sick and captives were to be visited; a decent burial for the Christian dead was seen as another responsibility.⁷ Church buildings were more impressive and better constructed than others, and they included rooms for the storage of provisions for the needy.⁸ Basil the Great used monks to staff schools, orphanages, and hospitals.⁹ Pope Gregory I took care not to waste the Lord’s assets. Careful records were kept of all those who received charity, how much and on what date. Fraud was emphatically discouraged. Gregory’s palace entertained strangers and fed the sick.¹⁰

The medieval era saw such ministries developed and extended. They continued after the Reformation. In England, the preaching of Thomas Lever (1550) started a major movement to undo the depredations of Henry VIII against the church by making a massive restitution to God by way of Christian works: educational, charitable, and so on.¹¹ The Church of England’s charity schools were a factor in later years.¹²

This very brief survey makes it clear that Christians assumed the responsibility for health, education, and welfare. They also provided courts of law to which, in the early centuries, pagans as well as Christians went for justice. *Clearly, the basic government of society was in the hands of Christians, and Christian institutions.*

This should not surprise us. According to Isaiah 9:6, the government shall be on Christ’s shoulder. With His coming, His death, Resurrection, and ascension, we are told that He “is the blessed and only Potentate, the King of kings, and Lord of lords” (1 Tim. 6:15), *is*, not shall be. As kings and priests unto God in Christ (Rev. 1:6), Christians have a duty to rule for Him. We are given this office by virtue of His atonement (Rev. 1:5), so that we are now His dominion people and therefore His justice men, His law defenders.

This faith was not a matter of debate or discussion within the church but a *tacit assumption*. To assume such governmental powers was an affront to the Roman Empire, as it is an affront to the nations today. Marxist states strictly prohibit it. Where a pretense of religious

freedom is maintained by some, Christians are limited to worship in a few churches, but barred from a governmental and dominion function.

Dominion is the exercise of government, and a religious fact. It was only natural that monks should have first created new lands in the Netherlands with their dikes, cleared forests for farms, and taken rocky and barren areas and converted them into fertile lands. All this and more meant the exercise of dominion, of government in Christ's name.

This governmental mandate was diminished and sometimes extinguished by two things. *First*, within the church, faulty theology, pietism, and antinomianism, and, later, eschatologies of flight and escapism, led to the collapse of Christian governmental action. *Second*, statism sought to hold exclusive dominion and government in every sphere, and it has successfully gained such powers.

Behind all this have been religious doctrines and movements, humanistic crusades and faiths. In the United States, this anti-Christianity came into focus in Ralph Waldo Emerson, and in Walt Whitman. Whitman's announced purpose, as set forth in "Starting from Paumanok," in the 1892 version, was "solely to drop in the earth the germs of a greater religion."¹³ Whitman saw himself as a poet-prophet, patterning himself after a fictional character in a French novel.¹⁴ In "Chanting the Square Deific" (1865), he presented himself as the current expression of a pantheistic divinity:

Chanting the square deific, out of the One advancing, out of the sides; Out of the old and new—out of the square entirely divine, Solid, four-sided, (all the sides needed) ... from this side JEHOVAH, am I, Old Brahm I, and Saturnius am; Not Time affects me—I am Time, old, modern as any, Unpersuadable, relentless, executing righteous judgments....¹⁵

In the same "poem," Whitman also identifies himself as Satan.¹⁶ This was not new. In 1885, in "The Sleepers," Whitman declared himself to be Lucifer's "sorrowful terrible heir."¹⁷ What begins as a protest against slavery becomes a "poem" celebrating homosexual fellatio (in section 8).¹⁸ According to Helen Vendler, who admires Whitman, this is compared to the wedding feast at Cana in Galilee, and Christ turning water into wine. (Vendler sees the episode as between Whitman and a virgin.)¹⁹ For our purpose, it is sufficient to say that Whitman, more rigorously than Emerson, not only adopted a new religion but also a new morality. Moreover, for him man's true future was democracy. Whitman's monism, as Rosenstock-Huessy pointed out with respect to all monism, leads to slavery. The only truth for Whitman was the voice of the people, whatever it may say, provided that the people were not Christian. Whitman's writings are a prolonged revolt against Christianity and Christian dominion and government.

Because Whitman's religion is the faith of intellectuals and educators, we have seen the steady advancement of monocratic government by the state. When people today speak of "government," they mean the state, whereas the true government begins with the self-government of the Christian man, and government means the family, church, school, our vocation, our society, and its many institutions and agencies, and only partially the state.

By surrendering dominion and government, churchmen have made themselves irrelevant to God and to man, to heaven and earth alike. Because Christ by His atonement has made us kings and priests unto God, we have an inescapable duty to exercise dominion and government.

Man is in Christ a prophet, priest,

and king. As a prophet, we must each interpret our lives and world in terms of God's law-word and apply that word to every sphere. To be a prophet in Christ is to live by God's every word (Matt. 4:4).

As priests, we dedicate and consecrate ourselves, our world, and our every activity to the triune God. All things must be made holy in Him (Zech. 14:20–21).

As kings, we are to rule the world in Christ and to develop all its potentialities for Him, so that the desert places blossom like the rose (Isa. 35:1).

Our offices in Christ are governmental and dominion callings. We have none other calling in Him. ■

1. J. G. Davies, *Daily Life of Early Christians* (New York: Duell, Sloan and Pearce, 1953), 167–168.

2. *Ibid.*, 169–172.

3. *Ibid.*, 169.

4. W. H. C. Frend, *The Rise of Christianity* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1984), 25.

5. *Ibid.*, 133.

6. *Ibid.*, 404–405.

7. *Ibid.*, 421.

8. *Ibid.*, 558.

9. *Ibid.*, 631.

10. *Ibid.*, 885.

11. Thomas Lever, *Sermons, 1550* (Westminster, England: Constable, 1901).

12. W. K. Lowther Clarke, *Eighteenth Century Piety* (London, England: Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge, 1944), 45–46, 69ff.

13. Lawrence Buell, "Unitarian Aesthetics and Emerson's Poet Priest," *American Quarterly* 20, No. 1 (Spring 1968): 3.

14. Esther Shephard, *Walt Whitman's Prose* (New York: Harcourt, Brace, 1938).

15. Walt Whitman, *Leaves of Grass* (New York: Grosset & Dunlap, n.d.), 425.

16. *Ibid.*, 427.

17. *Ibid.*, 98.

18. *Ibid.*, 94.

19. Helen Vendler, "Body Language," *Harper's Magazine*, October 1986, 64–65.

The Lordship of Jesus Christ

Mark R. Rushdoony



“[H]e is a Jew who is one inwardly,” Paul wrote (Rom. 2:29 NKJV). In creating his alternative to Christianity, Mohammed

countered that “He is Muslim who is one outwardly.” This is why Islam has always been a largely external religion that emphasizes outward conformity. It also clarifies why Islam has always spread by warfare, threat of force, and has been characterized by statism. It is possible and acceptable to force people to convert to the external conformity to Islam.

Christianity does not have mere outward conformity as its goal, but rather the believer’s inward renewal, which is then followed by the outward working of grace. In Christianity, saving faith represents an inward change, a regeneration so transforming it is called a “new birth.” This inward change is more than an analogy; it is substantive because it includes the indwelling of the Holy Spirit. The Spirit leads the “new creature” in Christ to a sanctified life of faithfulness. The Spirit’s work is efficacious; it has its desired effect. The believer is not left to wonder; he can live in terms of the certainty to which his salvation by grace testifies. Coercion is not part of the gospel message, but certainty is.

The Certainty

When many people look at the Christian message of certain truths and certain moral law, they think in modern statist terms, assume Christians think like statist, and see their moral certainties as a political agenda. What statist

believe, they impose by law, and they assume that we will do the same.

Coercion is not the goal of Christianity, is not a method by which godliness can be furthered, and is not the strategy of Christian Reconstruction. That, however, must not change our message of the certain truth of every word of God.

False Spirituality

Arguably the most persistent heresy in Christianity is Neoplatonism, which is the ancient dualistic perspective of Greek thought. Greek thought saw man’s problem not as a moral one, but as a metaphysical one. Man’s problem was that he was a physical being in a physical world, unable to achieve the higher plane of the spiritual. Neoplatonism sees true religion as a separation into the realm of the spiritual (or the related realm of ideas) and that the material concerns of life are counterproductive of legitimate religious activity.

One disastrous effect of Neoplatonism is that it limits the realm of what is spiritual and hence the scope of religion. To the extent that Christianity has ever embraced Neoplatonic categories, it has limited the message to what it has defined as legitimate spiritual concerns.

True Spirituality

In Scripture “spiritual” does not refer to the ethereal realm of Greek thought but to the power of God’s Spirit. Man’s problem is not that he is a physical being in a physical world; his problem is that he is a sinner. Man’s problem is not metaphysical, but moral. Man was created to be a physical being, and even heaven will be a physical place

(John 14:2–3), and our resurrection bodies will be real, physical entities (1 Cor. 15:35ff).

In Neoplatonism (and false Christian theology, which assumes such a dualism) salvation addresses a metaphysical problem and is man’s escape from the physical to the spiritual. (In Greek thought men could even become gods by transcending their mortality.) In Biblical Christianity spirituality is the power of the Holy Spirit in the very down-to-earth lives of very creaturely men because their real problem, their moral rebellion, was addressed by the second person of the Trinity incarnate in human flesh (which, if Greek dualism is accepted, was a very “unspiritual” thing for God to do). In Christianity, salvation is God’s resolution of man’s moral problem, so that regenerate man, in the power of the Holy Spirit, can have a certainty about his responsibility in his life in a fallen world.

Our Spiritual Life

Our life and growth in terms of our redemption is our *sanctification*, whereby the Holy Spirit causes us, more and more (but never completely), to reject sinfulness and live unto righteousness. Sanctification is not our escape into false, dualistic spirituality but our growth, in this world of matter and earthly responsibilities, in terms of the reality of the new life that is within us.

True spirituality causes us to address this world in the power of God’s Spirit and the authority of His Word, not escape from it. Our sanctification enables us to “get back to work,” to repudiate our rebellious ways and serve God. Man was created to work; Adam had work

before he was tempted. Our salvation is thus our restoration, our recall to life and work in terms of God's will.

The "will of God" can be a vague and meaningless term, however, if we do not self-consciously equate the *will* of God with the revealed *Word* of God, including His law. Our redemption is thus a recall to law-keeping. This is why James could say that faith without works was dead (James 2:20). Good works are not the means of justification but the certain result. The true believer will show the reality of God's Spirit within him by his submission to the certain Word of God.

Lawless Christianity

The Christian must be a law-keeper to be faithful to God. The great crisis of modern theology today is its exclusion of obedience, its Neoplatonic assumption that a vague self-defined spirituality is the essence of Christian duty. The term "godliness" is today rarely used because it implies a standard defined by God when we prefer the ambiguity of "spirituality." The theological exclusion of God's law from Christian practice is called "antinomianism" (anti-*nomos*, or anti-*law*). Antinomianism is moral anarchism in principle if not always in practice. Antinomianism is not anti-law *per se* because all but the anarchist believe in some law; it is only anti-God's-law because when God's law is rejected, some form of man's law will prevail. The question is not law or no law, then, but "whose law?"

The Lordship of Christ

The New Testament writers were very careful to show us who Jesus Christ is because His lordship is an essential part of the Christian gospel. Still, many Christians deny this, some explicitly and even more implicitly.

Some Jews insisted that "We will not have this man to reign over us"

(Luke 19:14). Those same Jews believed they were completely orthodox; in the name of what they saw as true religious faith, they opposed God Himself. The modern church is not much different. There is much rebellion in the name of true faith, much disbelief accompanied by passionate claims to genuine faith.

Another incident saw some Jews wanting to force Jesus to be their king, their political Messiah (John 6:15). They did not begin with His lordship but with their will and the benefits that would follow having a miracle worker as their leader. In that scenario the people were the kingmakers, the real sovereigns who drafted Jesus to be at the head of their program.

It is a false confession to say Jesus is Lord by man's choice. This is the error of Arminianism. It makes God subject to man, and Jesus Christ man's resource, a fire and life insurance policy, a service provider, a spare tire for man.

The True Confession

It is not sufficient to tell people they must make Jesus their Lord. The true confession is that Jesus is Lord by right. One of the messianic names of Jesus is "Shiloh," which means "He whose right it is." We do not make Jesus Lord; we acknowledge His eternal lordship and repent that our sin ever blinded us from that confession.

The power of the gospel comes from Whose gospel it is. Jesus is Lord by right. This is why coercion is absurd; if we try to coerce people, we claim God's right of calling.

Jesus Is Lord

Jesus is Lord because He is God, the eternal second person of the triune God. Jesus is Lord because His role as Messiah made Him the unique link between God and man. Jesus is Lord because He taught us "[a]ll power is given unto me in heaven and in earth" (Matt. 28:18).

We often miss the obvious, as the most common name for Jesus in Scripture is "Lord."

John shows us Christ in the New Jerusalem (Rev. 21–22), the Kingdom of God in its eternal perfection. There, Jesus is the temple, the light to whom all bring their honor, the keeper of the book of life, the source of the water of life that feeds the tree of life, the *alpha* and the *omega*, the beginning and the ending, the first and the last, both the root and offspring of David, the bright and morning star. John concluded Revelation with a curse on anyone who would take away these words. The apostle was not just talking of altering letters on paper, but about denying what this prophecy said about Jesus Christ.

By a false confession, we must not detract from who Jesus is. "Lord" means master, sovereign, one with proprietary ownership. He is not our fire insurance, He is not a service provider, He is not a resource we choose to access. Our confession must be that Jesus is Lord, that He is Shiloh, He whose right it is.

The lordship of Jesus Christ means that Jesus Christ, as God, is sovereign, so that all is subject to Him. In every area of life and thought, everything and everyone is called to submission to God and His Christ. The unredeemed are called to repent and believe. The redeemed are called to respond to the Spirit in faithfulness.

Every sphere of life is called to obedience: family, church, state, school, arts, business. Every profession and discipline is so called. Sometimes a question is a cynical method of dismissing something. If we are ever tempted to ask, "What does God have to do with art, or education, or business, or any other sphere of human behavior?" let us rather ask ourselves to defend the position that a negative answer would

Continued on page 30

Does Christian Reconstruction Have a *Compelling* Analysis?

Eugene C. Newman



Review of Presuppositionalism and Sovereignty

The first distinctive of the Christian Reconstructionist Analysis (or Argument), CRA, concerned the presuppositional approach to understanding anything, including God. One might legitimately ask what accounts for the notion of presuppositionalism in the first place. Are we expected to “presuppose” presuppositionalism? Would we then be guilty of either begging the question or indulging in a logically circular argument?

To help answer this question, we looked at the Biblical justification that Van Til and especially Rushdoony taught. Because Genesis posits “God as Uncreated Being” (a term derived from Scripture rather than one explicitly found therein), we first see that God is utterly and absolutely *transcendent* over His creation and not a part of it, nor subject to its laws. “In the beginning God created ...” in Hebrew has reference to God as being “other than” or “above” every aspect of His creation.

Van Til emphasized this Creator/creature distinction. Specifically, God as Uncreated Being is still a “being,” that is God is not a mere abstraction, He is not merely a “limiting concept,” but is “from the beginning” personal. “Created being” is time, space, matter, energy, or motion in the visible realm, and we can say that created being extends to the invisible realm of thoughts, ideas, or potentiality. Therefore, all of reality is what

it is by virtue of God’s creation of it.

When we use the term *presuppositional*, we are acknowledging that (1) God the Creator is the ultimate point of reference for all facts; and (2) it follows from this that every fact “has behind it” the meaning, purpose, and significance that God created it to have. Thus for every fact man encounters, he must ask what is presupposed or assumed to be true about that fact in order for it to be what it is. We get that answer by first going to God’s special revelation, the Bible, and second to God’s general revelation (e.g., the physical world).

When the late Greg L. Bahnsen taught on this principle, he suggested we ask the question this way: “What must be true in order for this or that to be so? Or, how can one account for this idea, fact, or principle?” If the God of Genesis did not exist, there would be no ultimate point of reference outside of a person’s mind or experience; therefore, presupposing anything would be a moot point. The opposite of *presuppositionalism*, as we’re applying the term, is what Van Til called *brute factuality*, a term that describes how facts appear to a reprobate, a “covenant breaker.”

A brute fact is an atomistic fact: it “stands on its own.” Since God has not created it, a brute fact is “uninterpreted”—“neutral” to the mind and to experience. But if this is the case, then there can be no *necessary* difference between one fact and another fact (any difference is a purely arbitrary or tentative evaluation). Thus there can be

nothing inherently *true* about what a person thinks or experiences; therefore, nothing can be presupposed or assumed concerning any such “fact” he encounters. Rushdoony argued that in such a scenario no knowledge is possible, so reality itself cannot be known even if it could be shown to exist.

In his sin, man suppresses the requirement that all of reality has a presuppositional basis (the Creator God as the ultimate reference point), which leads him to the illusory belief that he can grant or withhold to any given fact its meaning, purpose, and significance. But man does not live in “his world” but God’s. God as Creator is exclusively responsible for the definition of all things, including man himself. Thus the definition of all words, all concepts, and all material things has *fixed boundaries*, discoverable either in God’s general revelation or by His special revelation.

According to this distinctive, the CRA demands to know the presuppositional basis of any assertion of fact because when one correctly discovers the Biblical presupposition, God is uniquely glorified and exalted above all else. What is “compelling” about this distinctive is that *there can only be one possible presuppositional basis for any given fact or set of facts* because God alone is God; “There is none else” as the prophet Isaiah declares. There is only one basis for truth because God alone is immutable and He imparts this characteristic to His own creation decree. Just the opposite is true for man.

Man was created to change and adapt the way he thinks and acts. All creation is contingent. So while man must indulge in numerous interpretations, while he must experiment and test things, behind that reality can be only one ultimate basis for the truth-value of any factual assertion he makes. This is *not* to say that there is only one possible interpretation, rather that any interpretation that contradicts or undermines God's decree is false and can only lead in due time to failure.

Mankind is obligated to find truth but especially to find it in God and in His revelation. Take for example the principle of causality. This is foundational to science and metaphysics. The Scriptures clearly teach “nothing happens by randomness and chance.” Therefore, this causal principle is the presupposition operative whenever causality is referenced to explain either a scientific phenomena, an historical event, or a future potentiality. Obviously, this is not of little significance in life. When one denies the God of Genesis, and instead gives credence or authority to some other metaphysical scheme, he doesn't find a “new reality” or a “new truth”—he finds confusion, contradiction, and death.

The second distinctive is that *only God has ultimate authority, only God is sovereign*. God's sovereign authority forms the presuppositional basis for God's *government* of all creation, all reality, and all factuality. Only God's truth is truth, but Genesis reveals that God “spoke” the creation into existence; God spoke the truth into existence. Truth was not an abstraction in the Greek sense, a mere “Idea” hanging in the air or alternatively hidden in the cloudy memory of man, as it were. Rather truth or factuality was the manifestation of God creatively speaking His “decree” in real time, in real history.

God's decree not only *defined* what a thing was, it was also the law governing its meaning, purpose, and significance. For example, the Creator revealed “light” to be a physical property, a metaphor describing His truth, and what the reprobate will never see if he dies in his reprobate (unregenerate) condition. So we can say that God's sovereignty is the ultimate authority upon which He governs every aspect of creation. But there is something even more significant here for our purposes: the corollary to the doctrine of God's sovereignty is that only a “sovereign” can generate moral precepts (e.g., what is right and wrong) and thereby exercise the ethical use of power.

Rushdoony called attention to the first American dictionary definition of *sovereignty*, written by Noah Webster and published in 1828: *sovereignty* is an attribute that properly belongs only to God. Man's dominion is sometimes confused with sovereign rule, but this is a serious error. The subduing of the earth was a calling *imposed by God on man* and limited by His decree. The authority God gave man was real, and man would always be responsible for how he exercised it. But it was also (a) conditional on his faithfulness (as a consequence of man's evil he was banished from the Garden and lost his dominion privileges), (b) limited in scope (e.g., no dominion over *man* was comprehended), and (c) absolutely subordinate to the prior sovereign authority of God his Creator.

Having acknowledged these Biblical precepts, we can better understand how the notion of sovereignty brings to the surface an important aspect of mankind's evil. When a man asserts his own evil, he is asserting an autonomous claim for his own authority (which in time becomes an ultimate claim). He makes himself the “determiner” or “au-

thor” of what is “good and evil” because as his own “sovereign,” he claims for himself the autonomous authority to do so.

This is not “authority” but “presumption.” Presumption in the political realm was correctly identified by Rushdoony as “statism” (see his study *Christianity and the State*), while in the social sphere it became “civil rights” (see his study *The Politics of Guilt and Pity*). In both cases, an illegitimate sovereign authority is at work. Thus we understand the spiritual and ethical motivation of our Founding Fathers, who insisted on a system of checks and balances in their newly created “constitutional republic.” But they also knew well that no form of human government could truly mitigate the depravity of autonomous sovereign authority.

What is compelling about this distinctive in setting forth a CRA is that God's ultimate authority and sovereignty becomes the only justification, the only presuppositional basis for asserting the truthfulness and moral legitimacy of any fact. “By what authority does a man claim a righteous thought, word, or deed? In God's or his own?” The CRA demands to ask such a question. And if a man should refuse to answer honestly in this life, he will surely be required to give an answer in the next. ■

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Athanasius, Champion of the Trinity

Becky Morecraft

“[T]he Athanasian Creed¹ is precisely and logically theological ... [T]his creed is extremely important and represents a major victory of Western Christianity.”² — R. J. Rushdoony



I want to tell you a story about two men. One man was very wicked in that he tried to change the truth of God into a lie. He met a terrible end. The other man was righteous because he defended the truth of God and would not give it up, no matter what men threatened to do to him. I pray with all my heart that you and I will be like the second man, Athanasius.

Athanasius was born in Alexandria, Egypt, around the year A.D. 297, just sixty years after the first known public church was built.³ At about age sixteen, he was taken under the care of Bishop Alexander of Alexandria, who sponsored him as a student in the “Didascaleion,” a famous catechetical school where he probably studied under revered teachers such as Origen and Clement, and where he undoubtedly learned grammar, logic, and rhetoric, disciplines that would enable him to boldly defend Biblical truth.⁴ Early in his life, Athanasius began carefully explaining God’s Word to those who had been converted from paganism. And, although he respectfully listened to his teachers, he was a serious student of the Word of God and constantly compared Scripture with Scripture, carefully examining every teaching of man before accepting it as the truth.

Athanasius wrote essays⁵ on the nature of the Incarnation of Christ, addressed to a new Christian he was teaching. As he formulated his thoughts and wrote them down, God was prepar-

ing him to stand for the truth of Christ’s divinity against a heresy of tidal-wave proportions. False ideas about the truth found in Scripture are called heresies, and those who teach them are called heretics.

The early church called councils (meetings of pastors and Bible teachers) to discuss and pray about new doctrines men began to teach. They wanted to be sure the men didn’t make things up from their own minds but taught only what the Bible said. The Bible has no mistakes in it and is the only reliable guide for us to understand what God thinks about ... well, about everything! When a mere man decides he has a better idea about something than God, that man is foolish. Such a man was Arius, a priest from Libya, who challenged the belief that Christ had existed eternally with God the Father. Although this may seem unimportant at first, our very salvation depends on the Biblical truth that God the Son, the only God-man, could atone for our sins. Someone had to tell Arius he was wrong, no matter how many stood against him! That man was Athanasius.

Athanasius pointed out that Arius taught three very wrong ideas: (1) Christ is a created being; (2) Christ is not eternal; (3) Christ is not of the same essence with the Father. Many men liked these views because they made man seem just as important as God, or at least closer to being a sort of “god” like Arius believed Jesus was. How very foolish! God promises us in His Word that the foolishness

of men will be brought to nothing. I will tell you how Arius met his terrible end in just a few minutes.

Arius’ false views soon became widely popular. “All over the Empire, Christians could be heard singing a catchy tune that championed the Arian view: *There was a time when the Son was not!*”⁶ Even the emperor, Constantine, favored Arius’ heretical views because they made him feel god-like—if Jesus was created, a mere man without immortality and not equal with God the Father, then was not he, the emperor, as great or greater than Jesus? He told those in power to find those who opposed Arius’ new doctrine and persecute them. If they didn’t change their minds about Arius’ teachings, they were to be killed! What do you think Athanasius did? Although his life was in danger, he did not flinch nor back down. He simply refused to compromise God’s Word and continued to boldly proclaim that Jesus is the Son of God, equal with the Father and Spirit in substance, power, and glory.⁷

Disagreements concerning this doctrine became so widespread and serious that a church council was called in order to discuss the doctrine of the Trinity and reach a conclusion: whose view was right, Athanasius or Arius? The world held its breath to find out who would win this battle, a battle more important than any physical battle with spears and swords, for the “fullness of the God-head” was at stake!

Athanasius had become Archdeacon of Alexandria and as such, was allowed

to accompany his patron, the Bishop Alexander, to the first Council of Nicea in A.D. 325, called to iron out these disagreements concerning the Trinity. The newly converted emperor, Constantine the Great, was anxious to see these disagreements come to an end, for, "Division in the church," he said, "is worse than war."⁸ Athanasius was allowed to speak and defend the truths he held dear at this meeting: "Those who maintain, 'There was a time when the Son was not,' rob God of His Word, like plunderers," he asserted.⁹ Theodoret, Bishop of Cyrrhus, Syria, tells us that Athanasius "contended earnestly for the apostolic doctrines, and was applauded by their champions, while he earned the hostility of their opponents."¹⁰ A man approached the short, dark-skinned bishop, who was scornfully called "the black dwarf" by his enemies,¹¹ and asked angrily: "Athanasius, why do you not admit it [that Arius is right]? You are fighting a losing battle. Do you not know that at this moment the whole world is against you?" Here is one man's description of what happened next:

Athanasius threw back his shoulders and drew a long breath. He looked straight into the face of his heckler. His probing eyes flashed like the Northern Lights as he uttered the memorable words, "**Is the world against Athanasius? So be it. Then Athanasius is against the world!**"¹²

Arius' views about the Trinity were declared heretical at the Council of Nicea, and the orthodox views of the Trinity were spelled out concretely in the Nicene Creed.¹³ But although Arius was exiled, his friends in places of political power helped him regain his influence. He was invited to come back to the city of Alexandria and preach, spreading more of his false teachings to the gullible people who loved his convincing voice. Bishop Alexander heard that Arius was

on his way to preach to a large crowd of admirers, and his eyes filled with tears as he fell to his knees, praying: "If Arius comes tomorrow to the church, take me away, and let me not perish with the guilty. But if Thou pitiest Thy Church, as Thou dost pity it, take Arius away, lest when he enters heresy enter with him."¹⁴

The next morning, as Arius and his retinue were making their way to the church where he was to preach to large crowds of people, he had a smile on his face. This was his triumphant procession! Suddenly, the procession stopped. Arius was in terrible pain and left the group to be relieved. After some time, one of his friends walked over the hill to find him. "Arius," he called. "Are you alright?" To his dismay, he found Arius dead, for he had collapsed and drowned in a ditch that was used as a latrine! This horrifying death was viewed as an act of God, who will not let the wicked prosper forever. Dr. R. J. Rushdoony observes: "It was ... a providential conclusion to the great intellectual and spiritual battle of Nicea."¹⁵

Even after the death of Arius, Athanasius was forced to hide for his life. His concealment, however, only lasted for four months when an order came for his return; and from this time in February of 366, at the age of seventy, God allowed him to spend the rest of his life working hard to advance Christ's Kingdom on earth by stirring the hearts of men to a greater zeal for God. He never stopped in his efforts to refute heretics, to build churches, to rebuke ungodly rulers, to comfort faithful bishops, and to strengthen the cause of Biblical truth. He made use of every minute of time, even writing papers defending orthodox Christianity and devotional writings while in exile.¹⁶ One of the most important contributions of his life was in listing what he believed were the

books that should constitute the New Testament. His list comprised the books we use today. "In these [twenty-seven writings] alone the teaching of godliness is proclaimed," he wrote. "No one may add to them and nothing may be taken away from them."¹⁷ In the spring of A.D. 373, at a good old age, Athanasius ceased from all his work. "Having consecrated one of his presbyters his successor, he died quietly in his own house. His 'many struggles,' according to his panegyrist [those who praise him], won him 'many a crown.' He was gathered to his fathers, patriarchs, prophets, apostles, and martyrs, who had contended for the truth."¹⁸

His epitaph is **Athanasius contra mundum**, "Athanasius against the world" ... Athanasius stood for the Trinitarian doctrine, "whole and undefiled," when it looked as if all the civilized world was slipping back from Christianity into the religion of Arius—into one of those "sensible" synthetic religions which are so strongly recommended today and which, then as now, included among their devotees many highly cultivated clergymen. It is his glory that he did not move with the times; it is his reward that he now remains when those times, as all times do, have moved away.¹⁹

Arius will answer to God for his heretical beliefs someday when God judges men and nations. However, God used this terrible time in the history of His church to cause the truth about the Trinity to be more closely examined and openly proclaimed. He used a humble, courageous minister, Athanasius, as a powerful instrument to achieve this glorious victory. God works wondrous deeds when His people are more concerned about His honor and glory than about their own well-being. You see, God is never frustrated by the sinfulness of men. He causes all things to work together for our eventual good and His eternal glory (Rom. 8:28)!

I pray that you and I will be like Athanasius who would not back down nor compromise the truth of God's Word, even when his life was threatened. Be bold as a lion when you face God's enemies, for it is God who stands with you and He will never be defeated, using even the sufferings of His servants as they strive against principalities and powers to accomplish His purposes. Stand with Athanasius, the champion of the Trinity, and declare, "I will defend the truth of God's Word, even if the world is against me; in the strength of the Lord, **I will stand against the world!**"

Appendix 1: The Athanasian Creed²⁰

Whoever will be saved, before all things it is necessary that he hold the catholic* faith. Which faith except every one do keep whole and undefiled, without doubt he shall perish everlastingly. And the catholic faith is this:

That we worship one God in Trinity and Trinity in Unity.

Neither confounding the Persons nor dividing the Substance.

For there is one Person of the Father, another of the Son, and another of the Holy Ghost. But the Godhead of the Father, of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost is all one: the glory equal, the majesty coeternal.

Such as the Father is, such is the Son, and such is the Holy Ghost.

The Father uncreated, the Son uncreated, and the Holy Ghost uncreated.

The Father incomprehensible, the Son incomprehensible, and the Holy Ghost incomprehensible.

The Father eternal, the Son eternal, and the Holy Ghost eternal.

As there are not three Uncreated nor three Incomprehensibles,

but one Uncreated and one Incomprehensible.

So likewise the Father is almighty, the Son almighty, and the Holy Ghost almighty.

So the Father is God, the Son is God, and the Holy Ghost is God.

And yet they are not three Gods, but one God.

So likewise the Father is Lord, the Son Lord, and the Holy Ghost Lord.

And yet they are not three Lords, but one Lord.

For like as we are compelled by the Christian verity to acknowledge every Person by Himself to be God and Lord.

So we are forbidden by the catholic religion to say, There be three Gods or three Lords.

The Father is made of none, neither created nor begotten.

The Son is of the Father alone, not made nor created, but begotten.

The Holy Ghost is of the Father and of the Son, neither made nor created nor begotten, but proceeding.

So there is one Father, not three Fathers;

One Son, not three Sons;

One Holy Ghost, not three Holy Ghosts.

And in this Trinity none is before or after other;

None is greater or less than another; but the whole three Persons are coeternal together and coequal, so that in all things, as is aforesaid,

The Unity in Trinity and the Trinity in Unity is to be worshipped.

He, therefore, that will be saved must think thus of the Trinity.

Furthermore, it is necessary to everlasting salvation that he also believes faithfully the incarnation of our Lord Jesus Christ.

For the right faith is that we believe and confess that our Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of God, is God and Man; God of the Substance of the Father, begotten before the worlds; And Man of

the substance of His mother, born in the world; Perfect God and perfect Man, of a reasonable soul and human flesh subsisting. Equal to the Father as touching His Godhead and inferior to the Father as touching His manhood; Who, although He be God and Man, yet He is not two, but one Christ:

One, not by conversion of the Godhead into flesh, but by taking the manhood into God; One altogether, not by confusion of Substance, but by unity of Person.

For as the reasonable soul and flesh is one man, so God and Man is one Christ; Who suffered for our salvation; descended into hell; rose again the third day from the dead; He ascended into heaven; He sitteth on the right hand of the Father, God Almighty; from whence He shall come to judge the quick and the dead. At whose coming all men shall rise again with their bodies and shall give an account of their own works. And they that have done good shall go into life everlasting; and they that have done evil, into everlasting fire.

This is the catholic faith; which except a man believe faithfully and firmly, he cannot be saved.

* The term *catholic* here means "universal" or God's people throughout history and does not refer to the Roman Catholic Church.

Appendix 2: The Nicene Creed²¹

I believe in one God, the Father Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth,

And of all things visible and invisible: And in one Lord Jesus Christ, the only-begotten Son of God; begotten of His Father before all worlds, God of God, Light of Light, Very God of Very God, Begotten, not made; Being of one Substance with the Father; By whom all things were made: Who for us men and for our salvation came down from

heaven, And was incarnate by the Holy Ghost of the Virgin Mary, and was made man: And was crucified also for us under Pontius Pilate; He suffered and was buried: And the third day He rose again according to the Scriptures: And ascended into heaven, and sitteth on the right hand of the Father: And He shall come again, with glory, to judge both the quick and the dead; Whose kingdom shall have no end. And I believe in the Holy Ghost, the Lord and Giver of Life, who proceedeth from the Father and the Son; Who with the Father and the Son together is worshipped and glorified; Who spake by the Prophets: And I believe one Catholic* and Apostolic Church: I acknowledge one Baptism for the remission of sins: And I look for the Resurrection of the dead: And the life of the world to come. Amen.

*The term *catholic* here means “universal” or God’s people throughout history and does not refer to the Roman Catholic Church.

Appendix 3: Athanasius on Christ, the Image of God in Man, our Hope for Salvation, and Victory over Death

We were made “in the likeness of God.” But in course of time that image has become obscured, like a face on a very old portrait, dimmed with dust and dirt. When a portrait is spoiled, the only way to renew it is for the Subject to come back to the studio and sit for the artist all over again. That is why Christ came—to make it possible for the divine image in man to be recreated. We were made in God’s likeness; we are remade in the likeness of His Son.

To bring about this re-creation, Christ still comes to men and lives among them. In a special way He comes to His church, His “body,” to

show us what the “image of God” is really like. What a responsibility the church has, to be Christ’s “body,” showing Him to those who are unwilling or unable to see Him in providence, or in creation! Through the Word of God lived out in the Body of Christ they can come to the Father, and themselves be made again “in the likeness of God.”

If ... it is ... by faith in Christ that death is trampled underfoot, it is clear that it is Christ Himself and none other who is the Archvictor over death and has robbed it of its power. Death used to be strong and terrible, but now, since the sojourn of the Savior and the death and resurrection of His body, it is despised; and obviously it is by the very Christ who mounted on the cross that it has been destroyed and vanquished finally.

When the sun rises after the night and the whole world is lit up by it, nobody doubts that it is the sun which has thus shed its light everywhere and driven away the dark. Equally clear is it, since this utter scorning and trampling down of death has ensued upon the Savior’s manifestation in the body and His death on the cross, that it is He Himself who brought death to nought and daily raises monuments to His victory in His own disciples. How can you think otherwise, when you see men naturally weak, hastening to death, unafraid at the prospect of corruption, fearless of the descent into Hades, even indeed with eager soul provoking it, not shrinking from tortures, but preferring thus to rush on death for Christ’s sake, rather than to remain in this present life?

If you see with your own eyes men and women and children, even, thus welcoming death for the sake of Christ’s religion, how can you be so utterly silly and incredulous and maimed in your mind as not to realize that

Christ, to whom these all bear witness, Himself gives the victory to each, making death completely powerless for those who hold His faith...? No one in his senses doubts that a snake is dead when he sees it trampled underfoot, especially when he knows how savage it used to be; nor, if he sees boys making fun of a lion, does he doubt that the brute is either dead or completely bereft of strength. These things can be seen with our own eyes, and it is the same with the conquest of death.

Doubt no longer, then, when you see death mocked and scorned by those who believe in Christ, that by Christ death was destroyed, and the corruption that goes with it resolved and brought to end. ■

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1. See Appendix 1 to read the Athanasian Creed.
2. R. J. Rushdoony, *The Foundations of Social Order* (Vallecito, CA: Ross House Books, 1998), 72.
3. Mark Galli and Ted Olsen, eds., *131 Christians Everyone Should Know* (Nashville: Broadman and Holman Publishers, 2000), 17f.
4. Encyclopaedia Britannica, Vol. II, 9th ed. (New York: Charles Scribner’s Sons, 1878); public domain selection quoted by Christian Classics Ethereal Library, www.ccel.org.
5. St. Athanasius, *On the Incarnation* (New York: Macmillan Publishing, 1946).
6. *Ibid.*, 18.
7. *The Westminster Shorter Catechism*, Questions 5 & 6.
8. *Ibid.*

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Economics, Justice, and Modern Preaching

Martin G. Selbrede



In his *Systematic Theology*, R. J. Rushdoony sets forth a crucial insight concerning economics that is often missed:

A man, when free from the corruption of modern humanism, will work in terms of God's calling, and, under God, for his family, for the personal realization of his abilities, and more. These are essentially non-economic motives. Economics self-destruct when their motivating forces become essentially economic.¹

Our nation's economy, like that of many other nations, has long been motivated by essentially economic forces. The architects of modern economic policy revel in the manipulation of such forces. Such manipulation always entails a dance near the edge of self-destruction, as our economists' mumbling about maintaining a knife-edge balance between conflicting forces cannot help but underscore.

Rushdoony cites several key passages in connection with economics in general, and monetary policy in particular, that tie the concept of justice (righteousness) and money together. The concepts of justice and money are so tightly inter-related that it is possible to diagnose how *just* a society is by examining the foundational nature of the *money* used by that society. Consider these three references Rushdoony cites:

Ye shall do no unrighteousness in judgment, in meteyard, in weight, or in measure. Just balances, just weights, a just ephah, and a just hin, shall ye have: I am the LORD

your God, which brought you out of the land of Egypt. Therefore shall ye observe all my statutes, and all my judgments, and do them: I am the LORD. (Lev. 19:35–37)

Thou shalt not have in thy bag divers weights, a great and a small. Thou shalt not have in thine house divers measures, a great and a small. But thou shalt have a perfect and just weight, a perfect and just measure shalt thou have: that thy days may be lengthened in the land which the LORD thy God giveth thee. For all that do such things, and all that do unrighteously, are an abomination unto the LORD thy God. (Deut. 25:13–16)

Ye shall have just balances, and a just ephah, and a just bath. (Ezek. 45:10)

In these passages, it is clear that the opposite of a just weight is an unjust weight, constituting injustice and unrighteousness. The people of God were not even permitted to *possess* such false weights and measures on their person or in their home. Every measure of value (particularly monetary value) was to be just and perfect. Measures were either a delight to God or an abomination to Him, depending on whether they were just or whether they fluctuated in value (Prov. 11:1, 16:11). The money used by a society is one of its most important measures of value and becomes God's test for justice in a nation.

Where God's laws are preached, taught, and obeyed, these commandments are taken seriously. Regrettably, we live in an age where "the law is

slacked" (Hab. 1:4), where nations are "partial in the law" (Mal. 2:9), and so the abominations spoken of in God's Word are no longer reprov'd but tolerated and even endorsed.

But such waywardness in the churches, such failure and blindness emanating from our pulpits, doesn't change God's view of what is just and perfect and a delight to Him, versus what is abominable and unrighteous and wicked and unjust to Him. The money used in America is fiat money, not backed by gold or silver, that constitutes the "divers weight and measure" condemned as abominable in Scripture. As Rushdoony notes of the adoption of such a monetary system, "[A]ny social order which embraces fiat measures ... has embraced something of radical repulsiveness to God."²

A Surprise Discovery in Micah

It is at this point that Rushdoony's list of Scriptures in support of just weights and measures (honest sound money) becomes very interesting. He cites a passage in Micah that equates money held in such unjust forms (fiat paper money, such as the U.S. dollar) with "the treasures of wickedness." As Rushdoony puts it, "false measures are called 'the treasures of wickedness,' the essential means of falsifying the life of a society."³

This citation from Micah occurs in the context of arguably the most quoted verse in all of Micah, namely Micah 6:8. Of all the Old Testament quotations popular today, Micah 6:8 seems to always make the top ten list. It reads, "He hath shewed thee, O man, what is

good; and what doth the LORD require of thee, but to do justly, and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God?" So, how is it that this verse has become so thoroughly severed from its context (which speaks repeatedly about how a nation handles its money supply and its relationship to justice) that nobody is aware of its original setting? How did this passage get sloganized to the point of being completely emptied of its original meaning? How did the Word of God become of none effect in our pulpits and paperback books despite such widespread, universal quotation?

Micah 6:8 has become, in effect, something of a donut hole. I submit to you that the rest of the donut (the explanatory context that elaborates on the meaning of Micah 6:8) is absolutely necessary for the complete undistorted picture to be seen. It is time to set aside donut-hole theology. Let us consider Micah 6:8 in itself and then in its original context, borrowing some of Matthew Henry's comments as we move through this block of Scripture.⁴

"He hath shewed thee, O man, what is good ..." It is *God* who has shown us, meaning we don't have to figure out or create new policies in regard to what is good, etc. *What is good and just* has already been spelled out by the Omniscient One who knows far better than we do what is good, whose foolishness is wiser than the wisdom of men (1 Cor. 1:25). Micah directs this comment to all men generally ("O man"), not just to Jews, but to Jews, Gentiles, and to *us living in the twenty-first century*. We are among those addressed by this verse: "O man."

"... and what doth the LORD require of thee ..." From these words we recognize that what is *good* is equivalent to *what the Lord requires of us*. What God *requires* is for our *good* and achieves *good*, both personally and culturally.

Moreover what is required of us has been *shown* to us: it is not up in the air, it is *not in the New Testament* (or the verse would have started out with the future tense, "He *will show thee*, O man, what is good ..."). No, God *has shown*: past tense. God laid it out in the Old Testament law. "To the law and to the testimony: if they speak not according to this word, it is because there is no light in them" (Isa. 8:20).

"... to do justly ..." Here is the crux of the entire matter. The Lord *requires us to do justly*. And He has *already shown* what this means and how to do it—in His law. And we shall see how Micah makes this idea connect with God's law in the next several verses. The modern temptation to amputate this verse and show off the severed limb apart from the scriptural body it came from invariably subjects the phrase "to do justly" to all manner of speculative interpretations. All such guesswork at what "do justly" means (1) avoids mention of God's law and (2) avoids Micah's subsequent comments (i.e., it buries the amputee's body to pretend the severed limb of verse 8 is open to the interpreter's fancy). In reality, Micah is simply reasserting the command of Deuteronomy 16:20, which literally reads, "Justice, justice, shalt thou do!"

"... to love mercy ..." Not merely to be merciful, but to delight in mercy.

"... and to walk humbly with thy God." This is self-explanatory. Because modern pulpiteers seem to nail "mercy" and "walking humbly with God" in their sermons, giving their message "a strong finish," the people in the pews don't detect the complete sideswiping that the crucial clause "to do justly" receives at their shepherds' antinomian hands, especially when the rest of Micah 6 isn't discussed or put on the table.

The Rest of the Donut

Now, consider verse 9, the con-

necting verse to the verse Rushdoony actually quotes in his *Systematic Theology*: "The LORD's voice crieth unto the city, and the man of wisdom shall see thy name: hear ye the rod, and who hath appointed it." This verse speaks about a very serious situation: God is already crying out to the city. As Matthew Henry says, God warns before He wounds. He sends the voice of warning, and men of wisdom will hear the voice and discern God's name in it (specifically, that the rumblings of disaster are not impersonal events that "just happen," but have the impress of God's personal wrath imprinted on the tidings on the winds of change).

The men of wisdom understand what the Lord's voice is saying to all: "[H]ear ye the rod, and who hath appointed it." I would submit that R. J. Rushdoony was one of those few men of wisdom who could see the Lord's name in the looming financial judgments coming around the corner decades in advance. Such men, as Matthew Henry suggests, hear the rod while it's coming. Far better to hear it coming while it is still distant, than to actually see it. Yet, it is far better to see it and take action, than to have to then *feel* the rod. The warnings issued by men of wisdom cover the entire advance of the rod, from the far distance (like a cloud no bigger than a man's hand) to a disaster in our very face.

"[H]ear ye the rod" means that *every rod has a voice*. Matthew Henry makes it clear that it is the voice of God that is to be heard in the rod of God. "[A]nd who hath appointed it." We must look to who appointed it, for every rod is appointed. Henry holds that Job 23:14 further elaborates on this idea: "For he performeth the thing that is appointed for me." But this raises the question, *Why should a rod be appointed for us?* The next verse in Micah 6, verse 10,

that R. J. Rushdoony quotes in his *Systematic Theology*, explains why we've so thoroughly earned an appointment with the rod.

Micah 6:10–11: "Are there yet the treasures of wickedness in the house of the wicked, and the scant measure that is abominable? Shall I count them pure with the wicked balances, and with the bag of deceitful weights?" Here we have four concepts that mutually explain and elaborate one another. *Deceitful weights* involve wicked balances that result in *the scant measure* which constitutes *treasures of wickedness*. In this, Rushdoony is correct: fiat currencies are not only abominable and unjust and unrighteous, they are also the treasures of wickedness. The bag referred to is synonymous with today's wallets, bank accounts, savings accounts, and treasuries. What is in our bags today? *Deceitful weights!* Small wonder Noah Webster described legal tender laws (which force people to accept fiat paper currencies in lieu of gold and silver) as "the devil in the flesh."

Further on, Micah informs the people who use such abominations for money that "Thou shalt eat, but not be satisfied; and thy casting down shall be *in the midst of thee*" (v. 14). Micah here teaches that the origin of the destruction of a nation is in the midst of thee, that is, the nation will be broken and ruined by internal crises. God can cast a nation down using something *inside the nation*. National defense can protect a country's borders from external invasion, but it cannot protect from *destruction from within*, which is the precise form that this *rod of God*, described five verses earlier, will take.

A Long-Standing, Multi-Generational Problem

The ultimate issue in Micah is reached in verse 16: "For the statutes of Omri are kept, and all the works of the house of Ahab, and ye walk in their

counsels; that I should make thee a desolation, and the inhabitants thereof a hissing: therefore ye shall bear the reproach of my people." The word *for* at the head of the verse is equivalent to because. We read that the laws and policies of *previous administrations in Israel's distant past* were a primary cause of the threatened internal ruin. Omri and Ahab, kings long gone from the scene at the time Micah wrote, still worked their political poison, for they had established wickedness by *law* (the *statutes* of Omri, etc.). As the psalmist says, "[T]he wicked frame mischief using law" (Ps. 94:20). Here is a prime example of it.

The people governed themselves by the old statutes of Omri and Ahab, assuming that since no apparent ill had arisen from following those policies, they were surely in the clear. But God has no statute of limitations on His requirements! The sin of former generations is here transmitted to subsequent ones. As Henry puts it, those who make corrupt laws may prove the ruin of children yet to be born. It was irrelevant that the statutes were of long standing (had stood the test of time for many generations), just as it was foolish to think that God had winked at the land Sabbath law (which He finally enforced after putting up with nearly 490 years of Israel's violation of it). For our nation, or any nation, to think that the Almighty will continue to ignore long-standing open defiance of His statutes is nothing less than a death wish.

A primary sin of Ahab's was syncretism: mixing the worship of Baal with the worship of Jehovah. Syncretism is an attempt to have one's cake and eat it. Politicians in America are expected to follow Baal in Washington D.C. and the Lord in their private life. Such men halt between two opinions because they truly *are* trying to worship and follow two gods at once. Sadly, the average

Christian tends to follow Baal Monday through Saturday and to make a shabby pretense of following the Lord on Sunday morning (assuming the Super Bowl doesn't start too early).

But Elijah's summary proclamation still rings true: if Jehovah be God, *follow Him!* And if we are to follow the Lord and not Baal, we must abandon our love for *the treasures of wickedness* that unjust weights and measures deliver into our hand. For the modern Christian, this means working assiduously for the reestablishment of honest currency, of laboring diligently to tie our money back to specie metals, so that we no longer transmit the corrupt statutes of *our past* on to future generations.

Where Have All the Shepherds Gone?

I will lean heavily on G. Campbell Morgan's commentary on Jeremiah for the remainder of this discussion,⁵ paraphrasing his material and interweaving it with my own thoughts. My purpose is to expose the interrelationship of people and priest, the parallels between a nation and its wayward shepherds, and the key difference between worthless preaching and faithful preaching, both in Jeremiah's time and our own.

Jeremiah poses the question, "Why then is this people of Jerusalem slidden back by a perpetual backsliding? They hold fast deceit, they refuse to return" (Jer. 8:5). We find our own nation in similar straits, and the deceit we hold fast is emblazoned on virtually every television channel, newspaper headline, and all too many sermon points delivered from our pulpits.

For on the religious side of things, Jeremiah was confronted with rampant antinomianism (a rejection of God's commandments) that was disguised as *a respect for God's commandments!* "How do ye say, We are wise, and the law of the LORD is with us? Lo, certainly in

vain made he it; the pen of the scribes is in vain. The wise men are ashamed, they are dismayed and taken: lo, they have rejected the word of the LORD; and what wisdom is in them?” (Jer. 8:8–9). A more literal rendering of the second half of verse 8 is “But, behold, the false pen of the scribes hath wrought falsely.” In other words, antinomianism reigned supreme, but was cloaked in feigned respect for God’s law. We live in the grip of the same evil today.

“For they have healed the hurt of the daughter of my people slightly, saying, Peace, peace; when there is no peace” (Jer. 8:11). Surely, up until now, we have lived in an era where our pulpits have largely been silent concerning *the treasures of wickedness*. We have lived by the donut hole of Micah 6:8 without concern for the donut out of which it was carved. “For the pastors are become brutish, and have not sought the LORD: therefore they shall not prosper, and all their flocks shall be scattered” (Jer. 10:21).

National Sins Are Individual Sins Writ Large

It is needful here to interject a comment on one of the most quoted passages in Jeremiah. The ninth chapter of Jeremiah is principally addressed to the nation. But when the prophet turns to deal with the matters addressed, he switches focus to the *individuals that comprise the nation*. “Let not the wise *man* glory in his wisdom, neither let the mighty *man* glory in his might, let not the rich *man* glory in his riches” (Jer. 9:23, emphasis added). As Morgan comments, even though Israel had kings and governors, the emphasis of responsibility here is laid *not* on such rulers but on the individuals making up the nation. The strength of a nation depends upon the individual character of its citizens. The nation puts the government into power, and the nation is ultimately responsible

for its acts. National sins fall back, as to responsibility, upon individuals.

It is tempting to point to other factions as the source of our problems, and conclude that others need to repent and reform for our situation to improve, but we will perpetually hear “Thou art the man” in our ears because God holds all individually accountable to Himself. The restoration of society begins with us because judgment of society begins with us, with the house of God. That said (and it is important to affirm it), we must consider how justice failed so miserably in Jeremiah’s days.

The Loss and Recovery of God’s Message in Lawless Times

Several aspects of Jeremiah’s age mirror our own. In the first example, G. Campbell Morgan invites us to notice the peculiar choice of words in Jeremiah 22:13: “Woe unto him that buildeth his house by unrighteousness, and his chambers by wrong; that useth his neighbour’s service without wages, and giveth him not for his work.” The word that’s unusual here is *neighbor*. One would have expected *laborer*, except that in *this* instance, it is the *neighbor’s* services that are being extracted without wages being involved, with the ruler not giving his neighbors anything for the work he receives.

This is suspiciously similar to not only our modern tax code, but also to the hidden taxes that monetary inflation brings with it. (Monetary inflation entails debauching and devaluing a nation’s currency through fractional reserve banking and other modern engines designed to create and perpetuate unjust weights and measures in our culture.)

Jeremiah compares the current evil king to that king’s righteous father, Josiah, saying, “Shalt thou reign, because thou closest thyself in cedar? Did not thy father eat and drink, and do judgment and justice, and then it was well

with him?” (Jer. 22:15). Fancy buildings and edifices and offices in which to conduct “the people’s business” are no substitute for walking according to the pattern of justice that God requires of us (Micah 6:8). The emphasis here in verse 15 is on *judgment* and *justice*, in contrast to the current king’s primary focus: his own self-interest (paralleling the focus of congressmen and senators today).

“I spake unto thee in thy prosperity; but thou saidst, I will not hear. This hath been thy manner from thy youth, that thou obeyedst not my voice” (Jer. 22:21). Modern nations, too, have been addressed by God through His faithful mouthpieces while they yet exhibited external prosperity, and they also refuse to listen and turn away their ear from hearing. Jeremiah, looking for someone, *anyone*, who might listen to God’s Word, finally breaks out plaintively with a three-fold cry to the earth itself: “O earth, earth, earth, hear the word of the LORD!” (Jer. 22:29). That no men would listen while the rod was still distant was the tragedy of Israel. The threatened punishments came about seven years after Jeremiah predicted them.

“For both prophet and priest are profane; yea, in my house have I found their wickedness, saith the LORD” (Jer. 23:11). We see here the core problem: the churches of Jeremiah’s day were filled with leaders who refused to address the question of justice in a Biblical manner. As Morgan points out, they had debased the language of orthodoxy, claiming to speak in God’s name while seeking no message from God’s law. Their antinomianism was a total repudiation of God’s moral judgments. As cited earlier, the Bible experts in Jeremiah’s time “have rejected the word of the LORD; and what wisdom is in them?” (Jer. 8:9b). Having rejected God’s Word, there is no wisdom to be

found *in them*, considered in themselves and in regard to *their personal opinions*. The personal opinions of pastors, when at odds with God's law, *are not only worthless, but dangerous*.

In Jeremiah 23:16–17, Jeremiah warns the people to *pay no attention* to the teaching of the nation's Bible scholars because "they make you vain: they speak a vision of their own heart, and not out of the mouth of the LORD. They say still unto them that despise me, The LORD hath said, Ye shall have peace; and they say unto every one that walketh after the imagination of his own heart, No evil shall come upon you." If ever there was a day in which this kind of false gospel to the lawless is again being preached (in sermons heaped up unto heaven itself), it is our day and age.

Morgan reminds us that the message of these false shepherds came out of their own heart, out of the result of their own thinking, and as a consequence *they lowered the nation's moral standards*. They arrived at their message as a result of their own observation of the times. But Morgan adds that *no prophet of God* ever finds his message by the observation of the times in which he lives. A prophet doesn't neglect his times, but his work is to declare the Word of God *to the times for their correction*. We don't catch the spirit of the age to be successful in Christian ministry. Our work, rather, is to *correct* the spirit of the age. Not to catch that spirit, but to know it *and correct it*.

But the failures in the pulpit persist. "How long shall this be in the heart of the prophets that prophesy lies? Yea, they are prophets of the deceit of their own heart" (Jer. 23:26). The nature of their primary crime against Jehovah, which triggers the Lord's wrath, is laid out in Jeremiah 23:30: "Therefore, behold, I am against the prophets, saith

the LORD, that steal my words every one from his neighbour." The prophets *that steal my words* from their neighbors are those who *refuse to apply God's law, God's justice*, to their situation. Antinomianism, the "slacking of the law" (Hab. 1:4), is nothing less than *stealing God's words from our neighbors*. It is a woeful sin in those called to be ministers of truth, for the church is to be "the pillar and ground of the truth," not the agent of *truth eradication* through antinomian preaching.

If *Thou shalt not steal* is still in effect, *how much more* should we fear judgment for *stealing God's words from our neighbors!*

Such teaching causes God's people to err by the teachers' lightness: "[They] cause my people to err by their lies, and by their lightness . . . [T]herefore they shall not profit this people at all, saith the LORD" (Jer. 23:32). The empty, vain talk that is literally "bubbling up" out of these Bible scholars, although assumed by their listeners to be spiritually profitable, is anything but.

By contrast, a true Levitical ministry delivers radically different results, and *truly* profits the people, as we read in Nehemiah. "[Various leaders] and the Levites, caused the people to understand the law: and the people stood in their place. So they read in the book in the law of God distinctly, and gave the sense, and caused them to understand the reading" (Neh. 8:7–8). "And all the people went their way to eat, and to drink, and to send portions, and to make great mirth, because they had understood the words that were declared unto them" (v. 12). The people *rejoice* at having had God's words not *stolen* from them, but *read to them distinctly*, with their leaders *giving the sense*, so that the people are *caused to understand the reading*.

Jeremiah sets down a searing indict-

ment against the spiritual leaders who failed to follow this ordained pattern. "I have not sent these prophets, yet they ran: I have not spoken to them, yet they prophesied. But if they had stood in my counsel, and had caused my people to hear my words, then they should have turned them from their evil way, and from the evil of their doings" (Jer. 23:21–22). Let's consider these stinging words very, very carefully.

The Litmus Test

Jeremiah is saying that the *proof* of the leaders' faithfulness to God's Word is to be found in this, that God's people would then have repented and changed their course. All the leaders had to do was to stand in God's counsel (accept God's Word as authoritative and act accordingly) and to cause God's people to hear God's words (following the pattern of Nehemiah 8). But having *stolen* God's words, and delivered their *own words instead*, the flocks remain in their sins. By this standard, the abject failure of American Christians to *lift even a finger* to address *the treasures of wickedness* (spawned by our fiat monetary policy and lodging unchallenged in our shrinking bank accounts) is proof positive that our pastors *do not stand in God's counsel, nor do they cause God's words to be heard by the people*. If the pastors of our land had acted faithfully, we'd be in a far different situation.

But pastors don't operate in a vacuum, either. "[L]ike people, like priest" (Hos. 4:9) reflects the idea that not only does a people get the government they deserve, they also get the spiritual leadership they prefer (2 Tim. 4:3). The individualistic references in Jeremiah 9:23 serve notice that *all* are complicit in perpetuating these abominations: pastors *and* their flocks. It is worth acknowledging that *faithful* ministers of God's Word, who do *not* steal God's words from their neighbor,

are few and far between, but their work remains a bright light piercing the brooding darkness.

Tragically, a faithful shepherd always runs the risk of being muzzled by those who stridently charge that “the land is not able to bear all his words” (Amos 7:10). About four decades ago, the Orthodox Presbyterian Church had threatened to defrock R. J. Rushdoony for narrating a filmstrip critical of the Federal Reserve System (the primary engine enabling the Biblical abomination our nation’s money has become). Our religious denominations have no Biblically informed concept of justice. They *are*, however, willing to turn their misplaced judicial wrath against a “man of wisdom who saw God’s name and heard His rod, discerning who had appointed it” (Mic. 6:9), while they themselves continue to ignore the rod appointed against our “treasures of wickedness, scant measures that are abominable, wicked balances, and our bags of deceitful weights” (Mic. 6:10). They *steal God’s words from their neighbors*.⁶ None then change their ways.

Faithful preaching of God’s Word causes the turnaround in the peoples’ lives that Jeremiah solemnly affirms. Where faithful preaching is found, the people of God bend every reasonable effort to be part of the long-term effort to overhaul their nation’s monetary system and to work for just weights and measures that *delight the Lord*, not money that *repels Him*. Even *the first step* down the road to recovery receives the blessing of God (Haggai 1:12–13). But merely putting the words *In God We Trust* on a coin that God declares to be an abomination is nothing short of a brazen provocation against the Almighty. It is to spit in His eye. For this reason, God warns us all that “there is no peace.”

How do we begin to address the gaping hole we find in modern preach-

ing? The volumes by R. J. Rushdoony are arguably the most potent resource available for equipping the people of God to once again put on the full armor of God, inclusive of the entirety of the Lord’s law-word to us. The prescient nature of Dr. Rushdoony’s insights bears testimony to his studied refusal to mount his arguments upon anything less than the concrete Word of God. In Rushdoony’s hands, the soft plush toy that God’s Word has become through weak, faithless preaching once again becomes the *hammer* that God’s Word *was supposed to be all along* (Jer. 23:29: God calls His Word “a hammer that breaketh the rock in pieces”).

There is a lot of apparently impregnable rock that needs busting up in modern societies, including the imposing edifice of our utterly wicked and corrupt mountain of national monetary policy. Nothing less than the whole counsel of God, the full-sized industrial-strength hammer of God’s Word, will be sufficient to the task.

We need no more feel-good, “peace, peace” plush toys or “lightness” that “profits nothing.” We need God’s hammer, now.

Preachers: accept no substitutes.

Flocks: ditto. ■

1. R. J. Rushdoony, *Systematic Theology*, Vol. 2 (Vallecito, CA: Ross House Books, 1994), 1045.
2. Ibid.
- 3 Ibid.
4. Matthew Henry (1662–1714) authored a six-volume Complete Commentary on the whole Bible, providing an exhaustive verse-by-verse study of the Bible.
5. G. Campbell Morgan, *Studies in the Prophecy of Jeremiah* (Old Tappan, NJ: Fleming H. Revell Company, n.d., 1969 reprint).
6. It is true that many commentators hold that the phrase “[they] steal my words ... from his neighbour” refers to the false

prophets plagiarizing from one another (J. P. Lange, R. P. Smith, C. F. Keil, E. H. Plumptre, etc.) rather than stealing God’s words from the people at large by shirking their duty in regard to proclaiming His law. But this notion severs the connection between verse 31 and verse 22, where God affirms that “had [they] caused my people to hear my words,” God’s people would have repented. Accordingly, “my words” is not to be understood as ironic but actual, in keeping with the prior context, while “neighbor” can be taken in the general sense established earlier in Jeremiah 22:13 and in the following discussion in Jeremiah 23:35. Note also the contrast set forth between Malachi 2:6–7 and vv. 8–9 when God speaks to the Levites: “The law of truth was in his mouth, and iniquity was not found in his lips: he walked with me in peace and equity, and did turn many away from iniquity. For the priest’s lips should keep knowledge, and they should seek the law at his mouth: for he is the messenger of the LORD of hosts” (vv. 6–7), which confirms Jeremiah’s point that faithful preaching turns the people away from ungodliness. “But ye are departed out of the way; ye have caused many to stumble at the law; ye have corrupted the covenant of Levi, saith the LORD of hosts. Therefore have I also made you contemptible and base before all the people, according as ye have not kept my ways, but have been partial in the law” (vv. 8–9). Failure to keep the covenant of Levi, the law-teaching ministry to God’s people, is herein indicted.

“First Owyhee and Then the World”: The Early Ministry¹ of R. J. Rushdoony

Michael McVicar

On the evening of May 14, 1944, Rev. George Huntston Williams delivered an ordination sermon in honor of Rousas John Rushdoony at the Chinese Presbyterian Church in San Francisco. As Williams preached, he noted Rushdoony’s Armenian heritage and his ties to an ancient family of priests and churchmen. Williams connected Rushdoony’s ancient lineage to his current calling as a missionary, noting, “It is thus a moving and very fitting gesture, that you of this congregation . . . should provide the setting and occasion for the ordination of this scion of an ancient Christian house as an Evangelist, to be sent forth to still another people, the Paiute and Shoshone Indians in the mountains of Nevada.”² In Rushdoony, Williams saw an “heir of a great national Christian heritage” who would “enunciate anew the Gospel which seems to have been forgotten for a season.”³

Williams, who went on to teach at Harvard and author the now-classic text *The Radical Reformation*, could not have known how prescient his ordination sermon was: in 1944 his protégé had yet to mature into the Reformed theologian of *The Institutes of Biblical Law* fame. Instead, the twenty-eight-year-old Rushdoony was a theological conservative educated as a liberal who was only just learning how to defend and fight for the theological convictions he instinctively held. Rushdoony had recently graduated from the Pacific School of Religion (PSR) in Berkeley, a theologically left-leaning institution whose

faculty, Rushdoony believed, had more interest in Marx than Christ.⁴ While at PSR, Rushdoony sought refuge from the modern liberalism of the seminary by cultivating friendships with students, faculty, and laymen who shared his conservatism.

After leaving the Bay Area for the reservation, Rushdoony maintained these friendships—most notably with former PSR students Orval Clay and David Stowe and his mentor George Huntston Williams⁵—via a series of letters that still survive in his library. This correspondence provides an important record of Rushdoony’s difficult growth from an obscure missionary into the founder of the Chalcedon Foundation.

By focusing on this correspondence, we can trace many of the key ideas that ran through Rushdoony’s entire ministry. We can map the history of these ideas and more clearly understand, first, why they were important to the young minister, and second, why some ideas became central to his theology while others diminished. More importantly, however, by investigating his missionary sojourn, we can detect important discontinuities that shaped Rushdoony’s later ministry and set him on the path of Christian Reconstruction. In Nevada, Rushdoony’s hard work combined with his first major scholarly setback, an acute sense of cultural pessimism, and a chance encounter with a book to change the minister’s goals and his outlook on the possibility for the Christian cultural renewal in America.

A Harsh and Ruthless Ministry

Shortly after his ordination, Rushdoony and his wife packed his already “considerable and well-mounted library” into a large truck and moved to Owyhee, Nevada, to serve as Presbyterian missionaries on the Duck Valley Indian Reservation.⁶ Owyhee, located in northeastern Nevada, just south of the Idaho border, was—and is—a tiny isolated community of Indians, cowboys, and miners. It’s also a land of extremes: harsh weather, lawlessness, and, paradoxically, constant government intervention in the day-to-day life of the community.

In his early correspondence from Owyhee, Rushdoony often commented on the stark splendor of the isolated mission. “We are beautifully situated here,” he wrote to one of his former professors at Berkeley, “surrounded by high mountains and cradled in a small high valley.”⁷ The beauty enchanted Rushdoony, a young man who had spent much of his childhood in Detroit and his college years in the San Francisco area. The former seminarian and philosophy student took up hunting and fell in love with fishing, often wandering off alone on lengthy, isolated fishing trips.⁸ Rushdoony loved the rural setting of Owyhee, prompting him to write a friend, “I love it here and would gladly remain all my days if God so wills.”⁹

For all of its physical beauty, Owyhee also brought severe hardship. Heavy snow and frigid temperatures dominated from fall until spring. During his first fall in Owyhee, the snows

began in November and continued until Christmas. “We have had snow for a month and a half now,” Rushdoony wrote a friend in December 1944. “Our hills and mountains are wonderfully white ... On Sunday mornings I track through the clean snow to the Church to tug at the bell rope, with the joyous anticipation of hearing the clear ringing of the bell blend in to the frosty stillness.”¹⁰

These harsh winters limited travel while spring thaws unleashed torrents of water that destroyed bridges and turned roads into an impassable, muddy soup. Mail was always delayed for one reason or another, and electronic communication—telephones and telegrams—operated at the whims of the weather and the hapless bureaucrats in Owyhee and nearby Mountain City, Nevada. Only summers allowed for free travel and easy communication.

Aside from the difficulties imposed by the severe climate, the young minister also discovered that the mission itself posed challenges he had not anticipated. When Rushdoony arrived in Owyhee, he found a mission in “deplorable” condition: “[A] collapsing building, cracking walls through which snow drifts, and general disrepair with no prospect of financial assistance.”¹¹ Worse still, the degradation of the mission served as an analogue for the moral condition of the locals. “Lawlessness prevails,” Rushdoony wrote a friend, reporting “extensive drinking, gambling (legalized), fornication, rape, adultery, and extremely widespread illegitimacy.”¹²

The moment the Rushdoonys set foot in Owyhee, they became a moral force in the community. Letter after letter from his time on the reservation tells of their efforts to turn the locals away from drinking and fornication. In one compelling instance, Rushdoony summarized his Saturday night ritual:

The gambling house is the center of all evil here. My wife was out until 9:30 p.m. clearing the girls off the streets and then I took over. We brought in one 7th grade boy, dead drunk, and laid him out in the front study for the rest of the night, sent a drunken 8th grader home in the care of an elder, slightly drunk but repentant boy. Others, very drunk, were carried off into the willows out of my reach. At midnight, I summoned the government superintendent to the manse, to burn his ears with an account of conditions ... At 2:30, a fierce fight broke out in the Owyhee Club (the gambling house), and knives were drawn ... At 5:30, another bad fight, in which two boys I covet for Christ were involved ... Then home for sleep from 6:00 to 7:00, dressed and lying on the day-bed.¹³

He would preach his Sunday sermon in a few short hours.

Rushdoony met this environment with an uncompromising gospel. In a letter to Orval Clay, a friend from his PSR days, he summarized the key themes of his reservation sermons as follows: “Atonement, justification by faith, the two natures of Christ and His virgin birth, the congenital evil inherent in all civilizations and culture, the despair of man, the Church Triumphant and the Church Militant.” It all adds up, he told his friend, to “a harsh and ruthless ministry” that “wage[s] war in God’s name.”¹⁴

In short, Owyhee required the full attention of a young, hearty minister willing to endanger his family’s spiritual and physical well-being for the gospel. If Rushdoony described his ministry as “harsh and ruthless,” then his message was perfectly suited for the natural and social realities of Owyhee. In fact, at this point in his ministerial development, Rushdoony believed that the war he waged in God’s name was already lost. But it didn’t stop him from fighting,

Visible Sovereignty

As Rushdoony struggled to grow his outpost of the church, he also eagerly awaited word from the University of Chicago Press regarding his first major manuscript. While a master’s student at the University of California, Berkeley, Rushdoony studied under the great medievalist Ernst H. Kantorowicz. Kantorowicz, who eventually left Berkeley for Princeton after refusing to take a loyalty oath, encouraged Rushdoony to seek publication of a massive research project he completed for a class. The manuscript, *Visible Sovereignty*, studied Puritan government and its relationship to secular power in sixteenth- and seventeenth-century England. Rushdoony sent the manuscript to the University of Chicago Press and clearly had high hopes for the work.

Although his ultimate plans for the work are not clear, Rushdoony apparently saw the text as a way of entering academia. Throughout his letters authored in 1944 and 1945, Rushdoony frequently cited the “interim living” imposed on him by the press’s editors.¹⁵ He also suggested that if Chicago accepted the manuscript, he would need to leave the reservation to revise part of the text. At times he implied he might not return to missionary work if the manuscript did go to press.¹⁶

In other words, *Visible Sovereignty* represented a pivot in Rushdoony’s ministerial life. Throughout this period he pondered perusing a Ph.D. and seeking faculty positions at various colleges. Had Chicago—a highly reputable and important American university press—accepted his manuscript, it is highly likely that Rushdoony could have used the book to secure academic work and even submitted it as a dissertation leading him down a very different career path.

In March 1945 John Scoon, an editor with Chicago, rejected Rushdoony's book. Scoon wrote that the press could not publish the text because it "cannot get from the mills even the small amount of paper which we are allotted by the government."¹⁷ Also, the editor worried that the manuscript's focus on England might make it more suitable for a non-American press: "[Y]our manuscript is almost entirely devoted to England and we feel that some other organization such as the Oxford or the Cambridge Press would not only do a better job with it but would have a larger sale, because of their tradition and the audience they reach."¹⁸ In this ironic twist, government rationing and a study of European Protestantism undid a man who eventually became infamous as a critic of government intervention in the economy and known primarily for his influence on American Protestantism.

Rushdoony's letters from this period indicate that the rejected study emerged from his fascination with the history of Reformed Christianity and the secular historiography pioneered by his mentor Kantorowicz. At this point Rushdoony had much more in common with the mid-twentieth-century secular historiography than the explicitly Christian historiography he developed in the 1960s.¹⁹ The aspiring historian made this clear as he pondered the fate of his rejected manuscript. Writing to Kantorowicz, Rushdoony wondered if Kantorowicz might be interested in publishing one of his studies alongside Rushdoony's work and one by Williams, the man who preached Rushdoony's ordination sermon and another follower of Kantorowicz: "It requires temerity on my part to think in terms of coupling my work with yours and George's, but the three do represent a single strand and a product of the Kantorowiczian School."²⁰ This is an important

comment because it underscores that Rushdoony did not think of himself as a "Christian" historian; he was, by his own admission, a product of the "Kantorowiczian School."²¹

The manuscript's failure forced Rushdoony to reassess his career goals and made it clear that he would not easily find work in academia. If his goal had been to follow Kantorowicz and Williams into academia, he quickly abandoned this path. Instead of throwing himself into a revision of the manuscript, Rushdoony abandoned the text and became increasingly pessimistic about his own abilities, about his missionary work, and about the entire Christian church.²²

"Where Is the Church, That I Might Find It?"

Given the failure of *Visible Sovereignty* and the exhausting Owyhee environment, it may not be surprising that Rushdoony's personal correspondence from this period took on a deeply pessimistic, even elegiac tone. When his letters do not deal with the day-to-day operation of the mission, they often betray a despondent melancholy that his later letters do not possess. His early correspondence argued that Western Christianity was in the midst of an irreparable crisis. In a letter to Williams, Rushdoony described his emotional state as "distressed and disturbed."²³ He located "the source of my distress" in a simple question: "Where is the Church, that I might find it?" Throughout the mid-1940s, Rushdoony clearly believed that there was no easy answer to this question, and, from time to time, he suggested that the church was in fact lost and could never be recovered.

Interestingly, throughout his Owyhee correspondence Rushdoony consistently conflated the general state of Christendom and the failure of the church with his activities at the mission.

The result was a deeply pessimistic and sometimes moving coda to Western Civilization. He located the twin threats to the church in the dangers posed by modern statism and modern theology. As a social critic, he connected each of these broader cultural trends to the realities of Owyhee and in doing so suggested that should the church fail Owyhee, it would also fail the world.

In summarizing the sorry state of the reservation, Rushdoony used the physical location of Owyhee—located in the heart of a long-dormant volcanic mountain ridge—as synecdoche for the entire Western world. "Both Church and State are located at the base of an extinct volcano, a true symbol of their condition . . . Both Church and State live on the dead embers of their true sovereignty and power while striving hungrily to gain visibility through bastard sources."²⁴ Similarly, on several occasions he linked the situation in Owyhee to the complete arc of Christian history. "In government men and Indians," Rushdoony wrote to a friend,

I have the full range of the problems of Church and State, and all the concerns of Church of History. I am facing the problem in its concentrated form, so that rather than a romantic adventure, Owyhee is in every aspect a studied assault on a thousand and one problems confronting the Church of Christ.²⁵

As these quotations suggest, Rushdoony saw his Owyhee mission as part and parcel of the broad sweep of church history, but he also understood the situation he faced within its narrower historical context of the mid-twentieth-century United States. Specifically, he worried that a creeping secularization had eroded the Christian foundations of the American state, while a misguided modernism rendered American churches incapable of combating the threat this secular state posed.

Here, the specific situation of the Indians on the Duck Valley Reservation provided Rushdoony with a framework for understanding the cultural implications of secularization for *all* Americans. At Owyhee Rushdoony correctly saw that that state was in charge: “[The state] is the giver of all things, the source of power, of land, and (having built a reservoir for irrigation here) even of water ... The government hospital delivers the children, and the government army taketh them away, and blessed is the name of the government each Memorial Day and Fourth of July.”²⁶

In a 1949 article, Rushdoony pulled together his scattered observations on the importance of Indian missions and connected their failure to the collapse of Western Christendom:

Hence Indian missions are of central relevance to the church. If contemporary Christianity has lost its relevance to the central problem of Indian life, it has lost its relevance to the developing problem of Western civilization. Crisis has then ceased to be its opportunity and becomes its defeat. It must be conceded this is already the case. The weakness of Indian missions is merely the symptom which indicates the church’s ailment as well, while government policies simply communicate the contemporary failure of western culture.²⁷

For Rushdoony, his mission work became part of a much larger network of theological and cultural issues that pointed to modern Christianity’s inability not only to proselytize but also expose its failure to offer a Christian alternative to an all-powerful state that poses a threat to all Christians.

The Roots of Reconstruction

Even as Rushdoony busily wrote to friends warning of the demise of Western Civilization, something else was stirring in his fertile theological imagination. Although many of his Owyhee

letters affirmed the death of Christendom, by the late 1940s and early 1950s a new set of optimistic themes began to emerge in his letters. This shift in mood was precipitated by a chance encounter with a book.

In March 1946²⁸ while traveling back to Nevada from an extended trip in the east, Rushdoony stopped in a small Colorado town to visit another minister. During the visit, Rushdoony ran across a copy of Cornelius Van Til’s *The New Modernism* in the minister’s library. Intrigued, Rushdoony thumbed through the book. Noting Rushdoony’s interest, the minister responded, “You want it? Take it.”²⁹

Rushdoony did, and began reading it on his return trip. In a train full of troops returning home from the war, Rushdoony hardly noticed the commotion around him as he consumed the book. “When I reached Denver,” Rushdoony told an interviewer decades later, “I had to wait several hours in the railroad station. I just sat there and didn’t take the time to go and eat. I was there five or six hours.”³⁰

This chance encounter precipitated Rushdoony’s rapid departure from the pessimistic post-Christendom perspective described in the previous section toward a more positive—albeit highly critical—view of the Reformed church’s ability to offer an alternative to modernism and statism. After reading Van Til in March, Rushdoony immediately began adopting Van Tilian themes and terminology in his April 1946 letters. In a letter to a Presbyterian Mission official, Rushdoony offered the first clear exposition of Van Til’s ideas in his correspondence without mentioning Van Til:

I have been doing considerable studying since my coming here and am increasingly convinced that without a doubt our present day Biblical studies are grounded, not on sound scholarship

but on philosophical presuppositions and are thus unrelated to fact. And those elements in the Church which do cling to Scripture do so without the sound study and scholarship it requires: hence the prevalence of the premillennial view which is, I believe, a misreading of both scripture and the Second coming.³¹

Instead, Rushdoony explained that the zealous faithful look at scholarship with skepticism because it seems to deaden their encounter with God. “To most young men ... scholarship seems to belong to doubt and ignorance to faith, and the fact that this equation seems to be true, superficially, indicates the tragedy of the situation.”³²

Van Til’s ideas had clearly taken root in Rushdoony’s theological mind. From the first appearance of the term “presupposition” in his correspondence, to a clear rejection of the anti-intellectualism and the dispensational bent of contemporary fundamentalists,³³ Rushdoony saw the critical power of Van Til’s ideas. He also saw reason for hope: change a Christian’s epistemological presuppositions and you could change the church. Although he did not yet know it, here were the seeds of the answer to his question, “Where is the Church?” The answer lay in educational reform and reform of the social institutions that threatened Christian education.

By 1947 Rushdoony began encouraging his friends to read *The New Modernism*, and by the early 1950s Rushdoony dropped the last vestiges of his liberal PSR education to embrace a systematic Reformed perspective based on Van Til’s presuppositional apologetics. During this period Rushdoony recognized in Van Til’s ideas the hope for a wide-ranging American cultural renewal rooted in epistemological self-awareness. By developing this focus on epistemology, Rushdoony launched his first attacks on secular humanism and,

most importantly, secular education. Many of the themes of his later ministry emerged in this period as he developed a progressively more positive form of Christian social theory that eventually matured into the interconnected concepts of Christian Reconstruction and theonomy.

Conclusion

In February 1945, Rushdoony wrote to one of his former PSR classmates. The letter contains many of the hallmarks of Rushdoony's correspondence from this period—a personal pessimism combined with a deeper pessimism about the state of Christianity. But for all of his gloom, Rushdoony closed the letter on an upbeat note, "First Owyhee, and then the world: such is my dream."

He quickly qualified this statement, noting, "In many respects, I am seriously handicapped here."³⁴ Regardless of the handicaps and troubles of Owyhee, the mission was an important step in Rushdoony's development. The harsh social and physical environment of the reservation exhausted the young minister, while the isolated location also hampered his intellectual growth. It also proved to be a period of deep theological pessimism and perhaps even emotional depression for a theologian who later became known for optimistic theological and eschatological positions.

After encountering Van Til, Rushdoony's pessimism soon gave way to the development of critical social theory that was uniquely Christian. This new epistemological perspective allowed Rushdoony to see the prospect for a positive Christian social agenda that could provide an answer to his question, "Where is the Church?" Rushdoony began to turn his attention inward away from missionary work and toward the church itself. While he never abandoned evangelism, his primary audience

eventually became Reformed Christians. He worked tirelessly to popularize Van Til, and sought to empower Christian educators and thinkers.

In fact, as Rushdoony left Owyhee in 1952, he was seeking support for a new publication that would speak to clergymen like himself—unapologetically Reformed, conservative, and fearful of the demise of the church. The periodical failed miserably, but like *Visible Sovereignty*, it forced Rushdoony to reassess his ministry and led to work with the Volker Fund and eventually to the founding of the Chalcedon Foundation. Thus, for all of the trials and failures of Rushdoony's time in Nevada, his missionary days proved pivotal for his future ministry, and arguably set him on the path toward Christian Reconstruction. ■

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1. Unless otherwise indicated, all references to unpublished letters, interviews, and texts refer to material held in the R. J. Rushdoony Library, Chalcedon Foundation, Vallecito, California.
2. George Huntston Williams, "The Ordination Ceremony of Rousas John Rushdoony," 14 May 1944, 2.
3. Ibid.
4. Janet S. Larson, *The Oral History Interview of Dr. Rousas John Rushdoony* (1980), 48.
5. At this point in his pastoral and scholarly career, Williams was a rightward leaning Presbyterian. He and Rushdoony would eventually diverge both theologically and politically, but in the 1940s the two had much in common.

6. Williams, "The Ordination Ceremony," 2.
7. R. J. Rushdoony to Ernst H. Kantorowicz, 22 March 1945.
8. For Rushdoony's solitary fishing trips, see Stewart C. Potter, "The Man from Owyhee," *Chalcedon Report* 429 (2001): 24.
9. R. J. Rushdoony to George Huntston Williams, 26 February 1945.
10. R. J. Rushdoony to George Huntston Williams, 20 December 1944.
11. R. J. Rushdoony to Orval Clay, 15 December 1944.
12. Ibid.
13. R. J. Rushdoony to Emil Schwab, 15 January 1945.
14. R. J. Rushdoony to Orval Clay, 15 December 1944.
15. For examples, see *ibid.*; R. J. Rushdoony to George Huntston Williams, 26 February 1945; and R. J. Rushdoony to Ernst H. Kantorowicz, 22 March 1945.
16. R. J. Rushdoony to Ernst H. Kantorowicz, 22 March 1945.
17. John Scoon to R. J. Rushdoony, 21 March 1945.
18. Ibid.
19. For a summary of Rushdoony's rejection of humanistic and scientific historiography, see Rousas John Rushdoony, "A Preface on the Writing of History," *The Nature of the American System* (Fairfax, VA: Thoburn Press, 1978), v-vii.
20. R. J. Rushdoony to Ernst H. Kantorowicz, 20 May 1946.
21. Years later, recalling his relationship with Kantorowicz, Rushdoony noted, "I genuinely liked the man," but went on to describe him as "a decadent" who "belonged to the whole world of scholarship that I feel is bankrupt." Rushdoony concluded, "But his thinking was tremendous, and I am very deeply grateful for what I learned from him" (Larson, *Oral History Interview*, 42).
22. To this day, a massive, dusty carbon copy of *Visual Sovereignty* remains untouched and unpublished in Rushdoony's library. It is not clear what Rushdoony thought of the book in his later years, but it

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Calling Down God's Judgment

John Stoos

Then He [Jesus] spoke a parable to them, that men always ought to pray and not lose heart. (Luke 18:1 NKJV)



As Jesus comes near the end of His final journey to Jerusalem, Luke tells us that the Pharisees asked when His Kingdom would come (Luke 17:20).

Jesus answers, saying the Kingdom comes from within as God exchanges hearts of stone with hearts of flesh. Jesus then gives His disciples three important lessons. He shows them that His coming in judgment of Jerusalem and the old creation will be like lightning flashing across the sky, reminding them of the importance of staying focused on Jesus and His Kingdom. Jesus uses the account of the Pharisee and publican to teach them to remain humble so they would not grow proud as they serve in His Kingdom. Sandwiched in between is His reminder to pray always and not lose heart; He uses the story of the persistent widow to make His point.

Every faithful Christian agrees that we must be persistent in our prayers, doing the best we can to heed Paul's command to pray without ceasing.

When Paul instructs the Ephesians to be fully armed for battle, he concludes, "And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God; praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, being watchful to this end with all perseverance and supplication for all the saints" (Eph. 6:17–18 NKJV).

The pressing question for today is whether Christians are using all of the tools that God has given us in our prayer armory.

Obviously we have the model prayer our Lord taught us to pray, and many great examples of prayers lifted up by various saints that have been recorded for us in the Scriptures: the great prayer of Daniel in chapter nine of his prophecy, or the prayer of the Apostle Paul for the saints at Ephesus in the first chapter of Ephesians.

Many Christians rightly see the Book of Psalms as not only the church's hymnbook and a source of wisdom, but also as a means of praying God's thoughts after Him.

It is here in the Psalms that we often come to some verses and even entire Psalms that seem very strange to our modern ears. They are commonly called the imprecatory Psalms because they include imprecations. The *Webster's 1828 Dictionary* says that *imprecatory* means, "Containing a prayer for evil to befall a person." Even our modern dictionaries say that to imprecate is "to invoke or call down (evil or curses), as upon a person."

That does not seem very Christian to our more modern thinking, and most Christians are not sure what to do with them. Much of what has been written about these imprecations and imprecatory Psalms works hard to soften them, excuse them, or encourage the saints to ignore them altogether. I would contend that, with the battles we face today, they should be front and center in many of our prayers and used often in our worship services.

Christians choosing not to use these prayers would be tantamount to the Afghan people having said no thanks to our Stinger missiles, which they used to

take down the Russian helicopters after Afghanistan was invaded by the Soviet Union!

Why Pray for Judgment?

Why are imprecations included in the Bible's hymnbook? Why did Jesus talk about the woes and curses that were coming upon the nation of Israel? Why did the Apostle Paul pronounce anathemas on those who dared to add human works to God's gracious salvation by faith?

The simple answer is that God has enemies, and the Bible is clear that God's enemies will be defeated. All of God's enemies will be defeated with death being the last (see 1 Cor. 15:12–28 and Rev. 20:7–15).

God's enemies are our enemies, and we join with God in wanting them to be defeated, hence these calls for God to be victorious, calls for God to bring down judgment on His enemies.

There are entire Psalms that focus on calls for God's judgment, such as Psalms 7, 35, 55, 69, 79, 83, 109, and 137. There are other calls for God's judgment in the midst of many other Psalms, and we must remember that when we cry for God's victory, it is by implication a cry for the defeat of His enemies. There are also many instructions about our attitude when praying such prayers. Consider Psalm 76, where David sees the end of the wicked when he enters God's temple. This psalm reminds us that we must be patient in our prayers, something Jesus was reminding His disciples as He gave those lessons about the coming of His Kingdom.

Certainly we should not focus on these types of prayers exclusively. The balance that we see in the Psalms themselves can serve as our guide. The Psalms also remind us that we must be careful to approach these calls for God to bring judgment with a Biblical attitude, as we shall see shortly in Psalm 139.

In praying for God's judgment, we are seeking His justice and not our justice, and we are certainly not seeking personal vengeance or advantage. The Apostle Paul declares in Romans that God is both the just and the justifier of those who trust in Jesus for their salvation. Jesus took the punishment for the sins of His people so that the just judgment of God was carried out. A sinner's punishment will either be borne by the sinner himself through an eternity of hell, or it was borne by Jesus on the cross. This means that from our perspective, God's judgment can result in the destruction of the sinner or the salvation of the sinner if His wrath was propitiated by Jesus Christ at the cross.

To help us understand how we are to pray in this regard, we can look to the example of the church. The saints prayed often after Pentecost with many examples in the Book of Acts. In Acts 4, the saints boldly pray after the religious leaders had forbidden them to preach the name of Jesus. In verse 24 we are told, "[T]hey raised their voice to God with one accord and said: 'Lord, You are God, who made heaven and earth and the sea, and all that is in them.'" They turn to the God of heaven and earth proclaiming, "[W]ho by the mouth of Your servant David have said: 'Why did the nations rage, and the people plot vain things? The kings of the earth took their stand, and the rulers were gathered together against the LORD and against His Christ'" (vv. 25–26 NKJV).

Psalm 2 goes on to explain that

God has given His Son the nations and that Jesus will "break them with a rod of iron" and "dash them to pieces like a potter's vessel." Here we have a small band of new believers surrounded by the religious leaders of Israel in the midst of the powerful Roman Empire claiming the promises of God that He would defeat His enemies.

Just a few centuries later the saints still gathered to pray, but the city of Jerusalem had been destroyed and the empire of Rome had collapsed: the God of heaven and earth had used the Word of God, His rod of iron, to dash them to pieces!

These early saints were praying that God would come and judge His enemies, and we can see how God answered those prayers!

Oh, how we need such bold prayers today. Not for personal vengeance or gain, but so that the God of heaven and earth might be glorified as He answers such prayers and advances His Kingdom.

Great Enemies of the Young Church

Luke tells us of two great enemies of the church. One was Saul of Tarsus, a Pharisee who "held the coats" of those who stoned Stephen and then launched a vicious persecution of God's young church. Luke tells us that, "As for Saul, he made havoc of the church, entering every house, and dragging off men and women, committing them to prison" (Acts 8:3 NKJV).

The other enemy is King Herod Agrippa, the son of that Herod who had mocked Jesus and grew bold in his persecution of the church. Acts 12 begins by telling us that Herod Agrippa "stretched out his hand to harass some from the church. Then he killed James the brother of John with the sword. And because he saw that it pleased the Jews,

he proceeded further to seize Peter also."

Two vicious enemies of the church, and as such, it was proper for these praying saints to call for God to judge them as they had appealed to Psalm 2 in earlier prayers. This can be seen in Revelation after the fifth seal was opened and John says that he "saw under the altar the souls of those who had been slain for the word of God and for the testimony which they held. And they cried with a loud voice, saying, 'How long, O Lord, holy and true, until You judge and avenge our blood on those who dwell on the earth?'" (Rev. 6:9–10 NKJV).

The saints gathered after James had been killed and Peter was arrested to await the same fate. The saints prayed for Peter, and they would have also prayed for the destruction of their enemies. Not a prayer for personal vengeance, but a prayer that God's enemies might be defeated so that God's Kingdom could advance. Perhaps someone read from Psalm 55 where it says, "Let death take my enemies by surprise; let them go down alive to the grave" (NIV). These saints would have been bold enough to claim such a promise from God's Word, asking Him to bring judgment on His enemies like Saul of Tarsus and King Herod.

God was pleased to answer their prayers: not just with the release of Peter, but also in dealing with their enemies, who were, of course, God's enemies.

We can certainly see this prayer answered in the case of King Herod Agrippa, for later in Acts 12 we read: "So on a set day Herod, arrayed in royal apparel, sat on his throne and gave an oration to them. And the people kept shouting, 'The voice of a god and not of a man!' Then immediately an angel of the Lord struck him, because he did not

give glory to God. And he was eaten by worms and died” (vv. 21–23 NKJV).

We see God’s enemy defeated and His Kingdom advanced because Luke quickly adds in verse 24, “But the word of God grew and multiplied.” The God of heaven and earth answers the prayers of His righteous people and His Kingdom advances.

Then we come to Saul of Tarsus, where we see this prayer for the death of their enemy answered in a much different way: Saul was struck blind on the road to Damascus and dramatically converted. I am sure the saints were just as surprised by the way God dramatically answered this prayer as they were to hear Peter knocking at the door during the prayer meeting being held to pray for his release from prison.

The blind Saul was then led to Damascus, and there God tested the faith of one of his saints. We see a little of God’s humor as he asks Ananias to visit Saul of Tarsus after he was converted and brought to Damascus. Ananias has one of those “Are you sure, Lord?” moments when he responds, “Lord, I have heard from many about this man, how much harm he has done to Your saints in Jerusalem. And here he has authority from the chief priests to bind all who call on Your name.” The Lord assures Ananias it is going to be all right, telling him, “Go, for he is a chosen vessel of Mine to bear My name before Gentiles, kings, and the children of Israel. For I will show him how many things he must suffer for My name’s sake” (Acts 9:13–16 NKJV).

Saul of Tarsus Defeated

So, Ananias obeys and goes to baptize Saul, whom God had given a new heart of flesh, whom God appointed to be His Apostle to the Gentiles, and whom the Holy Spirit would use to write much of the New Testament!

- Saul of Tarsus had been defeated.
- Paul the Apostle was born again to serve the risen and reigning Savior.

God’s thoughts are not our thoughts, and His plans are not our plans. Saul had his plan for the trip to Damascus. But listen to how God explained His new plans to Saul, this great enemy of the church, after he was stricken on the road to Damascus:

And He said, “I am Jesus, whom you are persecuting. But rise and stand on your feet; for I have appeared to you for this purpose, to make you a minister and a witness both of the things which you have seen and of the things which I will yet reveal to you. I will deliver you from the Jewish people, as well as from the Gentiles, to whom I now send you, to open their eyes, in order to turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan to God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins and an inheritance among those who are sanctified by faith in Me” (Acts 26:15–18 NKJV).

The great enemy of the church has become the Apostle to the Gentiles in answer to the prayers of God’s saints, who asked that God bring down judgment on His enemies!

This is why we must not ignore these imprecatory Psalms. We must be bold and use them to advance the Kingdom of God, both in our private prayers and in our public worship.

Beware of “Wicked Ways”

We are not to use God’s judgment for personal vengeance or just to make ourselves feel better. We must always remember that sober warning in Proverbs 24:17–18, “Do not rejoice when your enemy falls, and do not let your heart be glad when he stumbles; lest the LORD

see it, and it displease Him, and He turn away His wrath from him” (NKJV).

Having the proper attitude is not easy, and we must learn to trust the Holy Spirit who uses the Word of God to be “a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart” (Heb. 4:12 NKJV). There is a call for God’s judgment in Psalm 139 that is often overlooked, but the context provides a real lesson regarding our thoughts and motives.

Psalm 139 is a favorite for many Christians. We all love to read and quote those verses in Psalm 139 that talk about how we are fearfully and wonderfully made. We are comforted by God’s care and attention to His people when we read, “How precious also are Your thoughts to me, O God! How great is the sum of them! If I should count them, they would be more in number than the sand; When I awake, I am still with You” (Ps. 139:17–18 NKJV).

However, the next verse brings a sudden shift with a strong call for God’s judgment:

“Oh, that You would slay the wicked, O God! Depart from me, therefore, you bloodthirsty men. For they speak against You wickedly; Your enemies take Your name in vain. Do I not hate them, O LORD, who hate You? And do I not loathe those who rise up against You? *I hate them with perfect hatred; I count them my enemies*” (Ps. 139:19–22 NKJV; emphasis added).

And then we have what appears to be another dramatic shift where the psalmist goes on to say: “Search me, O God, and know my heart; Try me, and know my anxieties; and see if there is any wicked way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting” (Ps. 139:23–24 NKJV).

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Western Civilization on a Mountaintop

Ben House



The less creative radicals of the 1960s thought they might change the universities, and hence the world, by taking over the administrative buildings. Far more intelligent thinkers—often radical themselves—have realized that the more certain way to change the universities, and hence the world, is through professorships and curriculum.

Bombs explode, but books change cultures. Ideas have consequences for sure, and those ideas must be conveyed in print or lecture form. The consequences begin when the words are read or the audience exits the lecture hall. The pen truly is mightier than the sword, for behind every sword thrust is a philosophy, a technology, and a mental process connecting words to cold steel.

Far more radical than opposition to the Vietnam War were grants of tenure, book contracts, and open lecterns. Buildings, bureaucracy, and budgets merely provide the flimsy coverings of a culture. Within the outward structures and underlying the prevailing clichés are the true societal and cultural roots.

It is no surprise that the cultural shifting winds of recent decades resulted in opposition to Western Civilization. The liturgical acknowledgement of Western Civilization was found in the “Western Civ” classes and canonical readings typically required by universities for freshmen or sophomores.

The attack against Western Civilization centered on its nearly exclusive focus on the acts, thoughts, and writings of dead white European males, some-

times referred to as DWEMs. Since one cannot will oneself either to be or not be alive, non-white, non-European, or female, perhaps these poor guys were victims of powers beyond themselves. But the fact that they got center stage, rather than contemporary Asians and African females, was a choice supposedly based on an evil power structure. Simply put, white men sought to perpetuate their own kind in power. One woman complained, “Who is this Mozart, this Haydn, these superior white men? Why is Mozart better than some African drummer?”¹

In a relativistic world, compromise and change are the only constants. Universities quickly dropped or revamped courses. Perhaps Dostoevsky, Descartes, and Bach could be dropped in favor of writers, philosophers, and musicians of recent vintage, of non-European ethnicity, and of the female gender. In some cases, the whole concept of Western Civilization as a course was placed on the chopping block. However you color the world map, Western Civilization as a civilization basically covers Europe, North America, Australia, and a few other outposts, leaving vast expanses of geography and time out of the picture. So, world cultures, global studies, and other courses were substituted for courses that were too European or Anglo-American centered.

In defense of knowing more of Asia, Africa, the Middle East, and Latin America, we should admit that we could learn from all cultures, examine historical roots of all civilizations, and find worthy subjects of study in all peoples.

Certainly, for those of us with worldwide expectations of the spread and success of the gospel, we recognize that we should learn more of those areas where the reign of King Jesus will be acknowledged in time.

Knowledge is acquired incrementally and wisdom slowly. A college course entitled “Everything 101” would be great, but not possible. One has to determine the basics and not only start there, but also stay there until thoroughly grounded. I have lots of books better than the “A, B, C” books my children start with, but Calvin’s *Institutes* are a bit hefty for a four-year-old.

Since we are culturally more connected to the Elizabethan Settlement than the Ming Dynasty, since the literature of Chaucer and Dickens is closer to us than the *Analects of Confucius*, since the religious convictions displayed at the Diet of Worms resonate more with us than the meditation of Gautama Buddha, Western Civilization is our cultural neighborhood where our learning begins. In short, our language, culture, music, art, ideas, politics, and economics sprang from the European peninsula and the British Isles.

It was not what Marco Polo found when he traveled to a more advanced Chinese civilization; rather, it was the fact that he returned to Europe and reported his findings. From there Europe assimilated Marco Polo’s travelogue and created trade opportunities. Columbus cannot be credited for discovering anything new, but a New World grew out of the 1492 expedition. The New World was the discovery of the possibili-

ties, which led to several hundred years of continental development.

Western Civilization is vital for Americans and Europeans to study. Because Western Civilization is so nearly synonymous with Christendom, it is vital for Christians to learn both the edifying growth and shameful abuse of Christianity within that civilization. Because of such ideas as individual freedom and economic capitalism, we not only must learn Western Civilization, but also humbly recognize its many superiorities.

What's Wrong with "Western Civ"?

There has been a long problem, however, with Western Civilization. It is a stream containing some very pure waters, some corrupted waters, and many that are mixed. There are those who have viewed, taught, and promoted Western Civilization from viewpoints that are humanistic, secular, and utopian. A good Western Civ professor might be a faithful Catholic or Protestant, but he might also be a dedicated Unitarian, Marxist, or atheist.

Salvation is not found in history, culture, or man's philosophies. A course in Western Civilization might improve a person's music listening habits, his appreciation for art, and his literary growth, but it cannot save his soul. It is far easier to imagine educating or holding discussions with people familiar with the Renaissance, the works of Shakespeare, and the impact of steam power than with the cultural captives of modern reality television. But the fact remains, knowledge of dates and dead people will not rescue us from modernity or post-modernity.

It is the older humanism—the optimistic view that thought man could be educated into civility and that schools could replace prisons—that believed education in the finer things could

result in societal regeneration. Western Civilization then sung the praises of Greeks for discovering democracy, of Romans for spreading civilization, and of medieval cathedrals for elevating beauty.

The greater praises were always reserved for such periods as the Renaissance and the Enlightenment. Both were taught as breakthroughs where the shackles of religious dogmas were loosed so mankind could enjoy progress. *Progress*—that word itself was often the key to understanding Western Civilization. While technological advances seemed to confirm the March of Progress, such events as the First World War stood as frightening unimaginable obstacles to man's potentiality. With an incredible resilience, humanists could still find hope for redemption, for Western Civilization taught the need for the centralized state, or utopian societies, or environmental faith and repentance.

Standing on humanistic, man-centered presuppositions, the subject of Western Civilization could be just as destructive as the deviancies and perversities that shock us today. Kenneth Clark's coffee table book *Civilisation* aptly illustrates and describes great cultural achievements, but the presuppositional coffee table supporting it cannot stand.

The best texts on Western Civilization need supplemental readings. The facts, figures, maps, dates, illustrations, and text might be a good representation of what occurred in history, but cannot answer the more important question, "What does it mean?"

There have been quite a few thinkers who have stepped beyond "what happened" to question the ideas preceding and the consequences following the defeat of the Spanish Armada, for example. These same thinkers have generally looked at the broader scope

of history, such as Western Civilization. Gordon Clark has commented on such an approach to history: "[Since] they deal so broadly with all time and nations they may let their imaginations run wild. Nonetheless, if history is worthwhile, someone must run these risks. We surely want, sometime, to survey all history."²

The Catholic historian Christopher Dawson certainly did this very thing. Consistently, his approach to history was grounded in the conviction that religious beliefs are foundational to all civilizations. The accumulated writings of Dawson contain his historiography.³ In the case of the German thinker, Eugene Rosenstock-Huessy, his work *Out of Revolution* captures the essence of his approach to history.⁴ In recent years, Jacques Barzun added his own cultural analysis in his brilliant *From Dawn to Decadence*.⁵

An increasing amount of attention is being drawn to the Calvinist worldview thinkers of the twentieth century. A host of intellectual pastors, theologians, philosophers, and professors—all united upon Reformed presuppositions—wrote, lectured, and addressed a generation that often was not listening. These men wrote books for small audiences, taught a few faithful disciples, and grounded a core group in rigorous thinking growing out of the tradition of Augustine, Calvin, and Kuyper.⁶ This group of men included Dutch philosopher Herman Dooyeweerd, Dutch-born apologist Cornelius Van Til, and English and Episcopalian scholar E. L. Hebdgen Taylor, along with such Americans as the philosopher Gordon Clark, the historian Gregg Singer, the pastor and evangelist Francis Schaeffer, and R. J. Rushdoony.

What Clark says of Augustine applies to all of them: "Too obvious to es-

cape notice and too important to escape mention is Augustine's constant relating of history to ethics, of ethics to theology, of everything to everything so as to form a comprehensive system.⁷ Every idea and fact connected to every other idea and fact constitutes a worldview, which is comprehensive and all-inclusive. From these foundational thinkers, the concept of a Christian worldview, sometimes called a world and life view, a weltanschauung, or a world and life system,⁸ caught on in the Christian community. The wider the concept spreads, the more shallow the waters occasionally become, but it is still good that Christians are using the term *worldview* and are attempting to think in broad categories.

There are at least four books by the Calvinist worldview thinkers that provide critical assessments of Western Civilization, and here we mean critical in both the sense of being analytical and of being in opposition to the generally accepted views. Herman Dooyeweerd's *Roots of Western Culture: Pagan, Secular, and Christian Options* grew out of the culture war in the Netherlands following World War II when the Dutch were reconstructing their society and reconsidering the role of Christianity for their future. Gregg Singer's *From Rationalism to Irrationality* followed the approach of his previous book, *A Theological Interpretation of American History*. Both examine the impact of religious views and philosophies on the history of Western Civilization and America respectively. The most popular and successful book was Francis Schaeffer's *How Should We Then Live?* The book and the video series awakened Christians to where they at least could recognize the historical eras, the key names and movements, and some of the impact of non-Christian thinking. People who avoided all movies, tuned out modern music, and

judged art based on exposed body parts, learned from Schaeffer at least how to begin thinking critically and presuppositionally.

Every book R. J. Rushdoony wrote was chock-full of historical data and insights. His short *World History Notes* and ten-part lecture series capture selected key time periods and events of Western Civilization. His *Foundations of Social Order* ties the early church councils and creeds to the impact they have had on all that followed. *Politics of Guilt and Pity* shows recurring patterns in the political order. But perhaps his best supplemental study of Western Civilization is his work *The One and the Many: Studies in the Philosophy of Order and Ultimacy*.

Philosophy and History

Those who have studied Rushdoony's writings have noted a change of his style after the publication of *The Institutes of Biblical Law* in 1973. He changed from writing in-depth and often lengthy studies to writing books containing short chapters or essays. His pre-1973 writings can be characterized as his dissertations, while the post-1973 writings are his recurring themes and teachings. Up to 1973, Rushdoony wrote for scholars, and after that, he wrote for students. *The One and the Many*, which came out in 1971, is definitely one of his more scholarly works.⁹

The very title *The One and the Many* with the subtitle *Studies in the Philosophy of Order and Ultimacy* are both daunting, and neither initially attracts the interest of most readers of history. Rushdoony notes, "Society does not speak of the matter of the one and the many; most people are ignorant of the problem."¹⁰ But he goes on to emphasize that the problem is basic to all of life and is seen in the societal tensions between "alternating anarchy and totali-

tarianism, between anarchic individualism and anarchic collectivism."¹¹

The history contained in this book concerns the men and ideas that created tyrannies, revolutions, and anarchy. Coming right after the turbulence of the 1960s, the book proclaims that the riots, assassinations, and moral disorder of that decade have deep roots in history and philosophy.

By the 1960s, people began to think of college education as a status symbol and the guarantee of economic success and intellectual achievement. The strength of the university system was the increasingly separated departments of learning and the still rather odd notion of "majors." So history students took history classes, philosophy students took philosophy classes, and political science students took political science classes.¹² Perhaps, even more pronounced was the fact that religious majors in Bible colleges focused on the Bible, church issues, and perhaps church or denominational history.

Rushdoony and other Calvinistic worldview thinkers were far more interdepartmental in their approach to learning. *The One and the Many* is neither a history, philosophy, or political science book, nor a theological work. Clark's defense of history explains both his viewpoint and that of Rushdoony and their fellow Calvinist thinkers. Clark says, "The utility and justification of history may be found in the position it holds as part of an all embracing philosophy."¹³

Clark as a philosopher saw the need for understanding history as part of an understanding of philosophy. Gregg Singer as a historian saw the need for philosophy for an understanding of history. Schaeffer as a preacher and evangelist saw both history and philosophy, along with art, music, and film, as

tools for engaging the culture in discussions. Van Til as an apologetics teacher looked at philosophy to discern the underlying presuppositions. Even more than Van Til, Dooyeweerd, who was a philosopher, worked to create a Christian philosophy and Christian critique of all immanence philosophies that encompassed all academic fields.¹⁴ Rushdoony's many emphases make it difficult to know which title—philosopher, historian, apologist, or theologian—best describes his work. He actually saw the title of pastor as encompassing all these things.

Rushdoony viewed his work as an extension of Van Til's presuppositional apologetics. In *The One and the Many*, Van Til's writings are cited throughout the work and then presented in detail near the end as the antidote to the false philosophies covered previously. But rather than being another study of Van Til,¹⁵ the focus of this book is on historical eras and key ideas coming out of those time periods; hence its relevance to Western Civilization studies.

History begins with the civilizations of Egypt, Mesopotamia, and the ancient Middle East, and so this book devotes a chapter to the apostate ideas and polytheism of those early cultures. Then comes Greece and Rome. It is here that many textbooks and authors wax most eloquently. Western Civilization studies exhibit a long-term romantic infatuation with the Greeks in particular. Certainly, when one considers the architectural achievements and the philosophical, historical, and literary remains, there is a lot of Greek rubble to be sifted through. But the problems have been the idolizing of all things Greek, the selective disregarding of Greek perversities, and the uncritical merging of Greek concepts with Christian ones.

Rushdoony devotes a long, detailed

chapter to examining root beliefs and practices of the Greeks. These include their view of man as a political animal and its implications for the Greek polis and their moral degeneracy. Likewise, when Rushdoony turns to the Romans, he points out the flawed underpinnings that go beyond just the oddities of particular emperors. Any Christian study of ancient civilizations needs Rushdoony's work as a supplement to and corrective for our views of antiquity.

After these chapters, Rushdoony turns to the impact of Christ and the early church. Titled "Christ: The World De-Divinized," this section shows how often the church nearly went astray through false or weak views of Jesus Christ and the Trinity. It was the church councils and creeds, as emphasized in Rushdoony's *The Foundations of Social Order*, that undergirded orthodoxy in church life and checked tyranny in political life. The gospel did more than merely release individuals from their guilt and sin,¹⁶ for it undermined all of the viewpoints—pagan, Greek, Gnostic, etc.—that moved society either toward totalitarianism or anarchy.

One of the most controversial figures in this time period is the emperor Constantine. Christians still differ on how to view him. Was he a convert to Christ who brought political freedom to the church? Or did he adopt the name of Christian for political gain? Rushdoony points out that Constantine appears to have been a genuine believer, but he was still a Roman emperor, who thought in traditional Roman categories. His treatment of Constantine is outstanding.

Rushdoony devotes three chapters to key figures in the medieval and Renaissance eras. His treatment of Thomas Aquinas, whose sound Biblical beliefs were entangled with Aristotelian ideas,

is very balanced. As expected, Rushdoony's treatment of the Reformation, Luther, and Calvin includes praise of the movement and the men; however, he also criticizes the errors of the men and the time.

From the Enlightenment to the present, the trends in philosophy have been increasingly characterized by a rejection of scriptural revelation and of God. It is not surprising that modern man has become increasingly devoted either to statist and totalitarian views or to individual anarchistic views. It is, likewise, not surprising that modern philosophy has drifted toward despair and meaninglessness. Rushdoony summarizes them, saying, "The one and the many apply to life. Philosophy, from Hegel to Marcuse, applies to death and invites it."¹⁷

In this book, as well as in others of his works, Rushdoony names key philosophers (usually deserving of his scorn), quotes a few brief selections, and cites some secondary scholarly commentary on them. In a little over one hundred pages, Rushdoony covers Thomas More, John Locke, Descartes, David Hume, Rousseau, Kant, Hegel, Marx, Nietzsche, Sartre, and numerous others. No doubt, there is something superficial about this cursory coverage of so many people. But Rushdoony's method is instructive and justifies his approach. What Rushdoony teaches by his example is this: find the key thinkers in any age, read their writings, read the best scholarly sources on them, uncover their apostate presuppositions, and summarize their thoughts.

Rushdoony and his Calvinist contemporaries analyze what Rushdoony calls "an end of an age." Rushdoony notes that "the economic, religious, ecological, and educational crises of the modern world are increasing" and that

“the modern age gives every evidence of approaching death.” These men were prophets, and their analyses are filled with grim interpretations of the twentieth century. But, being grounded in Scripture and the Reformation, they did not prophesy unalterable coming destruction, but instead called for spiritual renewal. Because of his postmillennial optimism, Rushdoony, even more than others, could say, “The death of modernity makes possible the birth of a new culture, and such an event is always, however turbulent, an exciting and challenging venture.”¹⁸

The study of Western Civilization is vital for our children and foundational for a true university education. There are glories growing out of man’s creative impulses and horrors emerging from man’s depravity. Some criteria are necessary for Westerners to discern the truth, goodness, and beauty. Within the study of history itself, those criteria do not exist. One has to bring philosophy, political science, art, music, and literature into the mix. Undergirding this comprehensive framework must be a theological commitment to a Christian worldview.

When this interdepartmental approach is taken, history suddenly has applications, utility, and justification. The excitement Rushdoony references can then begin, for from such an approach to history we can begin constructing a new culture. ■

Ben House is the author of *Punic Wars & Culture Wars: Christian Essays on History and Teaching*.

1. David Denby, *Great Books* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1996), 90.
2. Gordon Clark, *Historiography: Secular and Religious* (Nutley, NJ: The Craig Press, 1971), 19.
3. See Bradley Birzer, *Sanctifying the World: The Augustinian Life and Mind of Christo-*

pher Dawson (Front Royal, VA: Christendom Press, 2007).

4. Eugene Rosenstock-Huessy, *Out of Revolution: Autobiography of Western Man* (Providence, RI: Berg Publishers, Inc., 1993).
5. Jacques Barzun, *From Dawn to Decadence: 500 Years of Western Cultural Life* (New York: HarperCollins, 2000).
6. See James Jordan, “The Closing of the Calvinistic Mind,” and Andrew Sandlin, “The De-Intellectualization of the Reformed Movement.” My article “Rushdoony and Dooyeweerd,” which appeared in the January/February *Faith for All of Life*, focused on two of these thinkers.
7. Clark, *Historiography*, 234.
8. See David Naugle, *Worldview: The History of a Concept* (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2002).
9. R. J. Rushdoony, *The One and the Many: Studies in the Philosophy of Order and Ultimacy* (Fairfax, VA: Thoburn Press, 1971).
10. *Ibid.*, 362.
11. *Ibid.*, 362–363. Maybe it should have been titled *Between Anarchy and Totalitarianism*.
12. And education majors imagined that they were studying an academic field also.
13. Clark, *Historiography*, 18–19.
14. With all of the scholarly intellectual achievement of these Calvinist worldview thinkers, there were areas where they fell short in their works, such as literature. The Inklings in England and the Agrarians in the American South achieved great results in literary matters, although they lacked the Reformational underpinnings.
15. Rushdoony wrote two studies on Van Til and contributed to two Festschriften dedicated to Van Til’s thought.
16. And let us never cease from marveling at that vital aspect of the gospel.
17. Rushdoony, *The One and the Many*, 347.
18. *Ibid.*, 370.

M. Rushdoony ... Lordship cont. from page 5

suggest. Try explaining to yourself why God has nothing to say to some sphere. Consider how you would pray to God

and tell Him why your faith must preclude His interest in any part of His creation.

Of course, to do so would be blasphemous. To deny the claims of God over the fullness of the creation and the scope of human endeavor is to join His enemies who still say, “We will not have this man to rule over us.”

My father once wrote an essay called “Maximal Christianity.” He used the term in contrast to the minimal Christianity of so much of the modern church. If Jesus is Lord, then we are servants, and that means total submission and total obedience must be our response.

Some belief in God is not enough. James tells us that even the devils believe in God (2:19), but they tremble because they only know Him as their Judge. We are called to a confidence in the comprehensive sovereignty of the triune God. It is important that we not stop at the sovereignty of God the Father. We must specifically hold to the lordship of the incarnate second person of the Trinity. We must not see Jesus Christ as merely the Son who did a deed for His Father, as a role player, nor may we see Him as a benefit provider. In all that Jesus Christ does, He is also our God, our Lord, and our Master. This is the only Jesus Scripture offers us. Any other Jesus is a false god, one made in the image of men. ■

Morecraft ... Athanasius cont. from page 11

9. *Ibid.*
10. Encyclopaedia Britannica; public domain selection quoted by Christian Classics Ethereal Library, www.ccel.org.
11. Galli and Olsen, *131 Christians Everyone Should Know*, 17.
12. Henry Coray, *Against the World: The Odyssey of Athanasius* (Neerlandia, Alberta, Canada: Inheritance Publications), 38–39.
13. See Appendix 2 to read the Nicene Creed.
14. Quoted in R. J. Rushdoony, *Foundations*, 15.

15. Ibid.
16. See Appendix 3 for excerpts from the devotional writings of Athanasius.
17. Galli and Olsen, *131 Christians Everyone Should Know*, 19.
18. Encyclopaedia Britannica; public domain selection quoted by Christian Classics Ethereal Library, www.ccel.org.
19. C. S. Lewis, introduction to *St. Athanasius: On the Incarnation* (New York: Macmillan Publishing, 1946), xvii, xviii.
20. This creed was probably written either by St. Augustine or Ambrose of Milan and was named for the champion of the Trinity, Athanasius.
21. An early version of the Nicene Creed was hammered out at the Council of Nicea, A.D. 325. Later councils tightened the wording leading to its present form.

McVicar ... First Owyhee cont. from page 22

is telling that he never sought to revise it and publish it even under his own imprint.

23. R. J. Rushdoony to George Huntston Williams, 12 June 1947.
24. R. J. Rushdoony to Ernst H. Kantorowicz, 22 March 1945.
25. R. J. Rushdoony to Orval Clay, 24 February 1945.
26. Ibid.
27. Rushdoony, "Christian Missions" (1949), 12.
28. In an interview, Rushdoony said that he first read Van Til's *The New Modernism* in 1944 or 1945 while traveling back to Owyhee from a trip to Buffalo, New York. Rushdoony told the interviewer, "[S]ome years later when I was coming back from the east, where I had been speaking in Buffalo, New York, I stopped in this little town in Colorado to speak also, at a church, and the minister there had a copy of Van Til's *New Modernism*, which had just been published" (Larson, *Oral History Interview*, 43). In the same interview he tried to pinpoint the date: "Yes, it was 1944 or ... about the end of the war" (ibid., 41). Since *The New Modernism* was not published until 1946, and one of the surviving letters in his correspondence indicates that Rushdoony did not visit Buffalo until early 1946, I have adopted 1946

- as the year Rushdoony first encountered Van Til (see R. J. Rushdoony to Gilbert Lovell, 12 March 1946 for the only existing reference I could find to Rushdoony's Buffalo trip). It's possible that Rushdoony first read another work by Van Til in 1944 or 1945 and subsequently confused it with *The New Modernism*, but this is highly unlikely since Rushdoony consistently pointed to *The New Modernism* as his introduction to Van Til.
29. Larson, *Oral History Interview*, 33.
30. Ibid.
31. R. J. Rushdoony to Lorna Logan, 4 April 1946.
32. Ibid.
33. While Rushdoony is here critical of dispensationalism, it would be an error to assume he had adopted a postmillenarian perspective. At this time Rushdoony was making a transition in eschatology as well as theology and was probably still amillennial in outlook.
34. R. J. Rushdoony to Orval Clay, 24 February 1945.

Stoos ... God's Judgment cont. from page 25

We cannot ignore the enemies of God. We must confront them and the sin that flows from them, but we must remember that the battle belongs to the Lord. We must ask the Spirit to test our hearts continually to make sure that our motives are godly and that we are praying with a proper attitude and perspective: God's perspective.

We must wage this warfare with His weapons and remember that Jesus has come to bring light to the world: "For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life. For God did not send His Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through Him might be saved" (John 3:16–17 NKJV). The old earth and old heavens already stood condemned under the curse of sin: God sent His Son to save that which was lost, and we should

never be surprised to see the extent of His mercy.

As we call down God's judgments on those who hate God, we must remember two things:

First and foremost, we must always remember that there but for the grace of God go we ourselves.

Second, we must also say with the great hymn writer Isaac Watts that "we long to see God's churches FULL."

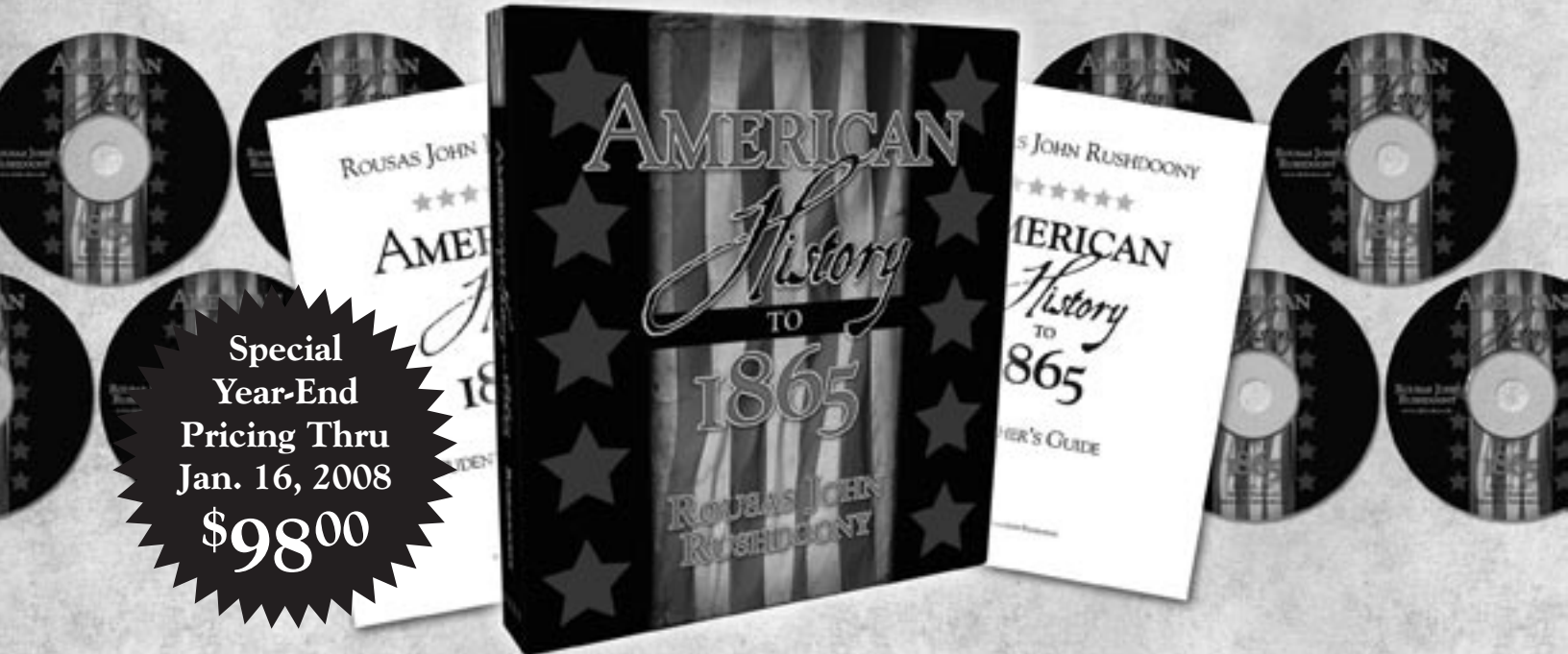
As Christians we must be ready and willing to call boldly for God's justice. And we must at the same time expect the repentance of sinners because Jesus came to save those who were lost. ■

John Stoos is the pastor of Church of the King, www.COTKS.org, and the director of Cherish California's Children, a pro-life ministry that provides literature for sidewalk counselors across the county, www.CherishCA.com. John also served as Chief Consultant for State Senator Tom McClintock for ten years and continues to advise qualified candidates running or serving in public office. John and his wife, Linda, live in Sacramento where they enjoy their six children and soon-to-be twenty-one grandchildren! John can be reached at (916) 451-5660 or stoos@jslink.net.

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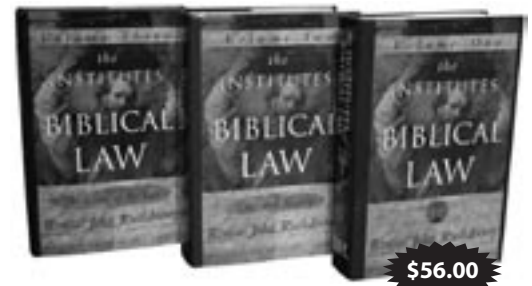
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| | 18. The Voluntary Church, II | | |

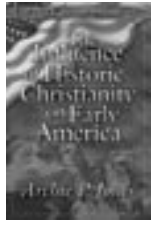
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Edited by Andrew Sandlin. *The Future of the Conservative Movement* explores the history, accomplishments and decline of the conservative movement, and lays the foundation for a viable substitute to today's compromising, floundering conservatism.

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

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By R.J. Rushdoony. America was a break with the neoplatonic view of religion that dominated the medieval church. The Puritans and other groups saw Scripture as guidance for every area of life because they viewed its author as the infallible Sovereign over every area. America's fall into Arminianism and revivalism, however, was a return to the neoplatonic error that transferred the world from Christ's shoulders to man's. The author saw a revival ahead in Biblical faith.

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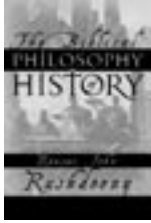
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The Biblical Philosophy of History

By R.J. Rushdoony. For the orthodox Christian who grounds his philosophy of history on the doctrine of creation, the mainspring of history is God. Time rests on the foundation of eternity, on the eternal decree of God. Time and history therefore have meaning because they were created in terms of God's perfect and totally comprehensive plan. The humanist faces a meaningless world in which he must strive to create and establish meaning. The Christian accepts a world which is totally meaningful and in which every event moves in terms of God's purpose; he submits to God's meaning and finds his life therein. This is an excellent introduction to Rushdoony. Once the reader sees Rushdoony's emphasis on God's sovereignty over all of time and creation, he will understand his application of this presupposition in various spheres of life and thought.

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

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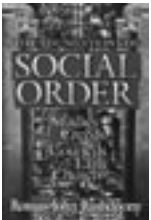
Church History



The "Atheism" of the Early Church

By Rousas John Rushdoony. Early Christians were called "heretics" and "atheists" when they denied the gods of Rome, in particular the divinity of the emperor and the statism he embodied in his personality cult. These Christians knew that Jesus Christ, not the state, was their Lord and that this faith required a different kind of relationship to the state than the state demanded. Because Jesus Christ was their acknowledged Sovereign, they consciously denied such esteem to all other claimants. Today the church must take a similar stand before the modern state.

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The Foundations of Social Order: Studies in the Creeds and Councils of the Early Church

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.

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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.

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The Word of Flux: Modern Man and the Problem of Knowledge

By R.J. Rushdoony. Modern man has a problem with knowledge. He cannot accept God's Word about the world or anything else, so anything which points to God must be called into question. 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.

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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.

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By What Standard?

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

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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.

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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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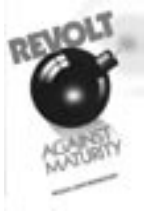


Politics of Guilt and Pity

By R.J. Rushdoony. From the foreword by Steve Schlissel: "Rushdoony sounds the clarion call of liberty for all who remain oppressed by Christian leaders who wrongfully lord it over the souls of God's righteous ones... I pray that the entire book will not only instruct you in the method and content of a Biblical worldview, but actually bring you further into the

glorious freedom of the children of God. Those who walk in wisdom's ways become immune to the politics of guilt and pity."

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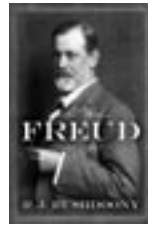


Revolt Against Maturity

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

filled with responsibility to God. Man's psychological problems are therefore a resistance to responsibility, i.e. a revolt against maturity.

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Freud

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

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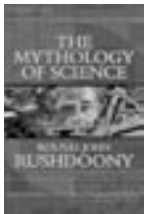


The Cure of Souls: Recovering the Biblical Doctrine of Confession

By R. J. Rushdoony. In *The Cure of Souls: Recovering the Biblical Doctrine of Confession*, R. J. Rushdoony cuts through the misuse of Romanism and modern psychology to restore the doctrine of confession to a Biblical foundation—one that is covenantal and Calvinistic. Without a true restoration of Biblical confession, the Christian's walk is impeded by the remains of sin. This volume is an effort in reversing this trend.

Hardback, 320 pages with index, \$26.00 ~~\$18.20~~

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 ~~\$11.90~~



Alive: An Enquiry into the Origin and Meaning of Life

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

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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.

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Economics



Making Sense of Your Dollars: A Biblical Approach to Wealth

By Ian Hodge. The author puts the creation and use of wealth in their Biblical context. Debt has put the economies of nations and individuals in dangerous straits. This book discusses why a business is the best investment, as well as the issues of debt avoidance and insurance. 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.

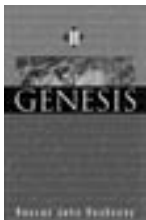
Pamphlet, 8 pages, ~~\$1.00~~ **.70¢**

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.

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Biblical Studies



Genesis, Volume I of Commentaries on the Pentateuch

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. 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. The entire book of Genesis is basic to Biblical theology. The church needs to re-study it to recognize its centrality.

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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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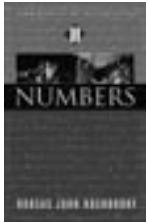
Much like the book of Proverbs, any emphasis upon the practical applications of God's law is readily shunned in pursuit of more "spiritual" studies. Books like Leviticus are considered dull, overbearing, and irrelevant. But man was created in God's image and is duty-bound to develop the implications 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 Lord desires a people who will embrace their responsibilities. The history of Israel in the wilderness is a sad narrative of a people with hearts hardened by complaint and rebellion to God's ordained authorities. They were slaves, not an army. They would recognize the tyranny of Pharaoh but disregard the servant-leadership of Moses. God would judge the generation He led out of captivity, while training a new generation to conquer Canaan. The book of Numbers reveals God's dealings with both generations. The rebellious in Israel are judged incessantly while a census is taken to number the armies of Israel according to their tribes. This was an assessment of strength and a means to encourage the younger generation to view themselves as God's army and not Pharaoh's slaves.

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By R. J. Rushdoony. Theology belongs in the pulpit, the school, the workplace, the family and everywhere. Society as a whole is weakened when theology is neglected. Without a systematic application of theology, too often people approach the Bible with a smorgasbord mentality, picking and choosing that which pleases them. This two-volume set addresses this subject in order to assist in the application of the Word of God to every area of life and thought.

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These tape series represent just a few of the many topics represented in the above work. They are useful for Bible study groups, Sunday Schools, etc. All are by Rev. R. J. Rushdoony.

Creation and Providence

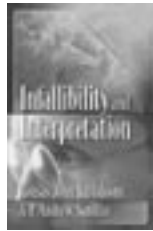
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following the Enlightenment's humanism, of reason. They affirm Biblical infallibility because the God Whom the Bible reveals could speak in no other way than infallibly, and because the Bible in which God is revealed asserts that God alone speaks infallibly. 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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The Lordship of Christ

By Arend ten Pas. The author shows that to limit Christ's work in history to salvation and not to include lordship is destructive of the faith and leads to false doctrine.

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By Charles D. Provan. For the last century, Christians have been told that God has an unconditional love for persons racially descended from Abraham. Membership in Israel is said to be a matter of race, not faith. This book repudiates such a racist viewpoint and abounds in Scripture references which show that the blessings of Israel were transferred to all those who accept Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior.

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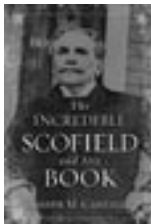
Edited by Andrew Sandlin. The Bible and the Christian Faith have been under attack in one way or another throughout much of the history of the church, but only in recent times have these attacks been perceived *within* the church as a healthy alternative to orthodoxy. This book is a trumpet blast heralding 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. 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 R.J. Rushdoony. Salvation in Scripture includes in its meaning "health" and "victory." By limiting the meaning of salvation, men have limited the power of God and the meaning of the Gospel. In this study R. J. Rushdoony demonstrates the expanse of the doctrine of salvation as it relates to the rule of the God and His people.

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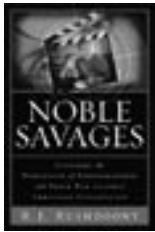
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A Conquering Faith

By William O. Einwechter. This monograph takes on the doctrinal defection of today's church by providing Christians with an introductory treatment of six vital areas of Christian doctrine: God's sovereignty, Christ's Lordship, God's law, the authority of Scripture, the dominion mandate, and the victory of Christ and His church in history. This easy-to-read booklet is a welcome antidote to the humanistic theology of the 21st century church.

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Edited by Elizabeth Fellserson. The law of God makes clear how important and how central marriage is. God the Son came into the world neither through church nor state but through a family. This tells us that marriage, although nonexistent in heaven, is, all the same, central to this world. We are to live here under God as physical creatures whose lives are given their great training-ground in terms of the Kingdom of God by marriage. Our Lord stresses the fact that marriage is our normal calling. This book consists of essays on the importance of a proper Christian perspective on marriage.

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By R.J. Rushdoony. This large volume provides all of Rushdoony's *Chalcedon Report* articles from the beginning in 1965 to mid-1989. These articles were, with his books, responsible for the Christian Reconstruction and theonomy movements. More topics than could possibly be listed. Imagine having 24 years of Rushdoony's personal research for just \$20.

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A Comprehensive Faith

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.

Hardback, 244 pages, ~~\$23.00~~ **\$16.10**



The Church as God's Army

By Brian Abshire. What if they gave a war and nobody came? In the great spiritual battles of the last century, with the soul of an entire culture at stake, a large segment of the evangelical church went AWOL. Christians retreated into a religious ghetto, conceding the world to the Devil and hoping anxiously that the rapture would come soon and solve all their problems. But the rapture did not come, and our nation only slid further into sin.

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Eschatology



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By R.J. Rushdoony. First published in 1970, this book helped spur the modern rise of postmillennialism. Revelation's details are often perplexing, even baffling, and yet its main meaning is clear—it is a book about victory. It tells us that our faith can only result in victory. "This is the victory that overcomes the world, even our faith" (1 John 5:4). This is why knowing Revelation is so important. It assures us of our victory and celebrates it. Genesis 3 tells us of the fall of man into sin and death. Revelation gives us man's victory in Christ over sin and death. The vast and total victory, in time and eternity, set forth by John in Revelation is too important to bypass. This victory is celebrated in Daniel and elsewhere, in the entire Bible. We are not given a Messiah who is a loser. These eschatological texts make clear that the essential good news of the entire Bible is victory, total victory.

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Thine is the Kingdom: A Study of the Postmillennial Hope

Edited by Kenneth L. Gentry, Jr. Israel's misunderstanding of eschatology eventually destroyed her by leading her to reject the Messiah and the coming of the Kingdom of Heaven. Likewise, false eschatological speculation is destroying the church today, by leading her to neglect her Christian calling and to set forth false expectations. In this volume, edited by Kenneth L. Gentry, Jr., the reader is presented with a blend of Biblical exegesis of key Scripture passages, theological reflection on important doctrinal issues, and practical application for faithful Christian living. *Thine is the Kingdom* lays the scriptural foundation for a Biblically-based, hope-filled postmillennial eschatology, while showing what it means to be postmillennial in the real world. The book is both an introduction to and defense of the eschatology of victory. Chapters include contemporary writers Keith A. Mathison, William O. Einwechter, Jeffrey Ventrella, and Kenneth L. Gentry, Jr., as well as chapters by giants of the faith Benjamin B. Warfield and J.A.

Alexander.

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God's Plan for Victory

By R.J. Rushdoony. An entire generation of victory-minded Christians, spurred by the victorious postmillennial vision of Chalcedon, has emerged to press what the Puritan Fathers called "the Crown Rights of Christ the King" in all areas of modern life. Central to that optimistic generation is Rousas John Rushdoony's jewel of a study, *God's Plan for Victory* (originally published in 1977). The founder of the Christian Reconstruction movement set forth in potent, cogent terms the older Puritan vision of the irrepressible advancement of Christ's kingdom by His faithful saints employing the entire law-Word of God as the program for earthly victory.

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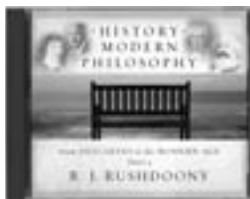
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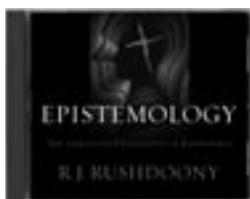
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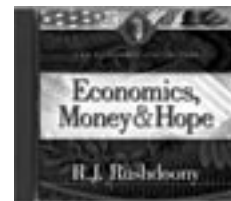
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