

# FAITH FOR ALL OF LIFE

*Faith for All of Life*  
September/October 2010

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

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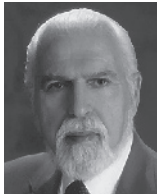
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# The Necessity of Creationism (1967)

(Reprinted from *The Mythology of Science* [Vallecito, CA: Ross House Books, 2001], 61–67.)

R. J. Rushdoony



When the first edition of Charles Darwin's *On the Origin of Species* was published on November 24, 1859, all 1,250 copies sold out

on the day of publication. The world was waiting for a theory with scientific prestige to render the Bible and God obsolete, and men immediately jumped on the bandwagon of Darwinism. George Bernard Shaw describes the relief of men at being rid of God and declares "the world jumped at Darwin."<sup>1</sup>

A great many churchmen climbed on that bandwagon then, and many more have done it since. The appeal is very great. Why not compromise? Why not be "scientific," or scientifically respectable? When the Genesis account of creation is such a liability, why not concentrate on other matters of the faith and accommodate the Bible to evolution? Why risk being considered ignorant and backward?

Bernard Ramm, in *The Christian View of Science and Scripture*, searches for "more credible, reasonable interpretations which should cause no embarrassment to any man with a scientific mentality but also with Christian convictions."<sup>2</sup> Ramm's purpose is to harmonize the Bible and modern science. Is such an approach tenable? Why defend old-fashioned, strict creationism?

St. James observes, "For whosoever shall keep the whole law, and yet offend in one point, he is guilty of all" (James 2:10). Similarly, anyone who denies the authority of Scripture at one point has denied it at all points. If we

assert that we can set aside the six-day creation doctrine, we have asserted our supremacy over Scripture. Our mind and our convenience now have a higher authority than the Bible, so that we have denied its authority totally and asserted our authority instead. If we claim the right at any point to set aside Scripture, we have established ourselves as the higher authority at *every* point. Clearly, therefore, the question of authority is at stake in Genesis 1: God or man? Whose word is authoritative and final?

But there is much more at stake. Science itself is involved. There are issues involved in creationism which are basic to the existence of science. Let us examine the necessity of creationism for science. Dr. Robert P. Knight, M.D., in his presidential address to the American Psychopathological Association (New York, May 9, 1946), states:

Determinism is a fundamental tenet of all science. Indeed, it is inconceivable that we could explain or count on anything in the physical world without relying on the basic assumption that all phenomena are strictly determined. Dynamic psychology is a science of human thinking and human behavior, and as a science must be deterministic. The phenomena of human thought, feeling, and behavior, of the whole range of pathology, must be understandable and explainable in terms of the causal factors of heredity, early psychological conditioning, subsequent life experiences, the composite of forces, external and internal, playing on the personality. In such a deterministic science of human behavior there is no place for the fortuitous, nor for "free will" in the sense

used in philosophy. Whatever human actions or decisions seem to indicate the operation of a free will, or a freedom of choice, can be shown, on closer inspection and analysis, to be based on unconscious determinism. The causal factors were there and operative, but were simply not in the conscious awareness of the individual.<sup>3</sup>

Knight's conclusion is a very interesting one:

Determinism is a prerequisite of all science, including dynamic psychology. The alternative is not free will, but indeterminism, which implies chaos, unpredictability, and a denial of cause and effect relationships in human affairs. Free will is a subjective feeling, which is better called a sense of inner freedom, and which depends on harmony and integration of the personality. It is experienced by those psychologically healthy persons who willingly choose a course of action according to inner standards they are glad to obey. Psychotherapy, far from requiring freedom to choose in order to influence patients treated, itself operates deterministically to achieve for the patient this subjective sense of freedom.<sup>4</sup>

Without getting involved in a discussion of predestination versus determinism, we can observe that Knight has rightly seen that the issue is one between a world under absolute law and a world of chaos, and he sees a world of law and of cause and effect as basic to science. If chaos or chance be ultimate, then there can be no science. An absolute, determined order, Knight states, "is a fundamental tenet of all science ... a prerequisite of all science."

But this statement points to a schizophrenic aspect of modern science. The theory of evolution requires a belief that somehow all things arose out of chance, and out of “the fortuitous” which Knight condemns; evolutionary science denies spontaneous generation as a fact but requires it in theory to account for the universe. Thus, J. H. Rush, while unable to affirm spontaneous generation, places his hope on finding evidence of it and writes: “It would be satisfying to find some kind of life on another planet, even lowly forms, to support our basic thesis that life is a spontaneously originating process.”<sup>5</sup>

Science thus *wants* a universe of law and of causality without God, but it would rather ascribe all the magnificent order of the universe to chaos rather than to God, because the scientists involved are fallen men, in rebellion against God and bent on suppressing their knowledge of Him.

Men will either presuppose God, or they will presuppose themselves as the basic reality of being. If they assume themselves to be autonomous and independent from God, they will then wage war against God at every point. There is no such thing as an area of neutrality: men will either affirm God at every point in their lives and thinking, or else they will deny Him at every point.

As Dr. Cornelius Van Til observes:

Now if our contention (that the evolution-hypothesis is a part of an antitheistic theory of reality) is correct, then we must do away with every easy-going attitude. The evolutionist is then a soldier in that great, that seemingly all-powerful army of antitheists that has from time immemorial sought to destroy the people of God. We must then prepare for a life and death struggle, if not in the courts of the land, then in the higher courts of human thought.

Every time any human being opens his mouth to say anything, he either says

that God is or that God is not a reality. It could not be otherwise. God claims to control every fact.<sup>6</sup>

Since God created all things, nothing can be truly understood apart from Him, and no fact can be truly interpreted apart from Him. When men seek to give an atheistic or agnostic interpretation to any fact, it is because they are at war with God and are bent on denying Him.

The basis of evolutionary theories is this anti-God position of apostate and fallen man. The convincing thing about evolution is not that it proves man's origins, or even gives anything resembling a possible theory, but that it dispenses with God. Scientists themselves have often called attention to the absurdities of evolutionary theory. Consider, for example, the comments of G. A. Kerkut, a biochemist:

It is ... a matter of faith on the part of the biologist that biogenesis did occur and he can choose whatever method of biogenesis happens to suit him personally; the evidence for what did happen is not available.<sup>7</sup>

It seems at times as if many of our modern writers on evolution have had their views by some sort of revelation ...<sup>8</sup>

This does not mean that Kerkut accepts creationism. Any alternative is preferable, apparently, to evolutionists other than God. His hope is that “future experimental work” will provide an answer,<sup>9</sup> but he is already sure that the answer will in some form be evolution. Thus, his basic assumption is a religious faith that the answer is not God but something else, although he does not know what that something is! Evolution is not a science but a religious faith which has taken over the sciences and rules them dogmatically.

And yet evolution, which rests on chaos, is held by men whose sciences presuppose God and His eternal decree.

Evolution requires chance, whereas science rests on absolutely determined factors and on causality. The doctrine of evolution is thus basically hostile to science.

Again, evolution is a theory which is radically hostile to Biblical religion. The Bible clearly asserts that God created heaven and earth, the whole created universe, in six days. If this statement be allegorized or interpreted away, no meaning stands in Scripture. Because God created all things, He and He alone is the sustainer, governor, and redeemer of all things. Man is responsible to God because God is his maker, because man is totally God's creation and therefore totally under God's law. God is man's savior because God as creator is alone omnipotent over man and the universe and sufficient for all things. God is man's judge because He is man's creator, and He created man for His own purposes and glory. If God's creative work is denied, then God's governance and redemption are also denied, because God is made irrelevant to man and to the universe, or at the least no longer omnipotent over them. Every doctrine of Scripture is undermined when strict creationism is undermined. Wherever strict creationism is set aside, the vital nerve of Christianity is cut, and the church begins to move in terms of humanistic and political power rather than the power of God.

The alternative to creationism is evolution, and Darwin has led to Marx and Freud, to materialism and agnosticism, and, as M. Stanton Evans has noted, to the “annihilation of value derived from Nietzsche and James and Dewey. These are the root precepts of Liberal philosophy.”<sup>10</sup> The problem of our time is not material: it is spiritual. Technology has given man more material wealth than he has ever before possessed, but man's condition is regularly

described as a desperate one, and man lives in a chronic state of anxiety. What the doctrine of evolution has done is to destroy man, not God. A theory cannot alter ultimate reality; it can affect the mind and welfare of man. How has it done so?

First of all, man is no longer viewed as created in the image of God. According to Scripture, man was created in God's image, and, although fallen, is strictly under God's law. Man cannot be reduced to the level of an animal. The Sabbath was made for man, not man for the Sabbath. The state is made for man, not man for the state. Man is called to glorify God and to enjoy Him forever, and the world is man's dominion under God. But the evolutionary theory views man as a product of the world rather than a destined lord over it in Christ. Man is seen as having evolved out of the fortuitous concourse of atoms and out of the primeval slime. Instead of being set over nature, man is set under nature as a product of it. Man is reduced to the same slavish status as existed during antiquity in ancient Egypt and other states which held to an evolutionary concept.

Man's liberty is a product of Biblical faith; the concept of evolution produces slavery, and it was welcomed by Marx as the necessary foundation for socialism. When man, as in evolutionary thinking, is a product of nature, he is passive in relationship to nature; his being is determined by nature, and his psychology is passive, conditioned, a reflex action rather than a governing action. When man knows himself to be created by God, and this faith is basic to his thinking, man is a product of God's creative work and is therefore passive in relationship to God but active toward nature. He is then determined by God, not by nature, and man is then active toward nature and governs it.

Man is then free from nature, not a slave of it, because man is created and governed by God, not by nature. Man's calling is to exercise dominion under God over nature, to rule it, develop and exploit it, under God and to His glory. Only the regenerate man in Jesus Christ can do this. The fallen man is in captivity to his own nature and to the forces around him. As a result, liberty rapidly declines when Biblical Christianity declines. Where men are not ruled by God, they are ruled by tyrants. And the rise of evolutionary thinking has produced a worldwide rise of totalitarianism. Since man is no longer seen as a creation by God, he is becoming a creature of the total state, and the total state is determined to remake man in its own image.

As a result, man is now the primary experimental animal. Many people are alarmed at the use of animals in scientific experimentation. But the grim reality is that the primary experimental animal is man. Not only the mental health experts, but virtually every agency of civil government is today engaged in trying to remake man. Moreover, scientists are engaged in experiments concerning psychochemical and electronic controls over man.

Such experiments were reported in *Life* magazine, March 8 and 15, 1963.<sup>11</sup> Scientists seriously talk, as did C. R. Schafer, at the National Electronics Conference at the Illinois Institute of Technology, about enslaving men with built-in electronic controls, a socket mounted under the scalp "a few months after birth," with "electrodes reaching selected areas of brain tissue." After "a year or two ... a miniature radio receiver and antenna would be plugged into the socket," and from that time on the child would be modified "or completely controlled by bio-electric signals radiated from state-controlled transmit-

ters."<sup>12</sup> When they begin by talking and experimenting in this vein, as they have done, we can be sure that the conclusion of their thinking will be far worse.

Orwell's *1984* will look like paradise compared to what these evolutionists plan to do with man. When men set aside God as Creator, they then set themselves up as man's recreators, as the new gods over man and the universe. It was this same temper which characterized man before the Flood, and Genesis 6:5 declares, "And God saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually."

A second way in which evolutionary theory has altered the mind of man is with respect to responsibility. According to Scripture, man is a responsible creature; his responsibility is to serve and glorify God; failing to do this, man became a sinner, sentenced to death. Evolutionary theory, because it sees man as a product of nature, sees man, not as a responsible creature made in the likeness of God, but as a product of a long evolutionary history and his environment. As a result, man is not responsible; he is not a sinner but a victim. He is what his environment has made him. The means therefore of changing man is not regeneration, not moral responsibility and renewal, but changing his environment. Man has to be reconditioned. This means a Pavlovian world.

Even as Pavlov trained his dogs to salivate when he rang a bell, so man has to be trained, like any animal, by conditioning. This means that education ceases to be education: it becomes brainwashing and conditioning. This means also that responsibility disappears. After all, it is not the criminal's fault, it is society's fault; it is not the young delinquent's fault, it is his family's fault. Mothers as a result are extensively



blamed for their children's sins and failures, or for their mental collapse. As one psychiatrist, Humphry Osmond, M.D., notes,

And if Mama was not to blame, the myth goes on, it must be Papa, or the husband or wife. This can be extended and is extended to anything in the family background—poverty, riches, lack of discipline, too much discipline.

Thus far, however, no one has blamed sons and daughters for the schizophrenia of Mama and Papa. But parents may have senile psychosis, and the day may come when children will be blamed for that. *It is dangerous these days to be the relative of a person who is mentally ill for you will probably be blamed for driving him mad.*<sup>13</sup>

This trend to blame someone or something else will not be stopped by such common sense observations by a few dissenting psychiatrists. Environmentalism is a logical necessity for evolutionary thinking. The theory holds that man is a product of his geological and biological environment and, because evolution is a continuing process, not a finished act, this means that man is still a product of his environment. As a result, the logical evolutionist will, first, insist that the environment is responsible for man, not man for his environment. Second, he will try to provide the right biological and social environment to further man's evolution and to prevent man's devolution.

This means total control over man, supposedly for man's welfare. Again we face the inescapable fact that evolutionary thinking *requires* totalitarianism. If the education of a people is dedicated to teaching evolution, it will also teach socialism or communism. Karl Marx knew better than others that evolution was a necessity for communism's success: it made socialism "scientific." *If men put their faith in evolution, they will*

*then look to scientific socialist planners for salvation rather than to Jesus Christ.* Their maker is their savior. Friedrich Engels agreed with Marx that Darwin's theory was basic to scientific socialism.<sup>14</sup>

When man is regarded as a product of his environment rather than a creature responsible to God, he ceases to be of much importance, either as a person or in his thinking. Darwin himself doubted the validity of his own ideas in many directions. For example, while denying all revelation, he believed that it seemed reasonable to conclude "that the Universe is not the result of chance," even though his theory did so much to enthrone chance. Then he added,

But then with me the horrid doubt always arises whether the convictions of man's mind, which has been developed from the mind of the lower animals, are of any value or at all trustworthy. Would any one trust in the convictions of a monkey's mind, if there are any convictions in such a mind?<sup>15</sup>

Darwin thus professed little respect for his own thinking. It is not surprising then that he had little respect for some races. He believed that some would be eliminated, and wrote, "Looking to the world at no very distant date, what an endless number of the lower races will have been eliminated by the higher civilized races throughout the world."<sup>16</sup> In other words, Darwin felt that evolution would eliminate "lower races." This is one possible approach to the problem from the evolutionary perspective: weed them out. The other approach is equally deadly: since environment changes men, provide these "lower races" with a new environment, new education, and a new set of controls, and you will evolve them quickly to the same level as what Darwin termed "the higher civilized races." Both of these evolutionary approaches reveal a fundamental contempt for man and a readiness to use him experimen-

tally. More important, they shift the problem from faith and character to planning and control, from responsibility to conditioning and experimentation.

A third way in which evolutionary thinking has affected the minds of men is that it has given men a new religion, and that new religion is science. As C. F. Weizsacker observed at a scientific gathering:

Science today is the only thing in which men as a whole believe: it is the only universal religion of our time ... The scientist has thus got himself into an ambiguous position: he is a priest of this new religion, possessing its secrets and marvels; for what to others is puzzling, strange or secret is plain to him. It is suddenly clear in many countries that the future of a nation, of a continent, of a view of life depends on producing enough scientists. Is this immoderate faith in the power of science justified?<sup>17</sup>

One of the clearest bits of evidence that science is now man's universal religion is the history of the churches since Darwin. Modernism is simply an attempt to keep religion up to date with science and philosophy. Even within supposedly evangelical circles, we see men like Ramm seeking a harmony with science. Genesis is interpreted, not in terms of what the Hebrew text requires, but in terms of evolutionary geology by most commentators. When even the churches move so extensively in terms of the authority of the evolutionary scientist, how much more so does the world bow down before this new priesthood!

A fourth way in which evolutionary thinking has affected the minds of men is in the area of morality. Biblical morality declares the sovereign authority of God and establishes His clear-cut commandments for men. Morality thus has reality; it is grounded in ultimate reality; it rests on the truth of God's Word and has the authority of God's judgment

behind it. The theory of evolution has no moral absolutes. Morality like man is a product of evolution; it represents, not ultimate and absolute truth, but social mores and customs. The new morality is the logical result of evolutionary theory. It simply wipes out all moral standards. The champions of the new morality declare that anything done “by mutual consent should not be prohibited by law” and is morally legitimate. The only crime is said to be compulsion or force used against another person.

According to the “Bruins for Voluntary Parenthood and Sexual Liberty,” in a 1966 handout at U.C.L.A., “Where there is no victim, every act is morally right,” and virtually every form of perversion is then listed and defended. But why limit the lawful acts to voluntary acts? After all, if, as such persons believe, there is no ultimate truth, no ultimate right and wrong, why not regard force as equally good as consent? The Marquis de Sade was more logical here: for him, the only real crime was Christianity; all else was permissible, every sexual crime, theft, and murder also. “Can we possibly imagine Nature giving us the possibility of committing a crime which would offend her?”<sup>18</sup>

At least one killer of late has been motivated in part by the Marquis de Sade’s writings. A murderer in England, who boasted of several brutal murders, was a professed follower of the degenerate Marquis.<sup>19</sup> It is ridiculous to believe that, when men believe that every kind of act is morally legitimate and natural, they will not begin to practice many of these acts. And this is exactly what is happening all around us. The growing incidence of every kind of perversion and crime is a witness to this moral collapse. Sigmund Freud knew that total breakdown of all law and order could easily follow the widespread adoption of unbelief.

When the masses become as atheistic as their leaders, Freud feared that they “will certainly kill without hesitation ... And so follows the necessity for either the most rigorous suppression of these dangerous masses and the most careful exclusion of all opportunities for mental awakening, or a fundamental revision of the relation between culture and religion.”<sup>20</sup> In other words, Freud saw the solution, as he proceeded to develop it, as one of total control in the scientific socialist state. Either that, or atheism would lead to mass murder and total lawlessness.

Unfortunately, we are increasingly getting both socialism and a moral breakdown with flagrant lawlessness as a result of our evolutionary thinking. Because God’s moral law is denied, men are increasingly living in terms of their sinful nature and their lawless demands for self-satisfaction. In a recent article on New York City detective George Barrett, the author reported on the collapse of law and order as seen from Barrett’s perspective:

If Barrett hates the bad guys, he grieves for the good. He walks through the west side of the precinct, among the crowded apartment houses, and he points to the heavy wire screens and bars covering the back windows over the alleys and empty lots. “Look at that,” he says. “They have to make prisons for themselves to keep the germs out. They have to hide themselves behind bars.”<sup>21</sup>

In many cities today, similar conditions prevail: the good citizens make prisons of their own homes to protect themselves from the hoodlums who rule the streets.

One prominent oil man commented on the moral breakdown by observing that backward areas of the world, which fifty years ago were the less safe areas for travel, are now safer than the

streets of America. The reason for this is not that these areas have improved; they have not. It is because the total moral nihilism and anarchism of evolutionary thinking is creating a monstrous new barbarian who respects nothing and delights in destruction. Concerning such a man, David writes, in Psalm 36:1, 2: “There is no dread of God before his eyes. For he flatters himself in his own thinking that his iniquity will not be found out or hated.”<sup>22</sup> This new barbarianism will only continue and increase until creationism is again believed, and, with it, Biblical Christianity and Christian moral order again prevail.

Jose Ortega y Gasset termed the specialized scientist of our day a barbarian:

But if the specialist is ignorant of the inner philosophy of the science he cultivates, he is much more radically ignorant of the historical conditions requisite for its continuation: that is to say: how society and the heart of man are to be organized in order that there may continue to be investigators ... He also believes that civilization is there in just the same way as the earth’s crust and the forest primeval.<sup>23</sup>

Modern men, scientists, and humble believers in evolution alike, are parasites. They are living off the unearned capital of Christian civilization, on the impetus, law, and order of centuries of Christianity. Like all parasites, they are destroying the host body, Christendom, and its collapse will be their death also. They are denying the eternal decree of God, His sovereign and omnipotent creative counsel and decree, and as a result they are left with a world of chaos which is destructive of science. If they were faithful to their philosophy, these scientists could have no science, because they would have to say that the world is a world of brute factuality, without meaning, purpose, causality, or law. Ev-

ery time a scientist works in his laboratory, he assumes the reality of God even though he may deny God with his lips. He is thus destroying the very foundations of his science when he denies the God who created all things and who is the source of all law and all interpretation. The moral capital of Christendom is rapidly disappearing; if it disappears entirely, all culture and civilization will go with it, and the decline and fall of the West will be far more devastating than the decline and fall of Rome.

The only alternative to this decline and fall is a renewal of Biblical Christianity, which requires a return to creationism. This means renouncing any philosophy, study, or science which seeks to act in complete independence of God. It means renouncing the idea of brute factuality, that is, the idea that facts exist apart from God and apart from any interpretation. Because God has created every fact in the universe, every fact must be understood in terms of the interpretation placed upon it by God's creative purpose. We must strive in every area to think God's thoughts after Him. We must believe that, in every area, there are God-ordained truths for man to know, and no other kind of fact and truth exists, only God-created ones.

Evolution says that the universe represents no purpose, plan, or law: it just happened. When we begin with such a total negation, we can only end up with a total negation. As Van Til has observed, a million zeroes still add up only to zero. This moral chaos is prowling our streets, pounding on our doors, and invading our homes. Scientific planning and mental health programs will not cure it: they are merely "scientific" forms of quackery which aggravate rather than alleviate the evil. The answer is a return to Biblical Christianity, to creationism as a basic factor thereof, to that faith defined by Hebrews 11:3: "Through

faith we understand that the worlds were framed by the word of God, so that things which are seen were not made of things which do appear." This is the basic truth which all men as God's creatures know, but, as St. Paul declares, according to the original Greek, they "hold down the truth in unrighteousness" (Rom. 1:18). They suppress this truth because of their sin, "[f]or the invisible things of him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even his eternal power and Godhead; so that they are without excuse" (Rom. 1:20). Not only is creationism a necessary faith: *it is an inescapable fact.* 🖱️

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23. Jose Ortega y Gasset, *The Revolt of the Masses* (New York: W. W. Norton, 1932), 126.



# A Christian Civil Order: Religion, Republicanism, and the American Founding

Roger Schultz



Rev. Ethan Allen once stopped Thomas Jefferson while the president was on his way to church. Allen, who considered Jefferson an infidel and was surprised at his attendance at worship, asked why Jefferson bothered to go. He was probably even more surprised by the president's response. Jefferson said, "No nation has ever yet existed or been governed without religion. Nor can be. The Christian religion is the best religion that has been given to man, and I as Chief Magistrate am bound to give it the sanction of my example."<sup>1</sup>

Please note that Jefferson does not address his acceptance of evangelical or doctrinal truths of the Christian faith. He was, most likely, primarily concerned with the social and civic utility of religion. (And often accused of infidelity, Jefferson may have been keenly interested in the *political* utility of church-going.) The historical record, in any event, is clear. Jefferson did attend church services regularly while in Washington, even though worship services were conducted in government buildings. In fact, two days after the issuing of the Danbury Baptist letter, in which he used the "wall of separation" metaphor, Jefferson attended worship services in the U.S. House.<sup>2</sup> Jefferson gave money to support churches and cast the public impression of being a faithful and religious chief magistrate, as he did verbally with Rev. Allen.

Today, the received wisdom is that

America's founders were indebted to secular and Enlightenment thinkers and little interested in or influenced by religion or Biblical Christianity. Many historians discount the role of Christianity. An influential contemporary historian, for instance, argues that the Great Awakening never occurred: it was the "interpretative fiction" of nineteenth-century evangelical historians. Others contend that the construction and ratification of a "godless constitution" is further proof of America's secularist orientation. This is a common understanding of the American past for humanists in academia.

New scholarship, however, underscores the obvious: that Christianity was a vital force in the founding period. A decade ago, James Hutson argued for the importance of religion in America in an outstanding work, *Religion and the Founding of the American Republic*.<sup>3</sup> Hutson's latest book, *Church and State in America: The First Two Centuries*, continues the story, giving a historical framework for the civil role of religion in America.<sup>4</sup> Hutson shows that Americans in the founding generation had shared assumptions about religion: that religion was absolutely necessary for morality and a virtuous republic, that public expressions of religious sentiment were valuable and to be encouraged, that religious freedom was important, that Christian convictions were broadly (often deeply) held, and that the general (or national) government was not to establish or meddle with religion in the states. This article examines a few

of these fundamental convictions and practices.

## Christianity and the Republic

First, the founders believed that religion, specifically Christianity, was vitally important for the success of the republic and that religion ought to be supported and encouraged. Political leaders repeatedly endorsed principles of Christianity in formal addresses. During the Revolutionary War, the Continental Congress appointed fasts and thanksgiving days, and many of the proclamations were steeped in evangelical language, Biblical imagery, and the familiar refrains of covenant theology. In 1776, for example, Congress urged citizens to pray "through the merits and mediation of Jesus Christ to obtain his pardon and forgiveness." In 1777, Congress urged Americans to confess their sins "that it may please God through the merits of Jesus Christ, mercifully to forgive and blot them out of remembrance."<sup>5</sup>

State leaders likewise encouraged passionate prayers and faithful religious observances. Perhaps most remarkable was the Thanksgiving and Prayer Proclamation of Virginia by Governor Thomas Jefferson. In November 1779, Governor Jefferson urged Virginians "to humbly approach the throne of Almighty God, with gratitude and praise, . . . (and above all) that he hath diffused the glorious light of the gospel, whereby, through the merits of our gracious Redeemer, we may become the heirs of his eternal glory." Jefferson went on to ask for prayer that God "would



go forth with our hosts and crown our arms with victory; that he would grant to his church, the plentiful effusions of divine grace, and pour out his holy spirit on all Ministers of the gospel; and spread the light of Christian knowledge though the remotest corners of the earth.” Jefferson’s concluding appeal is that God “would in mercy look down upon us, pardon all our sins, and receive us into his favor; and finally, that he would establish the independence of these United States upon the basis of religion and virtue.”<sup>6</sup> I wish that Governor Jefferson’s passionate prayer—that the United States would be established on the basis of religion and virtue—was the prayer of every civil magistrate!<sup>7</sup>

States, furthermore, offered formal support for Christianity and churches. Many states maintained ecclesiastical establishments in the Revolutionary era; state-supported churches didn’t wither away until the 1830s. State constitutions included statements about God, the Bible (acknowledging its inspiration and authority), and an afterlife of reward or punishment. A belief in heaven and hell, it was thought, would help guarantee a virtuous citizenry and sustain a republic.<sup>8</sup>

Many states had religious tests for officeholders or voters. The Pennsylvania Constitution of 1776, for instance, had required that each member, before being seated, “shall make and subscribe the following declaration, viz: *I do believe in one God, the creator and governor of the universe, the rewarder of the good and the punisher of the wicked. And I do acknowledge the Scriptures of the Old and New Testament to be given by Divine inspiration.*”<sup>9</sup>

My favorite example of church-state developments is the State of Franklin—a would-be state that sprang up on the east Tennessee frontier in the 1780s but faded away when it wasn’t recognized by

Congress. The State of Franklin drafted a constitution (largely borrowed from Pennsylvania, Virginia, and North Carolina) and principles of rights, and is an excellent example of bootstraps frontier republicanism in an area dominated by Scots-Irish Presbyterians.

The 1784 constitution imposes a religious test oath: “That no person shall deny the being of a God or the truth of the Protestant religion or the divine authority either of the Old or New Testament, or who shall hold religious principles incompatible with the freedom or safety of the State, shall be capable of holding any office or place of trust or profit within the civil government within this State.” The constitution also guarantees religious freedom: “There shall be no establishment of any religious church or denomination in this State..., neither shall any person on any pretense whatsoever be compelled to attend any place of worship contrary to his own faith or sense of judgment or be obliged to pay for any [church] or minister contrary to what he believes to be right..., but all persons shall be at liberty to exercise their own mode of worship.” The Declaration of Rights attached to the constitution further affirms the importance of civic virtue: “That a people have a right by their representatives to enact laws to encourage virtue and suppress vice and immorality.”<sup>10</sup> These were common features among the states immediately following independence: generic (Protestant) Christianity, religious freedom, and the importance of virtue.

## Religion and Government

Christian statesmen and theologians had long believed that the civil magistrate had a duty to support and encourage the true faith. Political theorists and commentators pointed to the words of Isaiah 49:23: “[K]ings shall be thy nursing fathers, and their queens thy

nursing mothers: they shall bow down to thee with their face toward the earth, and lick up the dust of thy feet; and thou shalt know that I am the LORD: for they shall not be ashamed that wait for me” (KJV). As a passage about the Messiah, commentators agreed, it was perfectly applicable to civil rulers during the gospel age. There was broad agreement in England and the colonies that kings and civil magistrates had a duty to God as nursing fathers to protect religion and the church.<sup>11</sup>

The “nursing father” metaphor was common in the colonies and lingered into the nineteenth century in America. In 1783, for instance, citizens in Amherst County, Virginia, urged their representatives not to ignore the “Important Business” of supporting religion or “think it beneath your Dignity to become Nursing Fathers of the Church.”<sup>12</sup>

State and national governments did much to encourage the “Important Business” of religion. In 1782, Congress sanctioned the publication of Holy Scripture to guarantee that Americans would have access to the Word of God and its wholesome influence. Congress even urged missionary activity in the trans-Appalachian west, calling for a fast in 1782 to see that “the religion of our Divine Redeemer ... cover the earth as the waters cover the seas.”<sup>13</sup> In 1785, as part of provisions for western expansion and later incorporated into the Northwest Ordinance (of 1787), Congress set aside 3 percent of all western lands for the support of schools and religion. The language of that congressional measure is striking: “[R]eligion, morality, and knowledge being necessary to good government and the happiness of mankind, schools and the means of education shall forever be encouraged.”

The founders repeatedly stated that religion, morality, and republican virtue were intertwined and vitally important

for the new nation. In 1779, Lunenburg County, Virginia, urged the General Assembly to promote Christianity, as religion was the best means of promoting virtue, peace, and prosperity. The preface to the 1780 Massachusetts Constitution states that the happiness of a people, and the good order and preservation of civil government, essentially depends upon morality, religion, and piety. The good people of Surry County, Virginia, put it this way: religion is “the great cement of civil society ... essential to the prosperity of civil society.”<sup>14</sup>

Washington’s famous Farewell Address in 1796 simply echoes what Americans had been saying all along. As Washington put it, religion and morality were “indispensable supports” of political prosperity and the “firmest props” of the duties of men and citizens. “[L]et us with caution indulge the supposition that morality can be maintained without religion,” he warned, as “reason and experience both forbid us to expect that national morality can prevail in exclusion of religious principle.”<sup>15</sup>

## Religion and Liberty

In addition to stressing the civic value of religion, Americans also emphasized religious freedom. Many American colonists were dissenters, or religious refugees, or the descendants of religious refugees. Americans resisted England in the 1770s, they argued, to defend their religious liberties as well as their political and economic freedoms.<sup>16</sup>

John Adams, in his “Dissertation on Canon and Feudal Law” (1765), argued that the sixteenth-century Protestant Reformers were the great champions of liberty, who opposed a coalition of ecclesiastical tyranny (canon law) and civil tyranny (feudal law). This conjoined despotism was best illustrated by the Inquisition (church tyranny) and the Bastille (statist tyranny). For Adams, the spiritual descendants of the Reformers

were the seventeenth-century Puritans who migrated to America to escape Stuart political and religious tyranny in the 1630s. The spiritual heirs of these freedom-loving Puritans, in Adams’ view, were the American Patriots of the 1760s who resisted the same coalition of tyranny.

Most of the colonies had some form of religious freedom by the time of the Revolution. Even where there was a formal religious establishment, freedom of religion was officially recognized or tacitly practiced. The most curious and atypical case is also the most famous: Virginia.<sup>17</sup> Virginia dissenters, mostly Baptists and Presbyterians, maintained a vigorous struggle for religious liberty. Jefferson and Madison made common cause with these evangelical dissenters, leading to the Virginia Statute for Religious Freedom in 1786.

The political story of Virginia disestablishment, however, is interesting and illustrates the broad spectrum (and complicated coalitions) of Christian reform. One side (Anglicans) supported a continuation of the established (Anglican) church. The second party (the Moderates), led by Patrick Henry, wanted a generic establishment, with the state providing support for various teachers of religion. This general assessment plan (or voucher system) would allow continued state encouragement of religion. The third party, led by Jefferson and Madison and supported by other evangelical dissenters, favored the outright disestablishment of the Anglican state church.

Madison and Jefferson secured an ultimate victory through some savvy politicking. Historian Daniel Dreisbach describes it this way: “Alarmed at the growing support for Henry’s (general) assessment campaign and the perceived threat to religious liberty, Jefferson uncharitably suggested to Madison:

‘what we have to do I think is devoutly to pray for his [Henry’s] death.’ Madison, however, had a less final solution: remove Henry from the legislature by having him elected Governor.” With the leading advocate of assessment kicked upstairs, the forces of disestablishment in the legislature won the day.<sup>18</sup>

All three Virginia groups, however, were interested in the continuing religious and moral influence upon society. When he first proposed ecclesiastical disestablishment in 1779, for instance, Madison simultaneously introduced legislation for punishing Sabbath breakers and a bill for sanctioning fast and thanksgiving days in Virginia. Most states combined commitments to religious liberty with concerns about public virtue and support for religion.<sup>19</sup> Commitment to disestablishing the Anglican Church was not synonymous with an interest in secularizing society.

Confessional standards were also adjusted to reflect the new freer order. Many communions embraced the Westminster Confession or some variation, although there were concerns about its potentially Erastian character—with the threat of the civil magistrate controlling the church.<sup>20</sup> (The original Westminster Confession of Faith of 1646, in 23:3, affirmed that the magistrate had a duty to preserve order, unity, and peace in the church, to protect the purity of the truth of God, and to suppress all blasphemies and heresies.)

When the American Presbyterian Church revised the Confession in 1788, the civil magistrate was still called a “nursing father” with a duty to protect the church of our common Lord, *but* “without giving the preference to any denomination of Christians above the rest, in such a manner that all ecclesiastical persons whatever shall enjoy the full, free, and unquestioned liberty of discharging every part of their

sacred functions, without violence or danger.” All in all, Americans wanted religious liberty so that evangelicals would no longer face persecution from state establishments.

## Church and State

Finally, Americans insisted that national or general government was not permitted to establish a national church or encroach on religious freedom. Americans had been highly suspicious of British attempts to control religion in the 1760s. Likewise, Americans in the 1780s wanted no caesaropapist or Erastian control of religion from Philadelphia (or Washington).

This explains why there is so little about religion in the U.S. Constitution. The Constitution treated religion precisely as the Articles of Confederation had done. It didn’t meddle with it, as religion was considered an affair of the states. The language of the First Amendment explicitly limits what Congress and the general government might do. The founders were concerned about protecting the states and state prerogatives against federal intrusion, and they had no interest in stirring up religious and sectarian strife on a national scale.

National leaders could promote religion in a general way, and they did so with Bible publication, missionary encouragement, and even funding a church for the Kaskaskia Indians (during Jefferson’s presidency). Washington’s 1789 Thanksgiving Proclamation is a good example of the role of religion for the first president. The proclamation gives thanks to God “for His signal and manifold mercies, and the favorable interpositions of His providence” as well as encouraging prayer to Him “to pardon our national and other transgressions.” As President John Adams faced a possible war with France in 1798, he urged Americans to confess their sins and pray that God, “of His infinite

grace, through the Redeemer of the World, freely to remit all our offenses, and to incline us, by His Holy Spirit, to sincere repentance and reformation.”<sup>21</sup>

With Jefferson’s presidency, there was a change in the posture of the chief magistrate. He no longer issued presidential thanksgiving proclamations. While this has been attributed to his infidelity and growing hostility to religion, Jefferson as president did visibly encourage religion. A better explanation for Jefferson’s conduct as president is found in his constitutional convictions. As head of the executive branch, Jefferson did not believe that he could officially promote a church or prescribe religious practices. Indeed, he felt constrained by the Constitution, and specifically the First and Tenth Amendments.

Daniel Dreisbach and others have argued that this is a consistent expression of Jefferson’s “federalism” or “constitutional republicanism.” In the draft of the Kentucky Resolutions of 1798, for instance, Jefferson affirmed that power over religion is reserved for the states or the people, since under the Constitution this power was not granted to the United States.<sup>22</sup> In his second inaugural address of 1805, Jefferson stated: “In matters of religion, I have considered that its free exercise is placed by the constitution independent of the powers of the general government. I have therefore undertaken, on no occasion, to prescribe the religious exercises suited to it; but have left them, as the constitution found them, under the direction and discipline of state or church authorities acknowledged by the several religious societies.”<sup>23</sup>

In his 1808 letter to Rev. Samuel Miller, a famous Presbyterian theologian, Jefferson explained why he did not authorize a day of fasting or prayer. He emphasized limitations on the general government, while stressing the pow-

ers of the several states: “I consider the government of the U.S. as interdicted by the Constitution from intermeddling with religious institutions, their doctrines, discipline, or exercises. This results not only from the provision that no law shall be made respecting the establishment, or free exercise, of religion, but from that also which reserves to the states the powers not delegated to the U.S. Certainly no power to prescribe any religious exercise, or to assume authority in religious discipline, has been delegated to the general government. It must then rest with the states, as far as it can be in any human authority.” (The last sentence, particularly the last clause, gives a hint of Jefferson’s scruples and real convictions.) In short, whatever Jefferson’s personal preferences may have been, he felt that ecclesiastical matters could only be within the jurisdiction of the states—and not the federal government. At the same time, he believed that religion and individual religious commitment was important for the success of the state.


## A Need for Blessing

At the Constitutional Convention, an aging Ben Franklin said: “[T]he longer I live, the more convincing proofs I see of the Truth—that God governs in the affairs of Men ... We have been assured, Sir, in the Sacred Writings, that ‘except the Lord build the House, they labor in vain that build it.’ I firmly believe this; and I also believe, that, without his concurring Aid, we shall succeed in this political Building no better than the Builders of Babel.” Though Franklin was not an orthodox Christian, he understood the need for divine blessing for national success.

In 1954 Chief Justice Earl Warren put it this way: “I believe no one can read the history of our country without realizing that the Good Book and the spirit of the Saviour have from the



beginning been our guiding geniuses ... Whether we look to the first Charter of Virginia ... or to the Charter of Massachusetts Bay ... or to the Fundamental Orders of Connecticut ... the same objective is present: a Christian land governed by Christian principles.” Warren continued: “I believe the entire Bill of Rights came into being because of the knowledge our forefathers had of the Bible and their express belief in it ... I like to believe we are living today in the spirit of the Christian religion. I like also to believe that as long as we do so no great harm can come to our country.”<sup>24</sup> Though Warren was a liberal and activist jurist, he could read the basic documents of American history and see their Christian character.

We need the blessing and aid of the Lord now more than ever. During the War for Independence, Congress repeatedly sought prayers for the reformation of religion in America and for God’s support. We could start by praying what Thomas Jefferson recommended for Virginians in 1779: that God would “pour out his holy spirit on all Ministers of the gospel; and spread the light of Christian knowledge through the remotest corners of the earth...; would in mercy look down upon us, pardon all our sins, and receive us into his favor; and finally, that he would establish the independence of these United States upon the basis of religion and virtue.”<sup>25</sup> 

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1. James Hutson, *Religion and the Founding of the American Republic* (Washington, D.C.: Library of Congress, 1998), 96.
2. *Ibid.*, 93.
3. Hutson, *Religion and the Founding of the American Republic*.
4. James Hutson, *Church and State in America: The First Two Centuries*

(Cambridge University Press, 2008).

5. Hutson, *Religion and the Founding of the American Republic*, 54.
6. Quoted in Daniel Dreisbach, *Thomas Jefferson and the Wall of Separation between Church and State* (New York: New York University Press, 2002), 138.
7. A question can be raised if Jefferson really believed what he said in the proclamation. It is possible that he knew the convictions of Virginians and simply clothed the proclamation in religious language since that is what his constituents wanted and expected.
8. Hutson, *Church and State in America*, 56.
9. The RJ&L Religious Liberty Archive, Historical Materials, <http://churchstatelaw.com/historicalmaterials/index.asp>. Some of these religious tests were diluted in the Revolutionary era; the previous Pennsylvania test was even more explicitly Christian: “[T]hat all Persons who also profess to believe in Jesus Christ, the Saviour of the World, shall be capable (notwithstanding their other Persuasions and Practices in Point of Conscience and Religion) to serve this Government in any Capacity, both legislatively and executively.”
10. Samuel Cole Williams, *History of the Lost State of Franklin* (Johnson City, TN: Overmountain Press, 1933), 341, 345.
11. Hutson, *Church and State in America*, 57.
12. Hutson, *Religion and the Founding of the American Republic*, 61.
13. *Ibid.*, 57.
14. *Ibid.*, 61, 64–65.
15. “Washington’s Farewell Address 1796,” The Avalon Project, Yale Law School, [http://avalon.law.yale.edu/18th\\_century/washing.asp](http://avalon.law.yale.edu/18th_century/washing.asp).
16. A good example is the Fincastle Resolutions (January 20, 1775), a patriotic resistance document from Virginia’s southwest frontier.
17. Hutson argues that Virginia was unique—“an ecclesiastical dinosaur.” One should not make generalizations based upon the colony that was the greatest exception to the American colonial pattern. Hutson, *Church and State in America*, 75ff.
18. Daniel Dreisbach, “Church-State

Debate in the Virginia Legislature,” *Religion and Political Culture in Jefferson’s Virginia*, eds. Dreisbach and Sheldon (Lanham, MD: Rowman and Littlefield, 2000), 150.

19. An historical example is Pennsylvania. The Pennsylvania Charter of Liberties, for instance, guaranteed a general religious freedom: “That no Person or Persons, inhabiting in this Province or Territories, who shall confess and acknowledge One almighty God, the Creator, Upholder and Ruler of the World; and profess him or themselves obliged to live quietly under the Civil Government, shall be in any Case molested or prejudiced, in his or their Person or Estate, because of his or their conscientious Persuasion or Practice, nor be compelled to frequent or maintain any religious Worship, Place or Ministry, contrary to his or their Mind, or to do or suffer any other Act or Thing, contrary to their religious Persuasion.”

20. The concerns were expressed when the General Assembly of Scotland adopted the Westminster Confession of Faith in 1647, and resurfaced during the American Presbyterian adoption debates in the 1720s.

21. Hutson, *Religion and the Founding of the American Republic*, 80, 82.

22. “Draft of the Kentucky Resolutions – October 1798,” The Avalon Project, Yale Law School, [http://avalon.law.yale.edu/18th\\_century/jeffken.asp](http://avalon.law.yale.edu/18th_century/jeffken.asp).

23. “Thomas Jefferson Second Inaugural Address,” The Avalon Project, Yale Law School, [http://avalon.law.yale.edu/19th\\_century/jefinau2.asp](http://avalon.law.yale.edu/19th_century/jefinau2.asp).

24. <http://www.time.com/time/magazine/article/0,9171,936197,00.html>

25. Dreisbach, *Thomas Jefferson and the Wall of Separation*, 138.



# Milton's View of Education: A Mirror of Reformed Educational Philosophy

Jeremy Larson



The seventeenth century was a time of massive expansion, not only geographically with the New World settlements such as Jamestown (1607), Plymouth (1620), and Massachusetts Bay (c. 1630), but also religiously with the rise of Puritan power and the drafting of monumental confessions of faith (e.g., the Presbyterian *Westminster Confession of Faith* in 1647 and *The London Baptist Confession of Faith* in 1677). On the literature scene, Shakespeare's First Folio was published in 1623, and England's bragging rights expanded even further with the addition of an epic poem on the fall of mankind, written in 1674 by the blind Puritan-poet John Milton (1608–1674). In the prologue of *Paradise Lost*, Milton asks the Heavenly Muse to sing of the loss of man's original state. Yet Milton acknowledges that one day, a greater Man will come and make all things new.

Of Man's First Disobedience,  
and the Fruit  
Of that Forbidden Tree,  
whose mortal taste  
Brought Death into the World,  
and all our woe,  
With loss of *Eden*, till one greater Man  
Restore us, and regain the blissful Seat,  
Sing Heav'nly Muse ...<sup>1</sup>

Unfortunately, as seems to be the case with many good ideas, this expansion of religiously based power lasted only briefly. The "city on a hill" did not turn into the New Jerusalem, the Puritans quickly fell from power, and with

the loss of that political paradise, Milton was forced to finish his life and writing at a much more muted capacity. But the heritage generated from that fruitful epoch has lasted for centuries. In fact, many of the contemporary books on Christianity and culture stem directly from the Puritans' high view of work, and even from earlier sources, such as John Calvin's *Institutes of the Christian Religion*, in which the Kingship of Christ gives the impetus for hard work in every legitimate occupation.

However, having people who understand what it means to truly serve God in their fields of work requires that they be educated on how to make God central in life. Milton—whose 400th birthday was celebrated by the literati in 2008—wrote about such an education, and if Cornelius Van Til's statement that "only upon a Reformed basis can God really be made central in education" is accurate,<sup>2</sup> then Milton's views on education were closer to a Reformed view than many people today realize.

Van Til continues: "We must refer to the original supernatural revelation that was given to Adam. Through it man was actually told about his future task. He was to increase in the self-conscious manipulation of the facts of the universe to the glory of God. He was thus to build the kingdom of God."<sup>3</sup> Milton's educational views could not be described better. In a day when claiming to be a Puritan meant something, Milton promoted his beliefs aggressively and unashamedly. And though he never

labeled his beliefs as being "Reformed," his convictions concerning education and cultural engagement, as put forth in his "Of Education," *Areopagitica*, and other works, closely mirror a Reformed educational philosophy.

Milton's views can be organized by two main points: Christians need a theoretical understanding that all knowledge is God's knowledge (Ps. 24:1), and they need a practical understanding that they are commanded to work for the transformation of culture, through the power of God, into a redeemed society that blesses the Creator and worships Jesus as Lord (Ps. 8:6).

## Epistemological Sovereignty

Christians can develop an understanding of Christ's epistemological sovereignty by recognizing that sin has corrupted every part of them, including their intellect. In *Paradise Lost*, Satan declares that God, being stronger, may have won the physical battle, but Satan has retained his reasoning abilities: "[W]ho overcomes / By force, hath overcome but half his foe."<sup>4</sup> Earlier, Satan had admitted that "The mind is its own place, and in itself / Can make a Heav'n of Hell, a Hell of Heav'n."<sup>5</sup> Satan is the worst being, since he was one of the most knowledgeable beings before he fell—thus, *corruptio optimi pessima*.<sup>6</sup> Of course, the effects of the fall of a non-redeemable angel does not necessarily apply to the fate of humans. But when Adam and Eve ate the fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil (Gen. 3), all human knowledge was

plunged into a dark bondage as well. In Book IX of *Paradise Lost*, Adam eats the fruit—his knowledge of God’s command being overcome by his submissive fondness for Eve. This acknowledgment by Milton perfectly coincides with Reformed teaching on the state of man’s mind, for as Calvin writes in *Institutes*,

[T]he mind of man has been so completely estranged from God’s righteousness that it conceives, desires, and undertakes, only that which is impious, perverted, foul, impure, and infamous. The heart is so steeped in the poison of sin, that it can breathe out nothing but a loathsome stench. But if some men occasionally make a show of good, their minds nevertheless ever remain enveloped in hypocrisy and deceitful craft, and their hearts bound by inner perversity.<sup>7</sup>

Milton further shows his understanding of the effects of sin on the mind through his portrayal of Samson in “Samson Agonistes” as a mighty man whose fatal flaw (*hamartia*) was a mind polluted with the sin of pride.

However, Christians also demonstrate their theoretical understanding of epistemology by acknowledging that Christ’s redemption has reversed the curse of the fall. Milton recognizes this fact when, in *Areopagitica*,<sup>8</sup> he references “Moses, Daniel, and Paul, who were skillful in all the learning of the Egyptians, Chaldeans, and Greeks, which could not probably be without reading their books of all sorts.”<sup>9</sup> Furthermore, not only did Paul study Greek culture, he “thought it no defilement to insert into holy scripture the sentences of three Greek poets, and one of them a tragedian.”<sup>10</sup> Likewise, Milton certainly did not refrain from using classical rhetorical techniques and Greek and Roman allusions in most of his works. So even pagan mythology and secular learning were not off limits as Milton looked to restore a correct view of the world.

Within the last fifty lines of *Paradise Lost*, Eve recalls the protoevangelium when she says, “By mee the Promis’d Seed shall all restore.”<sup>11</sup> Christ came specifically to “destroy the works of the devil” (1 John 3:8), and a perversion of knowledge is certainly a work of the devil. Christians can know the truth (John 8:32), and a right knowledge of things is possible through the fear of the Lord (Prov. 1:7).

## Transforming Culture

The second part of Milton’s educational views is that Christians need a practical understanding that they are commanded to transform culture. This command is seen most clearly in Genesis 1:28, which articulates the cultural mandate: “[S]ubdue [the earth]: and have dominion.” The Puritans were men with a goal to reform all of English society. Michael Walzer writes, “In his own fashion ... Cromwell was such a man; John Milton, who served him, was surely another. Not only the church, but the state, the household, the school, even the theater and the sports arena—religion, culture, family, and politics—all these the great Puritan poet would have made new.”<sup>12</sup>

Three things are necessary to accomplish this transformation. First, having come to understand that Christ’s Kingship extends over knowledge, Christians need to be knowledgeable themselves. Milton’s program in “Of Education,” which he did concede was a bit idealistic,<sup>13</sup> proposes an intense analysis of grammar, language, mythology, agriculture, medicine, reason, politics, law, poetry, and even physical and dietary practices.<sup>14</sup> One main purpose of writing this domestic pamphlet was to educate people to become good public rulers who would develop into “steadfast pillars of the state.”<sup>15</sup> Not only did Milton propose this program for others, but he also practiced what

he preached. Frank Graves states that Milton “wrote upon the freedom of the press, the tenure of kings, religious toleration, and against the episcopacy ... Also, he undertook as part of his reforms to contribute to educational theory and to the improvement of the schools themselves.”<sup>16</sup> Samuel Johnson, in describing Milton’s genius, writes that “Milton was able to select from nature or from story, from ancient fable or from modern science, whatever could illustrate or adorn his thoughts. An accumulation of knowledge impregnated his mind, fermented by study and exalted by imagination.”<sup>17</sup> Of course, Johnson continues, and quotes Addison, who said, “Our language ... sunk under him [Milton]”—a polite way of saying that Milton’s genius was so great that Milton had a hard time communicating with the common man at times.<sup>18</sup> But although his writing may be a little taxing for some readers, the fact remains that he was very knowledgeable, and it is in large part because of his brilliance in academics that he had such an impact on society.

Second, Christians need a Biblical basis for transforming culture. Neither Milton nor the Reformers adhered to educational views that presupposed a Christian minority position in culture. Reformers took Christ’s command (through the metaphor of a landowner) to “occupy until I come” (Luke 19:13) to mean that Christ’s Kingship was presently over all nations. Christians therefore have a responsibility to use God’s talents to further His Kingdom on earth. Iain Murray notes that proof of the Reformers’ high regard for excellent education, largely a result of their postmillennial views, is found in “all of the Confessional statements of the Reformed Churches four hundred years ago.”<sup>19</sup> In *He Shall Have Dominion*, Ken Gentry provides a list of postmil-

lennialists who supported the advancement of Christ's Kingdom through cultural and political involvement: St. Augustine, Greg Bahnsen, John Calvin, Jonathan Edwards, Matthew Henry, A. A. Hodge, Charles Hodge, J. Gresham Machen, Iain Murray, John Owen, R. J. Rushdoony, B. B. Warfield, the Westminster Divines, and many other Puritans.<sup>20</sup> Milton is not listed in this group of Reformed men, but H. Richard Niebuhr, in his book *Christ and Culture*, numbers Milton among men who refused to separate the value of the church and state (though they retained the concept of sphere sovereignty), but rather believed that Christ was the transformer of culture: "Political, scientific, literary, and military examples of loyalty to Christ in conflict and adjustment to cultural duties ... [include] Constantine, Charlemagne, Thomas More, Oliver Cromwell ... Pascal, Kepler, Newton, Dante, Milton, Blake and Dostoevsky ... [and] Robert E. Lee."<sup>21</sup> Proving conclusively that Milton had specifically postmillennial eschatological views might be difficult—especially since his views on soteriology and even the divinity of Christ were unclear at times—but his position on education and his outspoken attempts to shape public policy put him in the camp of Reformed men whose postmillennialism directly shaped their views on education and political involvement. In an article published in *The Journal of Christian Reconstruction*, Greg Bahnsen comes to the same conclusion regarding Milton and postmillennialism: "In addition to its stimulus to missions, the postmillennial hope was influential on men of letters (e.g., John Milton), scientists (e.g., Sir Robert Boyle), and politicians (e.g., Oliver Cromwell)."<sup>22</sup> Moreover, in Book III of *Paradise Lost*, Milton says (somewhat anachronistically) that Christ conquered Death, the last enemy,

and then ascended;<sup>23</sup> not a hundred lines later, God the Father speaks of Christ's total power and present Kingship over earthly "Thrones, Princedoms, Power, [and] Dominions."<sup>24</sup> Can such a view be anything but the sure hope of the success of the gospel in this age—the optimism of postmillennialism?

Third, Christians must be engaged in culture if they are to transform it. Milton's Puritan work ethic, his abundance of published materials, especially his pamphlets, and his governmental position as Latin Secretary demonstrate his deep involvement with culture. Leland Ryken states that Milton was a "worldly saint" who believed in "the sanctity of all legitimate types of work."<sup>25</sup> As William Tyndale says, "[T]here is difference betwixt washing of dishes and preaching of the word of God; but as touching to please God, none at all."<sup>26</sup> Milton's dedicated efforts in the literary arts are abundantly evident, and his views of government had a capital effect in 1649. Milton's defense of regicide ("Tenure of Kings and Magistrates") especially coincides with John Knox's<sup>27</sup> and John Calvin's<sup>28</sup> repudiations of the theory of the divine right of kings (cf. Jeremiah 22:1–10). Clearly, cultural engagement was a non-negotiable for Milton.

## Issues in Cultural Engagement

Two issues that concern themselves with cultural engagement are censorship and popular culture. Avenues of learning through which God communicates truth should not be indiscriminately censored. Milton's *Areopagitica* lacerates Parliament for thinking it could regulate morality to the hundredth degree. Milton did not play word games—he did not promote pornography or blasphemy; neither did he endorse the free expression of lewd or random art. But he was rather claiming that a governing body should refrain from telling people how to use their own judgment.<sup>29</sup>

Christians should be "vigilant"<sup>30</sup> when they read, and authors of corrupt books ought to be punished.<sup>31</sup> But banning books—and by extension, other areas of culture—hyperbolically "kills reason itself."<sup>32</sup> Christians cannot afford to be "cultural anorexics" (to use a term by Brian Godawa<sup>33</sup>) and censor everything if they are to be effective as salt and light (Matt. 5:13–14). If people bury their heads in the sand and eschew cultural interaction, how can they know, much less affect, their world? Milton believed that separation and censorship had their places, but he could not "praise a fugitive and cloistered virtue, unexercised and unbreathed, that never sallies out and sees her adversary, but slinks out of the race where that immortal garland is to be run for, not without dust and heat."<sup>34</sup> To Milton, the purposes and proportions of actions and habits were more important than their associations.

Regarding popular culture, many Christians say there is not much good material on television or in movies. But as Milton writes in "Smectymnuus,"<sup>35</sup> people cannot speak intelligently on a location unless they have been there,<sup>36</sup> and people who abstain from such venues know far too little to criticize them intelligently. This is not to say universally that experience is necessary to understand a concept or subject, but only that simply reading a review of something is not always good enough to obtain the right to criticize it. Hearsay is not sufficient for dissertational work; neither should hearsay be sufficient for assertions against popular culture. Popular culture has many forms of media through which thinkers can proclaim messages, and Milton probably would have availed himself of as many of them as he could. Just as Greek plays were the means by which philosophers promoted their ideas, so now television and movies spread today's



philosophies. A thoughtful man himself, Milton desired for all Christians to be intellectual heavyweights as well. And censoring everything is better suited to develop anemic thinkers, not to develop Christian thinkers who have brought every thought captive to the obedience of Christ (2 Cor. 10:4–5).

### Regaining the Blissful Seat

Milton states in “Of Education” that “the end then of learning is to repair the ruins of our first parents by ... be[ing] like [Christ].”<sup>37</sup> Unfortunately, it is rare for Christians today to knowingly “repair” anything with a goal of cultural excellence and dominion. In many cases, it is common for many Christians to view their secular callings as jobs that pass the time so that they can do “real Kingdom work,” such as passing out tracts or supporting missionaries. These endeavors are well and good as far as they go, but God’s commands extend well beyond the pale of “cultic” activities. God has commanded that we develop even our “secular” gifts for His glory and to show His majesty to the unbeliever; and to ignore those callings for “more spiritual” endeavors is to shirk divinely mandated responsibilities.

Christianity is not provincial. Just as Abraham held the title deed for Canaan, Milton and the Reformers believed that Christians hold the title deed to the planet. In fact, the covenantal promise to Abraham is expanded in Romans 4:13 to include, not simply a strip of land in Palestine, but the entire world. Milton’s desire for Englishmen, and all Christians, to see days of glory is echoed in the Puritan John Owen’s statement: “That God in his appointed time will bring forth the kingdom of the Lord Christ unto more glory and power than in former days, I presume you are persuaded.”<sup>38</sup> And because of this optimism, a Christian education and a

rigorous pursuit of excellence in all fields are not futile activities. America may no longer be a “city on a hill” when it comes to religious orthodoxy, but faithful people here and elsewhere can work in service to Christ, the only one who can finally “regain the blissful seat.”

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12. Michael Walzer, *The Revolution of the Saints* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1965), 11.
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19. Iain Murray, *The Puritan Hope* (Carlisle, PA: The Banner of Truth Trust, 1998), xvii. Several of these include The Thirty-Nine Articles (1571), The Scottish Confession of Faith (1560), The Belgic Confession (1561), and The Heidelberg Catechism (1563).
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22. Greg Bahnsen, “The Prima Facie Acceptability of Postmillennialism,” *The Journal of Christian Reconstruction* 3:2 (Winter 1976–1977), <http://www.cmfnow.com/articles/pt031.htm>.
23. Milton, *Paradise Lost*, Book III, ll. 250–259.
24. *Ibid.*, l. 320.
25. Leland Ryken, *Worldly Saints* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1990), 24–26.
26. Quoted by Ryken, *Worldly Saints*, 25.
27. John Knox, *On Rebellion*, ed. Roger A. Mason (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1999), 28–29.
28. Calvin, *Institutes*, 1491–1492.
29. Of course, Milton would differentiate between a nurturing school environment and adult society. But regarding the decisions of mature adults, Milton believed reasoning was better than censorship.
30. Milton, *Complete Poems and Major Prose*, 720.
31. *Ibid.*, 720.
32. *Ibid.*, 720.
33. Brian Godawa, *Hollywood Worldviews: Watching Films with Wisdom and Discernment* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2002).
34. Milton, *Complete Poems and Major Prose*, 728.
35. An antiprelatical tract written to defend several Puritans from attacks by Bishop Joseph Hall.
36. Milton, *Complete Poems and Major Prose*, 692.
37. Milton, *Complete Poems and Major Prose*, 631.
38. Quoted by Murray, *The Puritan Hope*, 38.



# *The Promise of Jonadab* by E. Ray Moore and Gail Pinckney Moore

(Greenville, SC: Ambassador International, 2010) Reviewed by Lee Duigon



Once upon a time there was a man who, seeing his country disintegrate culturally, believed the prophets who warned of God's impending judgment.

To ensure that his family would survive the catastrophe, he devised a set of rules to be followed by one generation after another. His descendants kept the rules, and survived—and were still obeying them 250 years later: at which point God promised them that this faithful family would be preserved forever.

This is the story of Jonadab. It's from the Bible, best known from Jeremiah, chapter 35. With a little Biblical detective work, Ray and Gail Moore have traced it back to First and Second Kings; and with a little inspiration, they have applied it to the needs of today.

## **Jonadab's Rules**

There is a note of urgency in this handsome little book (151 pages). "The tentacles that reached across Israel and seized Judah," the Moores write, "are not unlike the social malady today in Western culture spreading into the Church" (p. 58). And, "If moral decline continues [in the Western world] without repentance and revival, these nations could experience fundamental changes as a result of God's judgment" (p. 38).

How fundamental? The inhabitants of Israel and Judah—those who survived the wars and massacres—were uprooted from their land and marched off to

captivity in foreign countries. That was the kind of calamity Jonadab planned for his family to escape.

God has not yet told us specifically what form of judgment will overtake the West if its people do not change their ways. But we know from Scripture that judgment will come; and, like Jonadab, we wonder what we must do if our families are to survive it.

Jonadab's descendants—called "Rechabites" in Jeremiah 35, after Jonadab's ancestor—followed three family rules (in addition, of course, to obeying God's laws as given throughout the Bible):

- \*To abstain from wine.
- \*To raise herds for a living, rather than engage in agriculture.
- \*To live in tents, in the open, rather than in houses in a city.

Why such rules? Because Jonadab was convinced that disaster was coming—which it did—and these would help his family to escape it.

- \*Quick, clear thinking might be called for at any time: hence the need to stay sober.
- \*Herds of sheep and goats are portable sources of food and income; farms aren't.
- \*Tents are portable; houses aren't.

Jonadab's rules made sense to his descendants. By keeping them, they escaped from Assyria's conquest of Israel. Generations later, with Babylonian armies swarming into Judah, the Rechabites were ready to escape again.

## **Some Examples**

The Moores' purpose is to promote the idea of a "Christian family legacy" (p. 11)—how to start one, how to keep it going, and why such a legacy is desirable. Jonadab is their model—not that they're advising their modern readers to become nomadic herdsmen.

If a family can live in a godly manner, generation after generation, God will bless them. "Here is the promise of Jonadab; model him if you dare. *Jonadab the son of Rechab shall not lack a man to stand before me FOREVER!*" (p. 21).

Jonadab is not the only model given here. We also read of a pastor in Massachusetts carrying on a family tradition that came to America with the Puritans; a multigenerational family of missionaries; an Arab Christian family persisting over many generations in hostile, Muslim Egypt; a Scottish family from the nineteenth century; a German Christian family that survived both Nazism and communism; and the Moores' own experiences in raising their children. With the exception of the Scots family, these are all people whom the Moores have known personally—so they are writing about something that can and has been done.

## **A Godly Legacy**

So, how do you build a godly legacy for your family? The Moores break it down into five steps.

- \*First, *hear God's Word*. Jonadab wouldn't have acted if he had not heard God's prophets and believed

them. Those very words are still available, in your Bible.

*\*Next, cultivate a zeal for God's holiness.* Anyone can hear God's Word—but godly people respond to it, love it, and delight in abiding by it.

*\*Order family life around God's Word.* As the Moores explain it, “Each family has a culture created by its own special rituals to instill order and discipline. The believing Christian family incorporates habits of godliness and a clear plan to pass on the Christian faith to succeeding generations as part of the family culture” (p. 56).

It seems so simple and obvious—but this is the very thing American Christians have failed to do! We have behaved as if Christian faith and doctrine could be inherited, like hair color, and did not have to be painstakingly built up and reinforced over a lifetime. If Christianity seemed to be America's default position fifty or sixty years ago, certainly we treated it as such. We took our nation's Christianity for granted, did nothing to maintain it or protect it, and have allowed it to evaporate. Hence the true and pressing need for this book.

*\*Next, set standards for the family,* reasonably and sensibly based on God's Word. Unreasonable standards won't do: they'll only invite disobedience.

The Moores are careful to remind their readers that children must see their parents living by the rules. Setting a good example is important, as it always is. If the kids don't see Mom and Pop reading the Bible, they'll think they won't have to read it anymore when they're adults.

*\*Finally, protect the family's godly legacy.* The world will always be trying to tear it down. “A modern

Jonadab surely would not allow ‘Baal dolls’ in his home, nor would he listen willingly to ‘Baal music’ playing from the local radio station” (p. 49). For “[t]he American and Western culture is at war with the family, with Biblical parenting and with Christian faith” (p. 64).

## Christian Education

The Moores stress the need for full-time, comprehensive Christian education for all Christian children, either at a Christian school or in homeschooling. As president of Frontline Ministries and director of the Exodus Mandate, E. Ray Moore has long been a consistent advocate of Christian schooling.

The case against public education cannot be put too strongly; it's hard to put it strongly enough. One hour of Sunday school can hardly compete with five school days a week devoted to systematically anti-Christian teachings. It's asking too much to expect a child to keep his Christianity in such a determinedly hostile environment: the fact that some of them do is no excuse.

Facts and figures? Yes, the Moores have them. “Christian children and youth today do not routinely follow the faith of their fathers” (p. 97), as a number of polls and surveys clearly show. Pew Forum research in 2007 showed only 15 percent of *church youth*—don't even ask about the kids who are not in church—to be “deeply committed” Christians (p. 88). But by comparison, a 2004 survey of some 7,000 homeschooled children found that 93 percent of them “continued in the Christian faith and practices of their parents through their early adult years” (p. 99).

You simply can't put your kids through public schools today and reasonably expect them to grow up into solid Christians. Yes, it could happen—but the schools do everything in their power to prevent it. To argue against the

wealth of data proving this assertion is to be self-delusional. It may even be a form of moral sloth.

## Why Build Godly Families?

Why is it desirable to pass godliness down through many generations?

“[T]he moral and theological freefall of the Christian family in the West is undeniable,” say the Moores (p. 96). That makes godliness a matter of survival. “Although the defense of an ordered society may break down, a hedge can be built around a family for protection” (p. 60).

As America seems to sleepwalk through a minefield of public and private debt, an out-of-control federal government, sexual anarchy and radical moral confusion, blatant sin enthroned as law and public policy, and the willful rejection of Holy Scripture by apostate churches—to name just a few of the perils that beset us—it would certainly seem our families need a hedge of protection. Faithfulness to God, obedience to His Word, and continuity within the family over time: these are the elements with which Jonadab built such a hedge around his family. And we can do the same.

No one knows what will become of Western civilization, which proudly calls itself “post-Christian” even as it slides down the chute to history's rubbish heap. But as God saved Jonadab's family during times of crisis, so He will save anyone's family who puts his trust in Him.

There is another reason for teaching families to be persistently godly. Such families, and plenty of them, are how we may best repair and renew our culture from the bottom up.

It's a mistake to think we can repair it from the top down, say the Moores. “No political solution appears to exist

*Continued on page 24*

# The New Missionary

Bojidar Marinov



Ten years ago I was sitting in the study room in the house of a great Christian friend of mine, and I was sharing with him my vision for evangelizing Bulgaria and Europe through translating Christian books. Not just any books, but books that lay out the comprehensive Biblical worldview in all areas of human life and action—economics, science, education, politics, business, etc. I was telling him how Christianity in Europe has lost its comprehensive character, and it must be recovered and restored; Europeans must learn again that Christianity is not just a religion “of the heart,” it is a comprehensive solution to all problems. Such knowledge will of itself work as an evangelistic tool and can be used to turn the nations of Europe to Christianity and would create the intellectual foundation for building a truly Christian culture and civilization in Europe once again.

We were surrounded by my friend’s library, an impressive collection of a couple thousand books, at least. Theological writings, economic writings, Bible commentaries, political treatises, Christian fiction: so many Christian books that likely can’t be found in any other nation’s bookstore on the planet, much less in that nation’s own language. Such a great setting for my presentation.

After my one-hour presentation, my friend remained silent for a minute, and then asked: “Why do you need books? Why are books so important? I have always thought the important part of a missionary’s work is planting churches

and converting people. Every missionary that I know does exactly that—plants churches and evangelizes. Having a church is way more important than having good books on the market.”

It was a bit of a shock to me, I must admit. But I gathered my composure and said, “You know what? You are right.” I pointed to his books on the shelves around us. “I am taking these home to Bulgaria. I suppose you don’t need them since you already have a church planted, and you do evangelize in your town, right?”

His facial expression changed as he realized what I was saying. Take away all his books? No way. He needed them, didn’t he?

## Books as Building Blocks

American Christians today seldom realize the indispensable part books play for the forming of their culture. Books are taken for granted; they are just part of reality, like Walmart and swimming pools in the suburbs. They are available everywhere, cheap to get, and you can even find quite a few of them at the local library. America is blessed in having every good book ever written in the world translated to English and readily available. Of course, America is also cursed to have just about every bad book ever written available in English. Either way, books are inexpensive; it is easy to get them; and they are taken for granted.

Books in modern America are a perfect example of a vast discrepancy between the price and the value of something. Yes, the price of books is

very low, but their value to the civilization in America is unspeakably high. My friend discovered it when offered the opportunity to part with his books. Books build civilizations; a civilization is not a product of material factors, it is a product of the ideas that thinkers and teachers of the past wrote down. Ideas motivate the thinking and inform the practice of builders of civilizations; those builders are seldom the generators of the ideas they use. Very often in history different peoples would build civilizations similar to each other because they read the same books and were motivated by the same ideas.

In short, a culture, a civilization, is not the product of material factors—it is the product of ideas, expressed by thinkers in their books. Take away the books of a civilization, and you will destroy that civilization.

A striking example of this truth is the last days of the Roman Empire. In the second and the third century A.D., before the legalization of Christianity, we see the disappearance of pagan literature. There were no new ideas that pagan thinkers could come up with; there was no inspiration among pagans as to how to deal with the issues of the day. The pagan authors disappeared from the market. At the same time the Christian minority produced more and more books, treatises, and confessions. Christian literature was disproportionately present in the last days of the Empire. Christian authors covered every possible subject, from family and personal faith to admonishments to civil rulers and slave owners on how to rule according

to the will of God. Not all of it was perfect, and certainly not all of it had a long-lasting influence. But the sheer volume and ubiquity of Christian literature created the intellectual foundation for the future Christian civilization. Even before the Empire surrendered politically to Christ, the academic world and the publishing world surrendered, and this precipitated the fall of the pagan regime. Roman authorities could destroy churches and whole Christian populations, but they couldn't destroy all the books and the ideas in them. Eventually, when Constantine declared Christianity legal, the church that was decimated by persecutions was able to build upon that intellectual foundation and turn the world of Caesar into a world of Christ.

## Here Today, Gone Tomorrow

Never is this ignorance of the true value of books more obvious than when American Christians talk about missions and supporting missionaries. Not understanding what books can do and have done for their own civilization, American missionaries tend to focus their main effort on short-term activities like “converting souls” and church-planting. Books are only a side activity for most Christian missions. Americans just can't see that both planting churches and converting souls must be done in the context of an existing paradigm, an existing intellectual foundation. Without such a comprehensive foundation, converts soon become apostates, and churches disintegrate as soon as the missionary “feels called” to go back home.

Long-term success comes only from efforts that are long-term oriented. Short-term oriented activities don't bring long-term success. That's why the early church was so willing to spend precious time and resources building libraries and writing books. Today we can't appreciate this adequately, given the fact that the average book in the li-

brary costs us an hour's worth of wages. Back in the first centuries of the church, a book cost a year's worth of wages; and yet the early Christians were willing to pay the price of producing those books and making them available throughout the known world. From an economic point of view, producing even one book was a major economic effort, a waste of precious resources. Only one copy could pay a pastor's or a missionary's salary for one year; for the modern mind, such expense would be outrageous. Why not just send several missionaries at the cost of several copies of a book?

But the early Christians had their priorities in place. They were building for the ages to come, and they knew that books are worth the sacrifice. And so they created the European civilization as we know it. A continent that was so unbelievably diverse and fragmented by ethnic origins, languages, cultural differences, etc., nevertheless was *one* civilization because it read the same books. Many of us today do not understand the obsession of the scholars in Europe before the sixteenth century with the obsolete Latin language. But for those Christian scholars, Latin wasn't obsolete; it gave Europe the uniting principle she needed to remain as a Christian civilization. They did not see anything “magical” or “traditional” about the Latin language. It was only a tool for having the same books available throughout the continent, and thus uniting the whole continent in the same civilization, the Kingdom of God.

Even after the sixteenth century, books were still recognized as having superior value for building a civilization. Colonial America couldn't be described as anything else but the land of readers. Given the fact that there was no direct economic benefit of printing books to the fledgling colonial economy, printers were amazingly numerous, and books

were available everywhere. Colonial America was a society based on books, and later, in the Revolutionary War, it was writers who encouraged the people to revolt, not leaders.

Recently an article in a major Christian magazine stated an obvious but rarely discussed fact: “If short-term efforts produced long-term results, Mexico would be the most Christianized nation on the planet.” And true enough, in the last 200 years Christianity changed its focus in missions from long-term culture-building to short-term church-planting and soul-winning. Feeding the natives became more important than teaching them the truths of God's Word; consequently, the focus of Christian missions changed from publishing books to “works of mercy.” The result is that today most missionaries would engage in all kinds of activities in their efforts to evangelize the natives—from welfare and charity, to entertainment, to events and conferences—but not feed them books that teach them how to build their life and culture according to the requirements of the Word of God. When conversion becomes priority over learning, long-term efforts are abandoned; with that, long-term results never come. This changed the whole understanding of missionary activity: Christianity was now something “American” that American missionaries just “dispense” to local people. Since the local people did not have the Biblical intellectual foundation that the American missionaries had, they did not think of Christianity as something that was their own. It was “American,” and therefore it couldn't survive after the American missionary was gone.

The reality is that the individual man is not really converted unless his whole worldview is converted. If he lives in a culture hostile to his private beliefs, and if he doesn't have a *comprehensive*



answer to all the ideological challenges, he is not a believer, only a future apostate. The only way for a missionary to counter an anti-Christian culture is to create a Christian alternative to it. And building an alternative to a culture starts with making Christian literature available in that language. That must start before there are churches and converts because without it, churches and converts will disintegrate and fall away.

Therefore a new kind of missionary is needed today, and a new philosophy of starting and financing Christian missions. This new philosophy must go back to the priorities of the early church: make an abundance of Christian literature available in a local language *before* you send missionaries to that culture. The new kind of missionary must be willing to change his priorities to the long-term work of building an intellectual foundation for

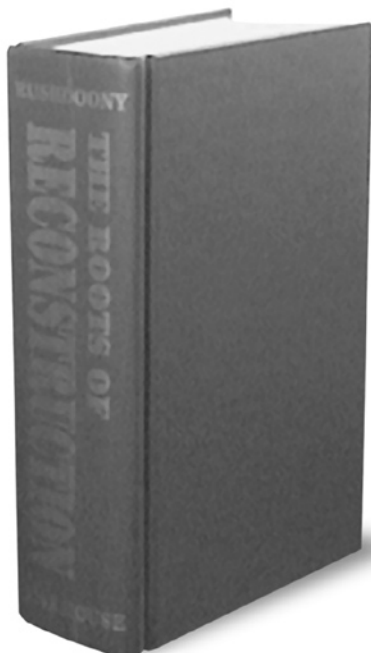
a new civilization; he must be willing to work for years in translating, painstakingly, word by word, the books that will help the local converts start rebuilding their society according to Biblical law. This new kind of missionary must be supported by churches and Christians who understand that church services Sunday morning and pictures of local children with rice bowls in their hands are not indicative of a missionary's success. If America is blessed by having all the good books available in English in our bookstores, we must transfer this blessing to other nations by financing translation and publishing *before* we finance short-term missionary trips and events. Christian books that teach how to build a Christian civilization are our twenty-four-hour missionaries in foreign lands, and they will stay there and keep working long after the American missionary is gone. If the early church

financed book publishing when it was so incredibly expensive, how much more do we need to do it today, when books are so easy and cheap to print ... cheaper than missionaries themselves.

Unless this truth is understood, our efforts will remain short-term, and we will never have any long-term success on the mission fields around the world. We need to change our priorities about missions, and this is where we must start. 📖

A Reformed missionary to his native Bulgaria for over 10 years, Bojidar preaches and teaches the doctrines of the Reformation and a comprehensive Biblical worldview. He and his team have translated over 30,000 pages of Christian literature about the application of the Law of God in every area of man's life and society, and published those translations online for free. He currently lives in Houston with his wife Maggie and his three children.

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# How to Write a Fantasy Novel

Lee Duigon



In reclaiming cultural ground for Christ's Kingdom, even small gains count. Besides, one never knows what even the smallest victories might lead to.

Fantasy literature has long been popular, especially among young readers, twelve years old and up. When J. K. Rowling's *Harry Potter* series made publishing history, it gave birth to a boom in fantasy. Here, at last, was something that young people really wanted to read!

But an examination of the shelves in any bookstore will show that fantasy, for all its popularity, has a major downside for Christian readers. The market is dominated by unwholesome content—books glamorizing witchcraft, vampirism, zombies, etc.

C. S. Lewis and J. R. R. Tolkien have long held the fort for Christianity in the realm of fantasy. It's time they received some reinforcements.

## A Darker Message

Why write Christian fantasy? The reasons are simple enough.

\*Fantasy, like poetry, appeals to a region of the mind not easily reached by other types of fiction. Would it not be good ministry to sow some seeds there?

\*Why let the field be monopolized by work that is anything but Christian?

\*An effective use of fantasy in Christ's service will make some readers more receptive to the gospel.

Finally, much fantasy is being used today to deliver a darker message. The whole point of today's vampire stories is salvation without Christ. The vampire

enjoys physical immortality, perpetual attractiveness to the opposite sex (for some reason there are no ugly vampires who remain ugly forever), power beyond the lot of ordinary mortals, and no burden at all of moral accountability. The witch, wizard, or magician is far superior to the uninitiated person.

This is especially dangerous to teens and tweens because it's so seductive. Children reach an age when they become aware that they are powerless, relative to the adult world, and they want some power of their own. They read of Harry Potter running rings around his lunkheaded foster parents, or teen vampires doing anything they please without getting grounded—and they want some of that. This kind of fantasy is nothing but an echo of the devil's seduction of Adam and Eve: "Ye shall be as gods."

We can't just let that stand. We have to elbow some of this junk off the shelves and replace it with more wholesome fare.

## Re-normalize Religion

Looking back on fifty-plus years of movies, television, novels and short stories, cartoons and comic strips, embracing untold thousands of fictional characters, it's hard to find religious faith playing much of a part in the lives of those characters. Apparently the vast majority of them simply live without it. This is a very peculiar and even unnatural situation.

Up until fairly recent times, religious belief and culture were inseparable. Read American letters and speeches from the nineteenth century, and you'll

see what I mean. But even by then, fiction in the Western world had begun to drift away from religion: faith is less visible in nineteenth-century fiction than it was in real life. By the time we get into the twentieth century, fictional characters can live out their whole lives without voicing a single religious sentiment or taking part in a single religiously motivated action.

The children of the twenty-first century, from infancy on, consume an incalculable amount of fictional content in movies, television, and other media. What they see, while being entertained, influences their worldview and their beliefs. If it were not so, no one would bother to produce commercials.

What children see in fiction, for the most part, is a world without a god. God is tacitly assumed to have no active role within the fictional world. When religiously motivated characters do appear in a movie or a TV show, it's usually to be made fun of—ignorant, nasty, narrow-minded fools, etc. But far more often there's simply no religious belief at all in evidence.

One of the tasks of the Christian fantasy writer, therefore, is to re-normalize religion—specifically, the Christian religion. Create fantasy worlds in which religion is as deeply rooted and vital as it has been in most real-world cultures for most of human history—not just painted on, but permeating everything; at least as deeply as the secularist pseudoreligion permeates our own culture today.

This is not to say we create a fantasy world and fill it with Presbyterian churches attended by all the characters

(although, on second thought, it might be worth a try). In my own work, I have tried to be more subtle than that.

When we read C. S. Lewis' *Chronicles of Narnia*, we who are Christians can easily see that Aslan, the Great Lion, is to be identified with our real-world Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. Christ appears here as a lion because Lewis imagined a world inhabited by talking animals. Their savior, naturally, would be in the form of a talking animal. Once we see Aslan give up his own life to save an undeserving sinner, and then be resurrected in the flesh, we can't not see him as Jesus.

But it may take some time for the modern, religiously desensitized reader to see this. Meanwhile, Lewis hoped to create in the reader's mind a receptive environment for Christ Himself. To what degree he succeeded is a matter of opinion, but there can be no doubt of his objective.

We are probably wise to assume that some of our readers will have little or no knowledge of Christianity, may even be averse to it, haven't read the Bible, and won't want to be "preached at." It is just such people whose hearts we most want to change. But how are we to reach them?

## A Few Simple Rules

My own fantasy writing is guided by certain principles that may be adopted by others—the fields being already white to harvest and the laborers being few. To present them briefly:

**\*God is still God, even in a fantasy world.** God, who created the world we live in, is the creator and sovereign lord of the world that I have imagined. In that world are characters who know this and characters who don't. The important thing is for the reader to know it, without being clubbed over the head with it. This requires some delicacy of touch.

**\*God's moral laws, as given in the Bible, apply to the fantasy world.** It can't be otherwise: God's laws proceed from His own righteousness. Even in an imaginary world, murder, adultery, theft, and all the other sins will still be sins. And virtues will still be virtues.

You'd think those two rules would go without saying, but remember the nature of the competition. We are going up against books about girls using witchcraft to get whatever they want, boys learning wizardry so they can wield power over other human beings, vampires who are their own salvation and a law unto themselves—all without a glimmer of God's grace. The moral order in our fantasy world must be a godly order.

## No Magic, Please

**\*Allow what the Bible allows: mortals can't do "magic."** This may seem counterintuitive. After all, what's a fantasy without magic?

Lewis and Tolkien have already blazed this trail. "Magic" in Narnia is woven into the fabric of the world and is best employed by Aslan. Witches in Narnia do great harm by magic, but they only look human: they aren't. And in Tolkien's world, powerful magic is done by spiritual entities—"wizards" to whom power has been divinely delegated, and evil spirits in rebellion against God's order. In both these fantasy worlds, mortals are unable to wield magic and get into real trouble when they try. (Remember what happened to the great man, Denethor, in Tolkien's *The Return of the King*, as a result of trying to use the magical seeing stone.)

In the Bible, Moses is able to produce water from a rock by striking it with his staff. If this were a Harry Potter novel, Moses would have learned this "magic trick" by studying at Hogwarts wizards' school. The power would be his, to use as he saw fit. But in the Bible

the power is all God's—and woe unto Moses for forgetting to acknowledge that! Similarly, the Israelites were under no illusion that any magical power of their own collapsed the walls of Jericho. They only did as God commanded and saw God's might destroy their enemy's defenses.

We don't want our fantasy to whisper to young readers that there is power out there waiting for them to pick it up and use it: that they can be as gods. We would rather teach that to God belongs all sovereign power and that our highest aspiration is to be servants of the true and living God.

We needn't let that inhibit our imaginations. As we see in the Bible, God's servants can get involved in some pretty hair-raising adventures—well worth reading about.

## Let 'er Rip!

**\*Give your imagination free rein—within the moral and spiritual boundaries set by the Bible.**

The appeal of an imaginary world is that it's very different from our own. There's no faster way to explode a fantasy than to drag into it some of the cultural rubbish of our own time and place. I actually read a fantasy novel once in which an elf turned to a dwarf and said, "We must respect diverse lifestyles." So much for that fantasy.

C. S. Lewis populated his Narnia with talking animals, along with creatures of classical mythology like fauns and dryads (a decision that his close friend, Tolkien, questioned). Tolkien wrote of hobbits, elves, dwarves, and dragons. Both created worlds with their own geography, cultures, and histories.

Allow your fantasy world to follow its own arc of history, as different from the real world's history as you please. My own fantasy world, for instance, unlike Narnia, has yet to meet its Savior. God created it and is in an ongoing

process of redeeming it from sin. The exact methods He uses there are not the same as the ones He has used in our world, because—obviously—they're different worlds. In my world of *Bell Mountain*, the modern age comes before the medieval period; animals thought to be extinct (or not even known about) are wandering in from parts unknown; prophecy breaks out in unexpected places; and God takes into His service children, the elderly, eccentrics, little hairy humanoids living in the ruins of ancient cities, heathen armies, and one or two thoroughly bad characters—passing over the wise, the great, the rich, and the powerful. And of course the inspiration for this is the Bible, Joel and First Corinthians chapter 1 in particular.

## What Not to Do

Finally, at all costs we must avoid “plugging in” religion just so we can say we have a “Christian” book. Bright young readers are sensitive to phoniness. They don't like being manipulated. Worse, a writer's awkwardness will look like phoniness and have the same effect.

Religion must be an integral part of the Christian writer's imaginary world and the lives of the characters who inhabit it. To know if this is so, apply a simple test: will the story hold together without it? If the answer is “yes,” then you have only tacked religion on to your story rather than embedded it, and you must try again.

It should be our aim to use fantasy to prepare the way of the Lord into the reader's heart. It should be our tactic to be as innocent as doves and as wise as serpents. In *Bell Mountain* and its sequels, I have tried to induct the reader into a world where Biblical principles are always operative, even though that world's history is very different from ours. Its scriptures and its practices look different, but that's only on the surface. Underneath, it's governed by the same

God who reveals Himself to us in the Bible and by the same immutable principles of righteousness. 🏰

Lee Duigon is a Christian free-lance writer and contributing editor for the Chalcedon Report. He has been a newspaper editor and reporter and the author of the newly released novel *Bell Mountain* from Storehouse Press.

*Duigon ... Jonadab Review cont. from page 18* currently to right the moral and cultural decay in the West. We cannot vote ourselves out of the crisis ... Political activism does not build strong Christian families, necessary to any stable and moral society, yet Western governments grow more hostile and adversarial to the Christian Church and family. *Laws being enacted will make further persecution of the Christian Church and family inevitable*” (pp. 141–142; emphasis added).

## One Family's Rules

The Moores list the “home rules” they've established for their family (p. 118).

- \*Family celebrations and traditions.
- \*Brothers and sisters regarded as permanent friends. (And how many Christian parents have been dismayed by some of the “friends” their kids picked up in public school?)
- \*Regular worship, Bible study, quiet time, and Scripture memory.
- \*Supper together around the table without a television.
- \*Short accounts when we have sinned.
- \*Practical holiness.
- \*Correction for disobedience, disrespect, stealing, and lying.
- \*Homeschooling or Christian schooling.
- \*Showing respect for parents and others in authority.

“Raising a family for God does not just happen,” they add. “Children do

not arrive on our doorsteps as obedient Christian disciples” (p. 119).

Is any of this easy? Of course not. “Isolation from events is impossible,” the Moores grant (p. 122). Yes—sooner or later, your children are going to want to know what those *Twilight* books and movies are all about: and they're going to want to know about worse things, too. “We can ultimately go nowhere on this earth to escape all problems. We must lovingly engage our culture for Christ without being overcome ourselves” (p. 123). A very strong Biblical foundation is indispensable. The corrupt culture in which we all must live never rests from its work of moral erosion. But in the long run, “Our security is in God alone” (p. 123); “God's justice will prevail” (p. 125); and “The righteous will be rewarded” (p. 126).

*The Promise of Jonadab* is available on [www.amazon.com](http://www.amazon.com), or it can be ordered directly from the publisher.

We recommend it because we agree with Ray and Gail Moore that Western culture is in a very bad way, and families had better make a plan to protect themselves. The best plan is to trust in God and live by His Word ... generation after generation.

We don't know what's coming down the road. It might be destruction; or it might be repentance, revival, and renewal. If we, like Jonadab, put our families in a right relationship to God—and teach our children to do the same for their children—we can be sure that God will bless us. 🏰



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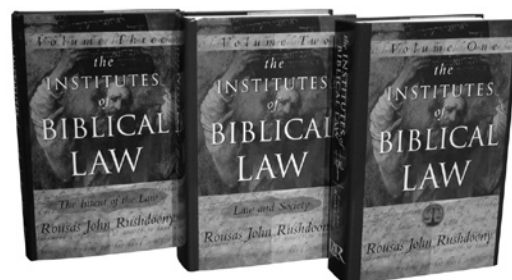
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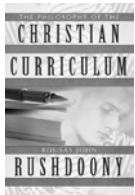
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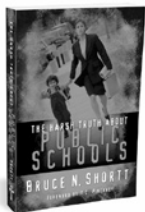


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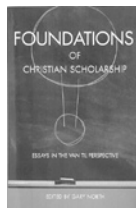
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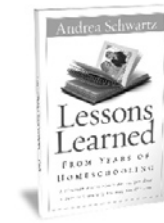


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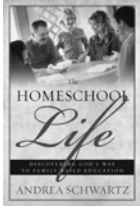


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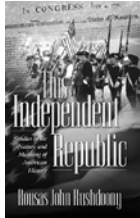


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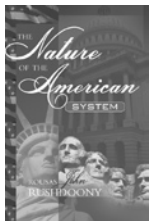
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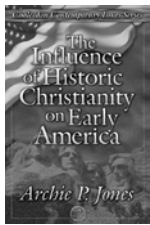
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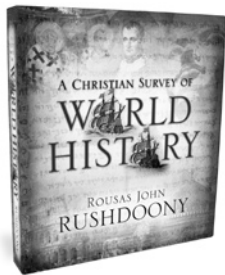
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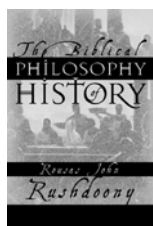
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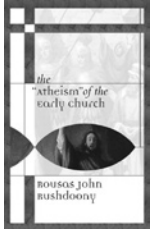
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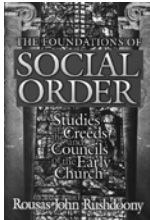
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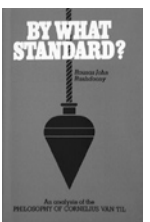
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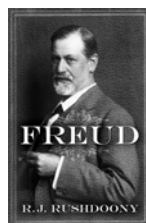


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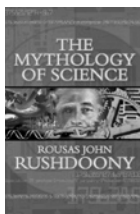
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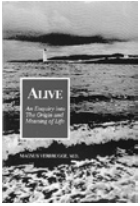


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By R.J. Rushdoony. This book points out the fraud of the empirical claims of much modern science since Charles Darwin. This book is about the religious nature of evolutionary thought, how these religious presuppositions underlie our modern intellectual 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."

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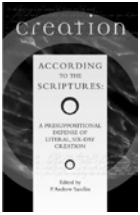
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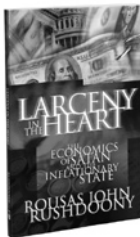
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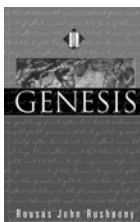


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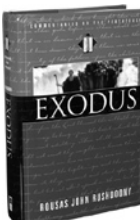
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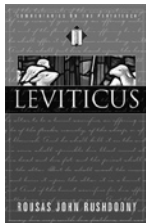
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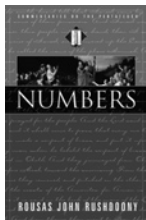
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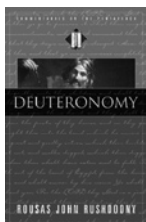
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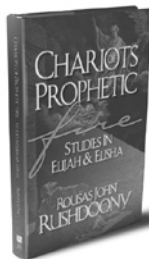
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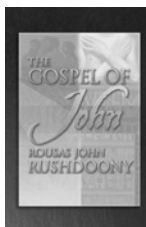
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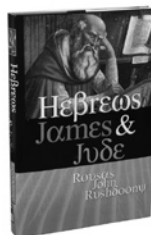
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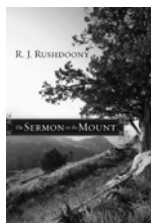


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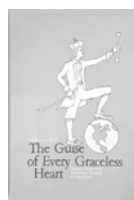
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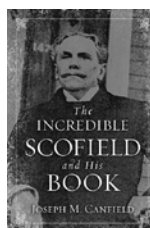


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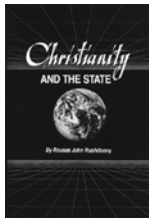


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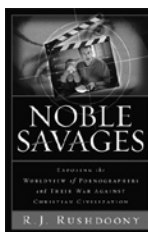
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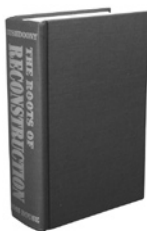


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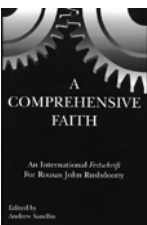
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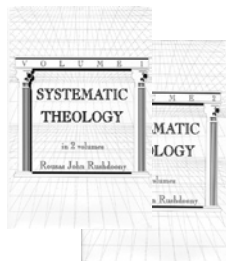
Edited by Andrew Sandlin. This is the surprise *Festschrift* presented to R.J. Rushdoony at his 80th birthday celebration in April, 1996. These essays are in gratitude to Rush's influence and elucidate the importance of his theological and philosophical contributions in numerous fields. Contributors include Theodore Letis, Brian Abshire, Steve Schlissel, Joe

Morecraft III, Jean-Marc Berthoud, Byron Snapp, Samuel Blumenfeld, Christine and Thomas Schirmacher, Herbert W. Titus, Owen Fourie, Ellsworth McIntyre, Howard Phillips, Joseph McAuliffe, Andrea Schwartz, David Estrada-Herrero, Stephen Perks, Ian Hodge, and Colonel V. Doner. Also included is a forward by John Frame and a brief biographical sketch of R. J. Rushdoony's life by Mark Rushdoony. This book was produced as a "top-secret" project by Friends of Chalcedon and donated to Ross House Books. It is sure to be a collector's item one day.

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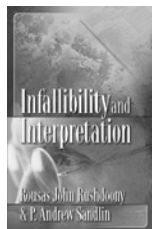
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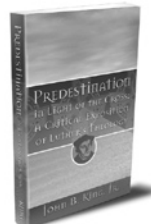


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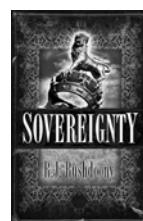
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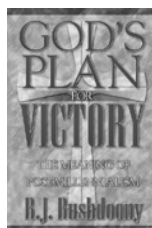
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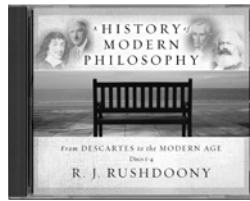
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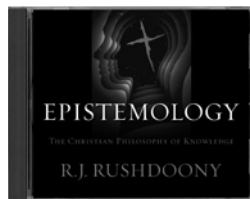
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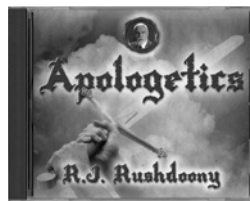
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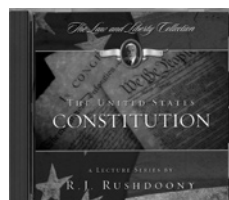
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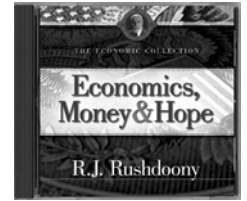
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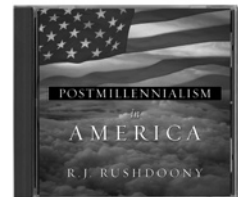
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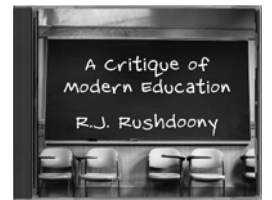
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