

# FAITH FOR ALL OF LIFE

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

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# The Beatitudes

(Taken from the soon-to-be released *Sermon on the Mount* [Vallecito, CA: Ross House Books, 2009])

R. J. Rushdoony

And seeing the multitudes, he went up into a mountain: and when he was set, his disciples came unto him: And he opened his mouth, and taught them, saying, Blessed are the poor in spirit: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Blessed are they that mourn: for they shall be comforted. Blessed are the meek: for they shall inherit the earth. Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness: for they shall be filled. Blessed are the merciful: for they shall obtain mercy. Blessed are the pure in heart: for they shall see God. Blessed are the peacemakers: for they shall be called the children of God. Blessed are they which are persecuted for righteousness' sake: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Blessed are ye, when men shall revile you, and persecute you, and shall say all manner of evil against you falsely, for my sake. Rejoice, and be exceeding glad: for great is your reward in heaven: for so persecuted they the prophets which were before you. (Matt. 5:1–12)



Our Lord, seeing the multitudes, went up into *the* mountain; this mountain is not identified for us, but our Lord's act does give us an identification. God gave the law through Moses on Mount Sinai (Exod. 19); from Mount Ebal, the curse of God upon disobedience to His law was pronounced; and, from Mount Gerizim, His blessing upon faithfulness was declared (Deut. 27:11–28:68). All three mountains are recalled in the Sermon on the Mount, which begins with the blessings of the Beatitudes, and ends with the judgment and curse upon the house not built upon the Rock, Jesus Christ (Matt. 7:26–27). That accursed and fallen house is unbelieving Judah and Israel.

Jesus came preaching the Kingdom of God (Mark 1:15). He gathered to Himself almost at once twelve disciples; many more followed Him, but He singled out twelve for the inner company. Even as Moses delivered the law to the twelve tribes of Israel, so our Lord renews the law, and develops its

inward implications (Matt. 5:21–48) in speaking to the twelve. However, while this renewed covenant, with its renewed affirmation of the law (Matt. 5:17–20) is with the twelve, the multitudes of Judea heard Him at the same time (Matt. 7:28–29). The covenant made by Jesus Christ is *new*, because it is with a *new people*, the new church or assembly of God's firstborn (Heb. 12:22–24), but it is the same covenant with Adam, Noah, Abraham, and Israel; *the same tree of life is the life of the covenant*, but new branches are grafted into it, and the dead branches are pruned out (Rom. 11:17–24). The tree of life, Jesus Christ, is the center and life of the New Jerusalem, God's Kingdom and city, in every age (Rev. 22:1–2).

This new covenant thus renews the law, because a covenant is a law-treaty, but, at the same time, an act of grace from the superior to the lesser. Because the triune God gives His covenant law to man, *an act of grace*, man must in gratitude and faithfulness keep that law. To depart from the covenant law and grace is to be accursed.

Our Lord in the Beatitudes therefore describes *the covenant man*, the man of grace who is therefore the man of law. These are *the blessed*.

*The blessed* are first of all defined as “the poor in spirit.” Edgar J. Goodspeed very ably paraphrases this as “those who feel their spiritual need.” These are they who know that they are not autonomous men, not gods (Gen. 3:5), but sinners. It is not the Kingdom of Men they want, but God's reign and Kingdom. They reject man's way and the tempter's plan (Gen. 3:1–5) and want in all of their being the Lord's reign in their lives, and the triumph of His law-word.

These too are they who *mourn* (*pen-theo*) as they see their sin and the world's apostasy. They rejoice in the Lord's salvation, but the world's rebellion against Christ the King is a manifest grief to them. The Kingdom of God or Heaven belongs to all such, and the Lord is their comfort. (Because of the Hebraic fearfulness of any vain use of God's Name, Matthew substitutes “Heaven” for “God” in speaking of the Kingdom.)

Covenant men are God's blessed *meek* (*praos*). In origin, *meek* referred to

a gentled horse, one broken to harness or saddle and made useful. Emphatically, the word *meeek* does not mean mousy or timid before men, but useful to the Lord, and harnessed to His service and law-word. If the word and Spirit of God bind us and guide us, we are the blessed meek. It is the blessed meek who shall inherit the earth (Ps. 37:11, 22) and shall delight themselves in the abundance of peace. For covenant men to conquer the world for Christ (Matt. 28:18–20), it requires of them this kind of character, *meekness*, being harnessed to the word of God and tamed and gentled by the Holy Spirit. The Greek word for meek was seen by Pindar as a royal virtue.<sup>1</sup> As against the servile virtues the world requires, the covenant man is marked by royal virtues. The slave has certain virtues which are a product of his servility, whereas covenant man, who is a prophet, priest, and *king*, has royal virtues.

Covenant men, as kings in Christ, are concerned with righteousness or justice; more, they hunger and thirst for it. These are the men who shall inherit the earth; their hunger and thirst after righteousness is not the desire of a slave for justice, but the active work of a king to establish it. Hence, they shall be filled or satisfied. The word translated as *filled* is *chortazo*, to feed to satiation; it comes from *chortos*, a garden or pasture. There is thus a hint here of entering a garden of satisfaction, a new Garden of Eden, the new creation.

Covenant men, the blessed, are also described as *merciful*, *eleos*. Mercy is God's prerogative and power, a royal and divine virtue, and we exercise it in faithfulness to His law-word as kings in Christ. Those who proclaim and manifest the grace and mercy of God also receive His mercy. All such are *the pure in heart*. The word *pure* is *katharos*, as in the English catharsis. They are pure

**The covenant made by Jesus Christ is new, because it is with a new people, the new church or assembly of God's firstborn (Heb. 12:22–24), but it is the same covenant with Adam, Noah, Abraham, and Israel; the same tree of life is the life of the covenant, but new branches are grafted into it, and the dead branches are pruned out (Rom. 11:17–24). The tree of life, Jesus Christ, is the center and life of the New Jerusalem, God's Kingdom and city, in every age (Rev. 22:1–2).**

because they have been cleansed by the blood of the Savior, Jesus Christ. Their purity is not of themselves: it is Christ's work. By their sanctification, or growth in holiness, covenant men "put off" the old man, and "put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness" (Eph. 4:22–24; Col. 3:9–10). "They shall see God." This is the ultimate joy and privilege: it is to see and know the triune God. "[H]e that hath seen me hath seen the Father," our Lord declares (John 14:9).

These are the peacemakers; they are called the children of God. To be God's children is to be princes, royalty, by the adoption of grace. Peacemaking in antiquity was a royal act of power. The peace of the land depended upon the king. So too the peace of the earth depends upon God's princes of grace. If they are faithful to their royal calling, they proclaim and bring in the King, Jesus Christ, for "this man shall be the peace" (Micah 5:5). By His atonement, He makes peace between God and man, and by His law-word, He sets forth the life of peace in Him.

Covenant man has a reward here and now in Christ, and in the inheritance of the earth, and in heaven (Matt. 5:12). He is also a part of the wars of the Lord, not as the Lord's enemy, but as the Lord's man. As a result, he will be persecuted for righteousness' sake. He may be killed for the Lord's sake (Rom. 8:36). His enemies, however, earn hell for their works, but covenant man gains heaven and the new creation.

He may be reviled or abused, and spoken falsely of, for Christ's sake, but he will gain from his Lord the joyful word, "Well done, thou good and faithful servant . . . enter thou into the joy of thy lord" (Matt. 25:21). Therefore, even under persecution, he must "[r]ejoice, and be exceeding glad" (Matt. 5:12).

Not every believer is persecuted, but every true believer is *blessed*. Our Lord does not conceal the fact of the battle, nor the cost thereof, but the overriding and dominating pronouncement is summed up in the word *blessed*.

To depart from God's covenant grace and law is to be accursed; to be faithful is to be blessed. Hence, these verses are called the Beatitudes. A *beatitude* is supreme blessedness, felicity, or happiness. Failure to stress this fact is to pervert Scripture. The covenant is a blessing; the law is a blessing; grace is a blessing; the Lord's salvation is a blessing. True, in a world of sin, the bearers of God's grace will suffer from the hostilities of the world against God, but our Lord declares plainly: "In the world ye shall have tribulation: but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world" (John 16:33). ■

1. M. R. Vincent, *Word Studies in the New Testament* (MacDill, FL: MacDonald Publishing Company, reprint of 1888 edition), 29.

# The Christian and the Passing of Time

Mark R. Rushdoony



The passing of one year and the beginning of another has been a prominent event in virtually every culture throughout history. Even those of us not particularly interested in staying up to experience the tick of the clock that measures the start of the new year cannot help but think of the passage of time this event represents. We feel much the same sentiments on our birthdays but experience it with everyone else only at the New Year's event.

Each new year reminds us of the passing of time, of things, and of people. It also reminds us that our life is moving quickly and that, before long, we too will pass.

## The Valuation of Time

Time is often seen as an enemy to men without faith because it is often seen as a thief, something that robs man. Evolution has reinforced this frustration because it uses time, along with matter, as givens in the cosmos, effectively making them ultimate. Time as such is both infinite and, ultimately, meaningless, hence we see the prominent theme of overcoming the restrictions of time in science fiction.

The doctrine of Creation and the final judgment gives time a finite character lacking in evolution. The Christian has a hope within history that comes from beyond history. Because time is finite, we cannot make it ultimate (as in evolution); or we become present and, often, pleasure oriented. We cannot eternalize time. The past, therefore, should not be idealized (whatever its

merits), romanticized, or lamented in an unproductive manner. If the present is seen as ultimate, we live in terms of it and fail in our work and responsibilities, which always direct us toward the future. Yet even the future must not be seen as ours to shape and direct, or we lose sight of the fact that it belongs to God.

Neither can we depreciate time for eternity. Our calling is not to contemplate heaven but to work in time and history with the confidence that our "labour is not in vain" (1 Cor. 15:58) because it is done in terms of the certainty of the victory of the Creator and His praise and glory.

Time is not to be made ultimate as it was by the Epicureans who said, "Eat, drink, and be merry, for tomorrow you die." Because they devalued their own future, they repudiated the present by making its focus their own sensory fulfillment; all of time shrank to the moment.

The believer, however, can enjoy the moment and all time because he places them in a context larger than himself. He can "eat, drink, and be merry" because he lives and breathes and has his meaning in God's eternal governance, which gives his life meaning, purpose, and hope. The man who knows that God rules all of time and eternity is able to value better and enjoy his every day and moment.

## The Lesson of the Sabbath

The most prominent scriptural teaching on time is the Sabbath, which is both law and object lesson. As law it was a prohibition, a limitation on man's use of one day in seven (as well as one

year in seven and a Jubilee year every forty-nine years). As an object lesson it was a forced rest by man's Master, a blessing that made clear He was also Lord over man's time and work, and that even our cessation from work was productive of His purposes.

God gave us two reasons for the Sabbath rest, neither of which relate to health or economics. The *first* is in Exodus 20:11: "For in six days the LORD made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that in them is, and rested the seventh day: wherefore the LORD blessed the sabbath day, and hallowed it." This refers to more than the *pattern* of creation and man's observance of rest; it refers to the *fact* of God's creation of all things as a theological context of life. God commands our weekly acknowledgment of His creative act, one that extends beyond matter, for time and history are also God's creation. Genesis 1:1 says, "In the beginning God created ..." meaning that time and history originated with God. We must reject evolution's elevation of either time or matter as eternally existent. Time began with God, was measured by His instruments (Gen. 1:14-19), and the Sabbath was then sanctified by Him (2:3) as a permanent remembrance of His creative act. Scripture also speaks of the "end of time," the "end of days," (Dan. 12:9, 13) and that time will one day cease to be (Rev. 10:6). The Sabbath's tie to the creative work of God gives it a theological touchstone in that its observance is a regular reminder that time, as well as all else, comes from God, is governed by Him, and may be used only on His terms. Man is called to dominion, to a

life of work and service, but the Sabbath reminds him that God is the Creator of all things and that time itself is His. This is very different from the lesson of evolution. Evolution implies not a *theology* but an *anthropology*; if man evolved, he is still evolving and the future is only what he makes of it. Evolution implies the supremacy of man as the highest development of natural forces.

A *second* reason given for the Sabbath is in Deuteronomy 5:15, “And remember that thou wast a servant in the land of Egypt, and that the LORD thy God brought thee out thence through a mighty hand and by a stretched out arm: therefore the LORD thy God commanded thee to keep the sabbath day.” The exodus from Egypt was the most defining event in Hebrew history. It represented the supernatural salvation of God to the Hebrews, a redemption that today we express more fully in the atonement of Jesus Christ.

If the creation references God’s sovereign right in terms of what He made, the exodus from Egypt conveys His prerogative in terms of what He has done for fallen man. Both reference God’s gifts of grace, and we sin when we see the Sabbath in terms of its limits on us rather than as a blessing from the hand of our Creator and Redeemer.

### Time and History

If we think in Darwinian terms, we distinguish between time and history. Time will be seen as a constant, even eternal, given and history as a recent story within its bounds. In the Bible, time and history coincide; both began in Genesis 1:1 and will end at the final judgment. The Christian can view all time, and his time, within the context of God’s creation (including its dominion mandate) and redemption. We are not given revelation as to our particular role in history, but we do have a context in which we can exercise our faith and

obedience.

The Bible gives us an overview of history; it even lets us read how the story ends. The Bible starts us with the origin of time, history, and the mature world that God declared “very good,” and it is into this God-given context that man is placed. From the day of his creation, Adam could only find meaning and purpose in terms of God’s purpose. The fall into sin was man’s seeking to establish himself in a phantom reality outside God. Subsequent history is then twofold: the outworking of man’s sin and the outworking of God’s grace in redemption.

### History as a Shaking

Hebrews 12:18–29 refers to the providence of God in history as a shaking, a judgment. The people of God are described as coming before a mountain from which God speaks. We are not come before Sinai, but Sion, “the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem” (v. 22), which is the entire church of all ages (v. 23), and before His Christ and the testimony of His blood (v. 24).

Before this company we are told to expect a voice and are warned, in effect, to “Listen up!” If those who refused this voice on earth could not escape, we are told, surely those of us who now hear this voice from heaven will not escape.

The voice of God from heaven, we are told, repeatedly shakes heaven and earth (v. 26). The purpose of this shaking is specifically stated: “[T]hat those things which cannot be shaken may remain” (v. 27).

The church is being told it has received a Kingdom from God, who is described as a consuming fire (v. 29). Both shaking and fire represent judgment, but what will remain firm is that which we have received, “a kingdom which cannot be moved” (v. 28). The Kingdom of God shall stand.

This is not a promise that believ-

ers will be insulated from the impact of God’s shakings throughout history. It is the “kingdom which cannot be moved” (v. 28), not its citizenry. Godly men can and do suffer for the Kingdom, and we need look no further than the prophets and apostles for examples. As in personal sanctification, the sanctification of the church in history is a difficult, even painful, process. False doctrine, secular philosophies, syncretism, compromise, and abstract theology, not to mention blatant rebellion against the law, cannot stand in the Kingdom of God. Augustine’s analogy was that of the City of Man fighting the City of God. Too often the visible church has taken up the banner of the enemy. Thus, Peter reminds us of the unpleasant certainty that “judgment must begin at the house of God” (1 Pet. 4:17). Lest we feel God might better direct His justice elsewhere, Peter also told us the lesson we were to desire from this truth: “[W]hat shall the end be of them that obey not the gospel of God?” The shaking of the church is its purification so that in time faith will remain.

How ought we to respond to the shaking of God, to this knowledge that we stand before all the witnesses of heaven and earth to the progress of His Kingdom? We are told that we are to “have grace, whereby we may serve God acceptably with reverence and godly fear: For our God is a consuming fire” (Heb. 12:28–29).

We serve God in our lives and calling because He is a consuming fire. We are confident in His judgments because we believe in His justice, not our own. We seek first His Kingdom because we know all else shall be consumed.

The Bible must be our primary history book because it gives time and history a meaning, a direction, and an end. All other theories of history are

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# A Crown of Thorns: Reigning Through Suffering

Christopher J. Ortiz



The kingdom of darkness utilizes a two-fold strategy to undermine the Kingdom of Light: neutralizing righteousness while advancing wickedness. We typically think of Satan as only increasing wickedness, but he is successful because he also neutralizes our ability to advance righteousness. In other words, he looks to weaken his opponent's ability to fight while beating him to the ground.

Modern military conflict works in much the same way in its use of psychological warfare. American troops experienced this in Vietnam as North Vietnamese radio programs sought to discourage the American soldier's will to fight while the Vietcong advanced against U.S. military positions. During Gulf War I, American psyops blasted loud heavy metal music toward entrenched Iraqi troops days before invasion. The intent was to intimidate the Iraqi soldiers by filling their minds with images of the merciless hordes soon to break over the hillside.

Since 1965, most of the writing surrounding *Christian dominion*—and the reign of the righteous—premised the *active work of advancing* the Kingdom. And until this article, I have also dedicated the sum total of my expression along those very same lines. However, I'd like to suggest an additional—and vitally important—element to the way in which we defeat the kingdom of darkness. I'd like to demonstrate how you and I play an important role in ac-

tually *weakening* the powers of darkness through the *neutralizing of evil*. In other words, you and I can handicap the work of Satan by neutralizing the effect of his weapons.

## Are Dominion and Suffering in Conflict?

One of the perpetual criticisms that dominionists hear is that we neglect the role of suffering in the life of the believer by our undue emphasis on the triumphant Christian. It is held that Reconstructionists neglect what the Bible says about suffering and that we proffer bringing in the Kingdom of God by our own power.

This criticism often stems from amillennialism and its view that evil will prevail historically—though not defeat the church—and will only be defeated when Christ returns at the end of history. The Reconstructionist—who is postmillennial—is suggesting a defeating of the kingdom of darkness in history without the direct intervention of the Second Advent—hence, the notion that we usher in the Kingdom of God by our own hand.

Without revisiting the well-trodden ground of that debate, I'd like to offer a second look at the concept of Christian suffering and demonstrate how it may be one of the most potent forms of spiritual warfare in our arsenal. In short, the dominionist does not shirk the idea of suffering; rather, he uses it to weaken the kingdom of darkness. Let me explain.

## Sin, Evil, and Satan

Unless we possess a proper understanding of the breadth of Christian suffering, dominionism can be overbearing and even dangerous. The first, and most important, fact being overlooked is that the primary ailment the Christian contends with is sin. It is sin that reigns in his mortal body (Rom. 6:12), and it is evildoing that prevails in a society (Rom. 13:3–4). The powers of darkness are only as strong as the “sons of disobedience” in any given area (Eph. 2:2), and the wrath of God comes in response to that disobedience (Eph. 5:6). This is why we are to seek *regeneration* as the source of societal transformation and not the upheaval of *revolution*.

Sin and disobedience in the heart of man represent the solidifying pillars upon which the kingdom of darkness rests. At the very least, we should recognize this inextricable tie between sin and the ruling spirits of evil. Paul's concept of spiritual warfare is often misconstrued due to an improper doctrine of sin:

**For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places. (Eph. 6:12)**

Charismatics have made the mistake of interpreting this text exclusively as a bypassing of any interaction with mankind and contending directly with these demonic entities through prayer. This is despite the fact that Jude warns

of those who “slander celestial beings. But even the archangel Michael, when he was disputing with the devil about the body of Moses, did not dare bring a slanderous accusation against him, but said, ‘The Lord rebuke you!’” (Jude 8–9 NIV).

We simply cannot separate the spiritual influence behind sinful acts and somehow divorce it from flesh and blood. Ultimately, spiritual warfare is “ground warfare” because it involves preaching the gospel to men so that sin might be destroyed. This is why Paul goes on to state that our “offensive” weapon is “the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God” (Eph. 6:17) and that our feet should be “shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace” (v. 15). An “air attack” directed at principalities and powers does little because the right to rule is granted to the kingdom of darkness by way of the sons of disobedience:

**He that committeth sin is of the devil; for the devil sinneth from the beginning. (1 John 3:8a)**

This is also made clear in Luke 10 where the seventy disciples return from preaching the gospel rejoicing and saying, “Lord, even the devils are subject unto us through thy name” (v. 17). Our Lord responds by saying, “I beheld Satan as lightning fall from heaven” (v. 18). In other words, Satan’s kingdom fell like lightning when the disciples preached the gospel. There were no intercessory meetings involving shaking their fists at the heavens and calling Satan’s kingdom down. Our Lord sent them in as a “ground” force, and Satan’s kingdom fell because sin and disobedience grant him the right to remain in power. If men are converted, the kingdom of darkness collapses like a house of cards. Again, *it’s regeneration, not revolution.*

## Expanding Our Understanding of Suffering

We have a very real enemy in the ruling spirits of darkness, but the locus of their power is found in sin—and sin resides in the heart of man. Therefore, we must not only seek to convert the hearts of men, we must also guard our own hearts from the influence of sin. However, we must take this a step further, and this is where the concept of Christian suffering enters in.

When we think of suffering, we obviously think first of the godly martyrs of both Old and New Testaments. And, of course, none personify suffering more than our Lord Himself, “who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God” (Heb. 12:2). For us in the West, suffering of this magnitude is unfamiliar. These days, only believers living under anti-Christian regimes experience real suffering.

But this is only one form of suffering. By definition, suffering is something we *put up with*, or endure, and that can be extreme, as in martyrdom, or moderate as in what we experience in our daily interaction in this world. Each day we all experience injustices at the hands of others. At other times, we are dispensing those same injustices. Either way, we regularly experience a form of suffering to which the Holy Spirit provides the remedy of *longsuffering*:

**But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance: against such there is no law. (Gal. 5:22–23; emphasis added)**

Most of these spiritual characteristics are to be operative toward other people, and in a sense, they all fall under the category of *love*. As Paul says, “Charity suffereth long” and “endureth all things” (1 Cor. 13:4, 7). Surely, he has

more in mind than enduring harsh persecution or martyrdom. He intends also our longsuffering toward one another:

**With all lowliness and meekness, with longsuffering, forbearing one another in love; endeavouring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. (Eph. 4:2–3)**

This is a broader definition of Christian suffering, and unless we consider it, *we will not see our longsuffering as a weapon against the kingdom of darkness*. Remember, it is both sin and Satan that we contend with, and our daily handling of suffering will directly determine how much sin and Satan will prevail.

## Absorbing the Evil

Evil propagates itself by a chain reaction. It is like a bad coin, which is passed on from one person to another until it reaches someone who will put it out of currency by absorbing the loss. If one man injures another, there are three ways in which evil can win a victory and only one way in which it can be defeated. If the injured person retaliates, or nurses a grievance, or takes it out on a third person, the evil is perpetuated and is therefore victorious. Evil is defeated only if the injured person absorbs the evil and refuses to allow it to go any further. It is this kind of victory which Paul describes when he says that Christ died to sin.<sup>1</sup>

G. B. Caird has given us a brilliant insight: *the defeat of evil is often determined by the injured person!* How? It is that person’s choice to absorb the evil through longsuffering, meekness, and love. When people do this, they prevent their personal injustice to percolate and transform itself into something they take out on another. The sin stops with them.

Isn’t this why Paul admonishes, “[F]athers, do not provoke your children to wrath” (Eph. 6:4 NKJV) and “do not

provoke your children, lest they become discouraged” (Col. 3:21 NKJV)? Yet how often do fathers engage in that very thing? How often do fathers take their own sense of injustice and transfer it as anger directed at their children? In other words, fathers—and anyone for that matter—can multiply the effect of one sin. They can transfer it to their children, and then their children can take it out on others. It’s the multiplication of sin and Satan’s effective means of neutralizing our righteousness.

Paul also says, “Be ye angry, and sin not: let not the sun go down upon your wrath” (Eph. 4:26). Our anger must never be converted into sin directed against another, and this is sure to happen if we let the sun go down upon our wrath. That means we are allowing the anger—derived from a perceived injustice—to simmer and grow. And when it is fully developed, it will cause further devastation. As James declares, there is an evolution to sin:

**Then when lust hath conceived, it bringeth forth sin: and sin, when it is finished, bringeth forth death. (James 1:15)**

James goes on to admonish his readers to restrain themselves from reactionary behavior such as anger, because, as the new creations of God (v. 18), we cannot advance righteousness in that manner:

**Wherefore, my beloved brethren, let every man be swift to hear, slow to speak, slow to wrath: for the wrath of man worketh not the righteousness of God. (James 1:19–20)**

To remedy this, we look to Christ and our identification with His death and Resurrection. As Caird notes above, Christ *died to sin*; and Paul rhetorically asks in Romans 6:2, “How shall we, that are dead to sin, live any longer therein?”

We are to consider ourselves as dead to sin (v. 11), and therefore not yield our members to its service (v. 13). If we are dead to sin, how then can we transfer it to another? We should therefore be like lightning rods that absorb the strike and neutralize it into the ground lest it destroy something else. Rushdoony states it this way:

Our personal victory over evil comes in preventing it from warping us into a mind governed by a reaction to evil, i.e., dominated by what has been done to us rather than by what the Lord requires of us.<sup>2</sup>

In a clear echoing of the devotional practices of Brother Lawrence, Rushdoony, in his section on Prayer in *Systematic Theology*, makes practical use of a continual conversation with God to help us *protect the Kingdom* from our tendency to overreact:

When we face a difficult problem, we ask, “Lord, give me patience to cope with this problem.” Then, later, we thank Him for His guiding hand and care. If we have a difficult person to meet with, we ask, “Lord, I don’t know what to say, and I don’t want to lose my temper or *hurt the Kingdom by my failure here*. Give me grace to deal with this man.” When we are afraid of something confronting us, we tell God so, and we ask for courage to cope with the problem or hurt.<sup>3</sup> (emphasis added)

### Reigning Through Suffering

When dealing with the “attacks of the enemy,” the idea is to “*quench* all the fiery darts of the wicked” (Eph. 6:16; emphasis added). Longsuffering, patience, and humility in the face of wrongdoing absorbs the evil and neutralizes it—*extinguishing* Satan’s flaming arrows. You might say the disease is now quarantined. Or, as Peter says:

**Forasmuch then as Christ hath suffered for us in the flesh, arm yourselves likewise with the same**

**mind: for he that hath suffered in the flesh *hath ceased from sin*. (1 Pet. 4:1; emphasis added)**

Peter also ties the concept of enduring suffering to that of defeating the kingdom of darkness:

**Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour: whom resist steadfast in the faith, knowing that the same *afflictions* are accomplished in your brethren that are in the world. (1 Pet. 5:8–9; emphasis added)**

Granted, Peter is referring to the type of afflictions that typically led to imprisonment or death, but the principle is the same for the type of suffering we all experience—the *type that we convert and transfer as sin to someone else*. It’s that spreading of sin like a virus that fortifies Satan’s rule. It’s that virus that we must neutralize by absorbing the evil with the spiritual power of longsuffering.

It should be clear that the New Testament writers place great emphasis on Christian suffering, but eschatological systems like amillennialism have misconstrued that to mean “no historical victory for the church.” It is my contention that the opposite is true: *suffering is central to defeating the kingdom of darkness by helping to stop the spread of sin*.

The Apostle Paul clearly understood the inherent power of Christian suffering. In fact, he established his entire ministry on the *embracing* of suffering. He knew what Christ had told him about how much he would suffer (Acts 9:16), and rather than complain, he accepted it and made it foundational to his ministry:

**Who now rejoice in my sufferings for you, and fill up that which is behind of the afflictions of Christ**

in my flesh for his body's sake, which is the church. (Col. 1:24)

Paul absorbed the suffering for the sake of the church, Christ's body. We must also strive to absorb the evil for the sake of His body. We must serve as neutralizers of the power of sin. We must be able to say, "The sin stops here!"

### Overcome Evil with Good

I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service. (Rom. 12:1)

The twelfth chapter of Romans is one of the more important in the Pauline letters to help us understand the true nature of our ongoing life in Christ. It begins with the most extreme image of dedication by suggesting we offer ourselves as a human sacrifice. It then goes on to work out the implications of that sacrifice with special attention given to this matter of overcoming evil:

Dearly beloved, avenge not yourselves, but rather give place unto wrath: for it is written, Vengeance is mine; I will repay, saith the Lord. Therefore if thine enemy hunger, feed him; if he thirst, give him drink: for in so doing thou shalt heap coals of fire on his head. Be not overcome of evil, but overcome evil with good. (Rom. 12:19–21)

A good many commentators interpret verse 19, "give place to wrath," to mean allowing for the wrath of God to be enacted instead of our own taking of vengeance. However, in order to allow for the wrath of God, we must fully embrace the wrongs done to us. In verse 17, Paul writes, "Recompense to no man evil for evil." In other words, though you receive evil, don't pay it back.

Let me also make clear that this is separate from the prosecution of crimes by the state. I'm not suggesting that someone who murdered your family member should not be prosecuted to the full extent of the law. What I'm referring to is how we process our suffering. Will we allow it make to us agents of unrighteousness?

The principle here is basic, though often ignored: *do not be overcome by the evil that is directed against you, but overcome that evil with good.* Herein lies a great power in spiritual warfare. We overcome evil by good. By feeding our enemy, or by not mistreating our families, we do not allow our future actions to be determined by the evil that is done to us. In this way, we are neutralizing the power of sin and evil while at the same time advancing the Kingdom of God by our proactive dominion efforts. It is a two-edged sword of weakening Satan while applying our faith. It is reigning through suffering.

This will all require a consistent rethinking of how we react to our circumstances, or the injustices done to us. For many of us—especially me—we tend to focus on the wrongs done to us by meditating on them, praying about them, and telling others about them. In fact, we can often spend so much time dwelling on the evil besetting us that it exceeds our focus on the worship of God. The Apostle Paul did not see it this way:

**For I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us. (Rom. 8:18)**

We, on the other hand, tend to think our present sufferings are "worthy." They are worthy of our time and attention. They are worthy of our constant meditation. And they are worthy of our proclamation to both God and man. This, as I hope to have shown,

leads to sin on our own part, as we are shaped by this evil into an "instrument of unrighteousness" (Rom. 6:13).

### A Crown of Thorns

We have yet to be glorified with our heavenly crowns, yet we often behave as if we bore them now. This is when dominionism becomes arrogance, and we do not present the humility so characteristic of our Lord. Christ Himself bore a crown, but it was a crown of thorns. His reign as King would begin by the endurance of suffering in order that He might put an end to sin. We must rejoice in that, like Paul, we are called to follow Him in "the fellowship of his sufferings, being made conformable unto his death; if by any means I might attain unto the resurrection of the dead" (Phil. 3:10–11).

We are certainly called to dominion, and the Kingdom of God will triumph over every area of life, with all men acknowledging Jesus as Lord and King. However, the road to dominion consists of more than the wonderful means God has given us to advance His Kingdom. Dominion is also accrued, as sin is defeated both in regenerated hearts and by absorbing the evil directed against us, thereby disallowing it to pass on to others. In this way, we are beating the devil at the game he plays so well. We are neutralizing his ability to perpetuate sin by being lightning rods for God! ■

1. G. B. Caird, *Principalities and Powers: A Study in Pauline Theology* (London, UK: Oxford University Press, 1956), 98.
2. R. J. Rushdoony, *Romans and Galatians* (Vallecito, CA: Ross House Books, 1997), 243.
3. Rushdoony, *Systematic Theology in Two Volumes* (Vallecito, CA: Ross House Books, 1994), 1199.

# Protection and Covering: A Look at God's Provision for the Biblical Trustee Family

Andrea Schwartz



God's law-word can be viewed either as a burden with hundreds of do's and don'ts that stifle the creativity and freedom of individu-

als, OR as a blessing given by God to man within the context of families as the standard by which to glorify Him and enjoy Him. Believers should view it from the second perspective.

In Scripture God has differentiated the roles of men and women. Despite attempts to blur the distinctions between the sexes, God's Word makes it clear that men have been given the responsibility to lead (headship) and women have been given the task to assist them in their calling.

If we are going to take the Word of God seriously as a faith for all of life, then we must do an inventory of our lives and determine which areas have been placed outside of God's domain (whether intentionally or unintentionally). We also must honestly examine whether we have allocated some actions or responsibilities to the "important" column and others to the "less important" or "inconsequential" categories. If we truly are to be the salt that hasn't lost its savor, or the light not hid under a bushel, then we would do well to ensure that we have not only embraced God's directives (no matter how big or small they may seem to us), but also unearthed areas in our own lives that have been in direct contradiction to clearly ordained elements of scriptural living. I submit that there are more areas than

most of us would care to admit, where we have been ignorant of God's requirements OR have been willing to remain "inconsistent" in adhering to them or trying to obey them in the first place.

I can hear the cries of legalism and works salvation. But I'm not discussing the way in which we become justified with God. We are justified by the act of God's grace, which recognizes Christ's death and resurrection as applying to us. I am talking about how our sanctification (growth in grace) constitutes our response to living out God's definitions of right and wrong, righteousness and unrighteousness, blessings and cursings, and so on.

## Outdated or Relevant?

Years ago, my husband and I would make our monthly (sometimes weekly) jaunts to Vallecito to hear Dr. Rushdoony preach. We would have regular Sunday afternoon discussions with him in his living room along with his wife, Dorothy, and any other guests who happened to be visiting. I always intently asked questions about those portions of Scripture I "knew" didn't apply any longer and was eager for Rush to help me understand why I was correct in my thinking. He provided me with no justification to assume that God's directives were things of the past, no matter how inconsequential they seemed to me. Rather, he would give an answer, provide a Scripture reference to back it up, and then add, "Someone should really write about this. This is an area that needs more development." This article

is an effort to further develop a Biblical understanding of one of those issues.

After the creation account, concluding with the creation of Adam, the Bible proceeds to define the purpose and role of the woman. She was to be his complement—providing aspects of personality and gifts that matched up well with his. Physically, the bodies of men and women clearly show an intentional design that makes them compatible with the task of producing progeny that God assigned to them.

Likewise, in matters of size, strength, inclinations, and temperament the differences in the sexes was a deliberate act of creation and one that was designed to further the Kingdom of God.<sup>1</sup> Men are stronger and more suited to the tasks of combat, hunting, defense, protection, and leadership.<sup>2</sup> Much like the outside of a building, God has instilled in men to be that which stands in constant protection of that which is inside—providing a barrier between the outside and the inside. Women, on the other hand, are more concerned and gifted in the areas of childbearing, comfort, edification, and beautification, similar to the inside of a structure that serves as a pleasant and suitable environment for family life and nurturing. A building without insides is an empty shell; rooms without outside protection are short-lived and vulnerable to predators and thieves. Thus, from the outset, the roles of men and women were defined and established to ensure the furtherance of the Kingdom by means

of the dominion mandate to be fruitful and multiply and replenish the earth.

## Assault on the Weaker Vessel

Opponents of Biblical Christianity like to paint a picture of the caveman-mentality when it comes to describing what the Bible says about men and women. Not unlike their father the devil, they seek to attack the most vital stronghold of Christian civilization—the Biblical trustee family.<sup>3</sup> By promoting egalitarianism, and perpetuating the “battle of the sexes,” they stimulate a conflict of interests rather than a harmony of interests. Their assault undermines a woman’s most important role—raising and educating God’s children. By succumbing to the lure of outside careers and personal fulfillment, women are abdicating the royal role of wife and mother and transferring it to paid surrogates.

Our Lord said, “He that entereth not by the door into the sheepfold, but climbeth up some other way, the same is a thief and a robber” (John 10:1). In the Garden, Satan avoided a direct assault on the “door,” Adam, and sought entry through “some other way,” Eve. She was clearly a weaker point of entry (1 Pet. 3:7), but that’s why the Bible describes the Fall of man as the “sin of Adam” (Rom. 5:12, 14), and not Eve. It was Adam’s responsibility to “dress and keep” the Garden (Gen. 2:15) and that included his wife. Yet Eve was still culpable in that she allowed herself to be deceived (1 Tim. 2:14). The end result was a disastrous course for world history that is only remedied by Christ’s redemption and a deliberate reversal of the original sin on the part of man, i.e., the marriage relationship must be reconstructed along Biblical lines.

God never has left mankind without a witness to that which pleases Him and obtains His blessings. Throughout the pages of both Old and New Testaments,

there are provisions that serve to safeguard the interests of the trustee family by acknowledging the vulnerability of women and establishing the protective responsibilities of fathers and husbands. Rushdoony has this to say:

We understand ... why a married woman as well as unmarried daughters carry the name of the husband and father. They signify thereby that they are under his care and authority. It is a protective covering.<sup>4</sup>

A pertinent portion of Scripture on the subject of vows can be found in Numbers 30:1–16. It is an example of a law given by God to protect the interests of the family by giving the husband and father the responsibility to examine and approve the dealings of his wife and daughters and thereby act as a covering for them in business dealings and other important matters.

Rushdoony elaborates,

This obviously is a law of far-reaching implications because here alone in the law do we find that statement, “And Moses spake unto the heads of the tribes of the children of Israel” (v. 1); usually Moses is commanded to speak to the children of Israel. Obviously, we have a law of importance and a different in kind.<sup>5</sup>

Much is important in this passage, but for the sake of this discussion Rushdoony’s comment on the role of husbands and fathers is highlighted:

The reason why the husband or father had oversight where a wife or daughter made a vow was to prevent rash vows which, however well-intended, could adversely affect family life. This meant that the head of the household had to be responsible, not only to annul rash vows, but to avoid himself any rash vows that would harm the family.<sup>6</sup>

How can we presume that the New Testament contradicts or overrides these God-given directives that preserve and

uphold the institution of the family? Yet, it is the Biblical trustee family, of all the institutions that God has ordained, that is continually assaulted (either directly or indirectly) by both church and state—the family’s authority, preferences, and jurisdiction are regularly challenged. This is so true in our day, that the portion of Scripture cited above is virtually unknown among professing Christians.

The church is often guilty of dealing with believers as autonomous units rather than within the context of family life—often approaching men, women, and children in isolation from their familial roles. The state, too, is not without guilt as it robs the loyalty of the children from their parents by means of the compulsory educational system, not to mention robbing the family wealth by means of inflation and excessive taxation.

## New Testament Application

A look at the early church gives us a picture of the application of the covering commanded by God for women (either wives or daughters) by their husbands or fathers.

In chapter 7 of Paul’s First Epistle to the Corinthians, he writes in direct response to a letter from them regarding fidelity, morality, and marriage. The apostle’s reply included a condemnation of fornication (v. 2), a remonstrance against individualism in a marriage (vv. 3–5), a recommendation of abstinence (vv. 7–8), and the problematic issue of having an unsaved spouse (vv. 10–16). It’s in this last matter that neither salvation nor the church sought to annul the institution of the family: an unbelieving husband remained the head of his believing wife, insofar as he was willing to remain in the marriage.<sup>7</sup>

This has far-reaching implications. From the outset, the church was not claiming jurisdiction over the family,

but declared it was God's institution to support and uphold family life. In fact, it maintained that within the structure of marriage and family life, evangelism was most likely to find its good fruit, thereby encouraging new converts to stay married if the other spouse was willing. Even 1 Peter 3:1–6 instructs wives to be in subjection to husbands who obey not the Word, as a means of converting them. Paul never wavers from identifying the family as an institution under God rather than under the church. And an important distinction includes that wives are to be subject to their own husbands, *not* to any and every man. Thus, a wife's membership in the church never was intended to replace the authority of the husband as the family head.

### Power on Her Head

In 1 Corinthians 11:1–15, Paul instructs men and women in their proper roles under God and in public worship.

**1 Be ye followers of me, even as I also am of Christ.**

**2 Now I praise you, brethren, that ye remember me in all things, and keep the ordinances, as I delivered them to you.**

**3 But I would have you know, that the head of every man is Christ; and the head of the woman is the man; and the head of Christ is God.**

**4 Every man praying or prophesying, having his head covered, dishonoureth his head.**

**5 But every woman that prayeth or prophesieth with her head uncovered dishonoureth her head: for that is even all one as if she were shaven.**

**6 For if the woman be not covered, let her also be shorn: but if it be a**

**shame for a woman to be shorn or shaven, let her be covered.**

**7 For a man indeed ought not to cover his head, forasmuch as he is the image and glory of God: but the woman is the glory of the man.**

**8 For the man is not of the woman: but the woman of the man.**

**9 Neither was the man created for the woman; but the woman for the man.**

**10 For this cause ought the woman to have power on her head because of the angels.**

**11 Nevertheless neither is the man without the woman, neither the woman without the man, in the Lord.**

**12 For as the woman is of the man, even so is the man also by the woman; but all things of God.**

**13 Judge in yourselves: is it comely that a woman pray unto God uncovered?**

**14 Doth not even nature itself teach you, that, if a man have long hair, it is a shame unto him?**

**15 But if a woman have long hair, it is a glory to her: for her hair is given her for a covering.**  
[Emphasis added.]

Despite how unpopular the entire subject of head coverings is today, it has a long and important history in the life of the church and Christian civilization in general. All one has to do is view films made earlier than the 1960s that contained church scenes and you will see women with their heads covered. I know from my own childhood that this was accepted practice, even if most did not recognize its origin.

Rushdoony comments on 1 Cor-

inthians 11:10, "For this cause ought the woman to have power on her head because of the angels," and points out the seeming contradiction between Paul establishing a head covering as a sign of subordination and authority at one and the same time:

This seeming contradiction arises from the anarchic concept of authority which is so deeply imbedded in man's sinful nature. All true authority is under authority, since God alone transcends all things and is the source of all power and authority. A colonel has authority because he is under a general, and his own authority grows as the power, prestige, and authority of those above him grow, and his unity with them in mind and purpose is assured. So too with the woman: Her subordination is also her symbol of authority.<sup>8</sup>

Think of the implications of a woman covering her head in worship within the context of Paul's remarks:

1. Praying with her head covered prevents a woman from dishonoring her head (her husband).

2. By way of analogy, since it would be shameful for a woman to have her head shaved, likewise, she should cover her head in public worship.

3. Covering her head is a visual symbol of her being the "glory of the man" and under her husband or father's authority as ordained by God.

4. Because of this aforementioned relationship, a woman has (wears) power on her head, establishing that she lives and acts under authority. (This is much like the practice of nurses, policemen, and military personnel having a head covering that denotes they are under authority, and thus have power or jurisdiction in a particular area.)

Finally, Paul asks and answers the question, “[I]s it comely that a woman pray unto God uncovered?” By answering that nature itself testifies that men and women have differing roles and thus designated manners of dress and adornment, he is answering this question with a definitive “no.” The meaning seems straightforward: men dishonor their heads when they come to congregational worship with covered heads, and women do so when they fail to cover theirs.

There are any number of alternate explanations of this Biblical text, and one in particular which, although it doesn't maintain the need for actual head coverings, does concur that God's authority structure of male headship must be maintained.<sup>9</sup> However, there are some published church standards that emphatically state that women must *not* cover their heads as a sign of submission and are liable to cause division and offense by doing so.<sup>10</sup> If the authority for this statement comes from Scripture, then the passages on either side of this directive to women, admonishing men to pray without a covering on their heads, might be called into question as well. Furthermore, since Paul talks about some sort of covering, where is the teaching in the church today that does more than say “This doesn't apply any longer”? In the very same portion of Scripture there are instructions regarding the administration of the Lord's Supper. Are these to be taken as specific answers to problems of the Corinthian church and not applicable to our time?

Shortly before his death, I asked Dr. Rushdoony in a private conversation about the issue of head coverings for women and why it generated such division and discord among Christians. His answer was succinct. He said, “Because it is just a matter of obedience. There

isn't attached to it any other obvious benefit. You will see the beginnings of true revival when once again women have their heads covered in worship. It will mean you have a people desirous of obeying God completely.”

But I didn't stop there with Rushdoony's answer. After all, years before, he had commented that there were topics in Scripture that needed more scholarship and study. So my husband and I began to discuss this issue and see what, if anything, we were missing. It was my husband who finally identified that the sign of a woman covering her head in worship was a visible display that familial ties were not abandoned when families walked through the doors of a local church. Rather than become absorbed into the life of the church, this visible sign established the family as the first and foremost of the three major institutions (family, church, state) ordained by God. Herein lies the key to liberty in the Christian sense of the word to be nurtured and developed within the context of the Biblical trustee family.

Additionally, as the early church grew, there were many families where one spouse would come to faith before the other. What better sign that the church had no desire to rob a man of his wife<sup>11</sup> or his daughters, than for women to have a visible representation that they were under the protection of husbands and fathers?

### Because of the Angels

Many commentators differ when it comes to explaining the clause “because of the angels” in this text. Whether you accept the perspective that Paul is describing fallen angels or faithful ones, he is nonetheless emphatic that women should wear power on their heads. Without settling the designation as to which angels are being referred to, we have to acknowledge Paul's emphasis.<sup>12</sup>

### Where Do We Go from Here?

A congregation consisting of women with covered heads is a testimony to God's creation order and a visual symbol of the high regard the Christian faith places on women. Biblically speaking, this is an obvious sign that a woman is under the care and protection of her husband or father (or some male relative in the case of death) and serves as a constant reminder to both women and men that women minister under authority (Proverbs 31), and do so with power—that power that derives itself from He who owns the Kingdom, the Power, and the Glory and delegates it to men in authority and women under their fathers and husbands.<sup>13</sup> This line of thought runs completely counter to modern thinking.

I can testify from my own experience that at the point in my Christian walk that I took this directive seriously, my efforts within my own family, in homeschooling leadership roles, and in Christian ministry reached new levels.<sup>14</sup> If for no other benefit than as a testimony to myself, I was able to embark on existing and new opportunities for service within the context of being a woman under authority. The sign on my head continues to serve as a reminder that I live and breathe in terms of God's order and that I am in no way autonomous in any of my earthly relationships.

We constantly hear clamoring for strong family values and strengthening the family against the attacks from those outside the faith. Maybe it is time we examined how we have been party to disobeying God and abandoning the very symbol He has ordained to regularly and routinely picture the family as His most basic, fundamental institution. Maybe the greatest opposition to God's order for the family is unwittingly found within the very walls of the church.<sup>15</sup> ■

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1. See Chris Ortiz's article on the Kingdom, "The Kingdom-Driven Life: Discovering God's Larger Purpose and Our Place in It," *Faith for All of Life*, March/April, 2008, <http://www.chalcedon.edu/articles/article.php?ArticleID=2840>.
2. When Adam was created, there was no need of combat or hunting. Defense and protection probably did come into his calling at that point, but in a nonviolent way. The calling of the male as head and the female as helpmeet were normative in a non-fallen world.
3. Andrea Schwartz, "The Biblical Trustee Family," *Faith for All of Life*, Nov./Dec. 2007, <http://www.chalcedon.edu/articles/article.php?ArticleID=2794>.
4. R. J. Rushdoony, *Deuteronomy* (Vallecito, CA: Ross House Books, 2008), 79.
5. R. J. Rushdoony, *Numbers* (Vallecito, CA: Ross House Books, 2006), 340.
6. *Ibid.*, 344.
7. The unbeliever's headship did not mean that the wife had to obey the husband when he wanted to lead her or the family into sin or outside the clear directives of the Scriptures.
8. R. J. Rushdoony, *Institutes of Biblical Law, Vol. I*, (Phillipsburg, NJ: The Craig Press, 1973), 347.
9. See James B. Hurley, "Did Paul Require Veils or the Silence of Women?: A Consideration of 1 Corinthians 11:2–16 and 1 Cor. 14:33b–36." Hurley's conclusions assert, "1) that the primary issue was the authority of husbands in relation to their wives as focused in the hair-style of wives at the worship service and 2) that Paul did not intend to silence women but rather to regulate their

relation to their husbands as they charismatically prayed and prophesied."

10. See *The Practice of Headcoverings in Public Worship*, issued by the Reformed Presbytery of North America, June 4, 2001.
11. Note in pagan cultures, it was not uncommon for men desirous of another man's wife to kill him so as to have the wife. Such were the cases in Genesis regarding Abraham and Sarah.
12. R. J. Rushdoony, *Institutes of Biblical Law, Vol. I*, 347.
13. It is important to distinguish between the Christian covering of women and the Islamic covering of women. The covering of a Muslim woman certainly has nothing to do with power, but rather degradation. If you saw a Christian woman and a Muslim woman each with their heads covered, would you be able to tell the difference? Folks often comment when they see a woman with her head covered, "Is she a Muslim?" Under Islam a woman is covered because she is deemed a temptation and snare to men. Under Christianity, she is recognized as having full status as a redeemed person, albeit existing in an authority structure with the husband as the head. This relationship has been compared to a king and his prime minister.
14. It should be noted that sola Scriptura, not experience, must be the final guide in determining how we should live.
15. Some would challenge my premise and ask if all women immediately covered their heads in worship, would revival result? The question confuses the symbol with that which the symbol refers. I could ask likewise: if a woman removed her wedding ring, would she suddenly not be married? The symbol points to a reality of her being married. Likewise, the wearing of a veil during the marriage ceremony was a symbol of being under authority. The father brings the woman to the husband, and she is "given" in marriage. Thus, a transfer of authority takes place.

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# Canadian Bloggers Targeted by “Human Rights” Censors

Lee Duigon

“Do not think for a moment that your First Amendment will protect you from these commissions.”—Kathy Shaidle, Canadian blogger

“When you lose track of your purpose, you start thinking your purpose is to do *everything*.”  
—Peter Vere, Canadian journalist



No target is too small for Canada’s “human rights” machine.

Kathy Shaidle’s blog, “Five Feet of Fury”<sup>1</sup> (she’s actually 4’11”), along with several other conservative blogs, is in the crosshairs of a libel suit filed by Canada’s busiest “human rights” *apparatchik*.

“It’s about political censorship, the abuse of government power, and the freedom of the blogosphere,” writes another defendant in the suit, Ezra Levant.<sup>2</sup> “[Plaintiff Richard] Warman wants to marginalize and perhaps even criminalize conservative ideas ... It’s part of a global attempt to squelch ideas about liberty and other western values.”

Chalcedon interviewed Kathy Shaidle and Peter Vere to get to the heart of the story—a story that might hit closer to home than many American readers think.

## The Tyranny of Nice

Shaidle and Vere have written a book, *The Tyranny of Nice*, detailing and analyzing the abuses of liberty—some of them decidedly bizarre—practiced by Canada’s “human rights” commissions and tribunals.<sup>3</sup> Already in its second printing, the book has just been picked up by the Conservative Book Club.

In the meantime, Shaidle and some

**“It’s about political censorship, the abuse of government power, and the freedom of the blogosphere ... Warman wants to marginalize and perhaps even criminalize conservative ideas ... It’s part of a global attempt to squelch ideas about liberty and other western values.”**

of her fellow bloggers have already laid out “thousands of dollars each,” she said, defending themselves from a libel action that has not yet come to trial.

“So far, it’s been paid for by donations from my readers,” Shaidle said. “But once you’re caught up in the human rights system, you can never get your money back. I guess they figure no one will ever be found not guilty.”

The bloggers’ “crime,” she explained, was to publish on the Internet a transcript of a Canadian Human Rights Commission hearing—supposedly a public hearing—in which Richard Warman was involved.

Warman, formerly employed by the commission as an investigator, has made

a name for himself—and a great deal of money—filing “Section 13” human rights complaints against various defendants. In fact, in a list of “hate speech” decisions posted on a government website, Warman is named as the plaintiff in eleven of thirteen cases.<sup>4</sup>

“Our lawyers are talking to Warman’s lawyers, but we won’t settle,” Shaidle said. “We shouldn’t be punished for publishing a public hearing on the Internet. We were only reporting the news.”

The problem with this hearing was that the defendant accused Warman of corrupt investigative practices, including outright entrapment, falsifying evidence, and invading the privacy of a citizen who had nothing whatsoever to do with the case. In an April 9, 2008, posting on his blog, Ezra Levant gave the particulars of these abuses.<sup>5</sup>

“Neither the government nor the judiciary has tried to rein in these tribunals that trample on our legal rights,” Peter Vere said. “That’s why we wrote the book. A book about this needed to be written.”

## Bizarre Examples

“This gang of government bureaucrats have murdered reputations and terrorized employers, religious leaders, and publishers for over a decade, through torturous investigations and

quasi-judicial hearings,” proclaims *The Tyranny of Nice*.<sup>6</sup>

The book details many “human rights” cases, some of which have been reported on by Chalcedon.<sup>7</sup> But we have not gotten around to some of the more extreme examples reported in this book:

- A “human rights” commission forced a bar owner to allow a customer to smoke marijuana on the premises—even though another government agency advised him that public marijuana use is illegal in Canada, and if he allows it on his property, he’ll lose his liquor license!
- A McDonald’s restaurant in Vancouver incurred a \$50,000 fine for insisting that a food-handling employee wash her hands before handling food that was to be served to customers. The Vancouver Human Rights Tribunal found “no evidence of the relationship between food contamination and hand-washing.” Hepatitis, anyone?
- A stand-up comic was charged with a hate crime for talking back to a pair of tipsy lesbians who heckled him.

“We’ve only scratched the surface in this book,” Peter Vere said. “There are so many cases, we just can’t keep up with all of them.”

Some of these cases may seem amusing, until one reflects that the defendants—“victims” might be a better word—are mostly ordinary citizens for whom it’s a catastrophe to be hit with thousands of dollars’ worth of fines, the destruction of a business, the ruin of a reputation, not to mention legal costs, which, under Canada’s “human rights” regime, are all paid by the state on behalf of the plaintiff, while the defendant must pay his own. This can run literally into hundreds of thousands of dollars.

**The most intriguing thing about this document is that although the subject is “hate,” and how to purge it from the Internet, the term “hate” is never defined... For all the alarmism about “hate propaganda,” and the need for “identifying hate speech,” we are never told exactly what “hate speech” is.**

“The process is totally unfair,” Vere said. “These commissions and tribunals have established jurisprudence that destroys freedoms and creates precedents whereby government can come in and suppress liberty.”

With a “human rights” commission and/or tribunal in each Canadian province, along with the CHRC on the federal level, there is no limit to the number of times a defendant can be investigated and punished for the same offense. “We have no double jeopardy rule to protect us,” Vere said. “We are subject to double jeopardy, triple jeopardy, multiple jeopardy.”

Under Section 13 of the Canadian Human Rights Act, a hate crime occurs when someone’s actions or words seem “likely” to expose a person to hatred or contempt—“likely” denoting the boundless expanse of an indefinite future. The complainant’s *feelings* are accepted as evidence, and it is not necessary for the plaintiff to prove he has incurred any damages from the defendant’s actions. Written law, case law, precedent, rules of evidence, presumption of innocence—none of these have any bearing on the proceedings of a “human rights” tribunal.

“No Christian has ever been acquitted of ‘hate speech’ by one of these tribunals,” Vere said.

## “Taming the Internet”

How credible is the charge that the Canadian Human Rights Commission is trying to censor the Internet? For an answer, we visited an official CHRC website and found an article by law professor Jane Bailey, *Strategic Alliances: The Inter-Related Roles of Citizens, Industry and Government in Combating Internet Hate*.<sup>8</sup>

The most intriguing thing about this document is that although the subject is “hate,” and how to purge it from the Internet, the term “hate” is never defined: a rather puzzling omission by a law professor. For all the alarmism about “hate propaganda,” and the need for “identifying hate speech,” we are never told exactly what “hate speech” is.

But we know from having covered many of these stories that “hate speech” is anything that a gay activist, a feminist, or a Muslim says is “hate speech.” No definition is needed. Since the matter is entirely subjective, no definition is possible.

Citing a need for “Internet governance,” Professor Bailey wishes to enlist “individual citizens, Internet and technology-based businesses, NGOs and governments ... and citizen collectives” in a vast crusade that is to include “[s]trong public expressions of disapprobation of hate propaganda”—undefined—“through legal regulation and proceedings.”

She suggests forcing Internet service providers to self-censor, and suing them if they don’t. So dire are the effects of “hate speech”—still undefined—that government, businesses, and private pressure groups must set up “hate hotlines,” install new technology to filter “hate,” and resort to litigation as often as seems necessary.

Canada’s mission to “tame the Internet” is of long standing. In 2006, Ezra Levant reported that Richard War-

man, supported by the Canadian Jewish Congress, asked the Canadian Radio-television and Telecommunications Commission (CRTC) “to censor foreign websites, by blocking Canadian Internet users from accessing them.”<sup>9</sup>

“It was an attempt to replicate the Orwellian ‘Great Firewall of China’ that the Chinese Communist Party uses to stop politically incorrect websites from reaching that country,” Levant wrote.

The CRTC rejected the proposal—but then, reported Levant, “the CJC wanted the CHRC to find other ways ‘to provide ISPs [Internet service providers] with the motivation and the ability’ to block foreign sites. That is, to do exactly what the CRTC ... forbids them to do: tamper with content on the Internet.”

As we have seen from Professor Bailey’s article on the CHRC’s own website, the “human rights” establishment is committed to the idea of censoring the Internet, although it has not yet obtained any legal authority to do so.

Hence the libel suits against Kathy Shaidle and the other bloggers; it seems the censors have decided there’s more than one way to skin a cat.

### How Has It Come to This?

How has Canada, once a free country, come to this?

“Definitely, Canada is no longer a Christian nation,” Peter Vere said. “The government and most of the culture has become very secular, very anti-Christian. They’ve lost sight of the fact that society’s primary purpose is to protect and nurture the family. When you lose track of your purpose, you start thinking your purpose is to do *everything*.”

Drifting away from Christianity, Kathy Shaidle said, has left Canadian culture hollow at its core.

“Canadians are not Americans—and that’s the only thing they’re proud of anymore,” she said. “They want

**“Americans need to wake up,” Peter Vere said. “They need to fight this battle because this stuff is spreading south of the border. The big danger is that America is adopting many of the same practices that we have in Canada. If freedom is snuffed out in America, it won’t survive anywhere.”**

the government to protect them from conflict.

“It’s about cowardice. It’s about not having anything to believe in anymore. No one’s going to fight and die on Juno Beach for recycling.

“Even our Conservative Party isn’t really conservative, and certainly isn’t Christian. Conservatism without Christianity is nothing. It has no gold to back it up.”

Much of the public support for the human rights agencies, she said, has been generated by scare tactics.

“We’re told that if people read ‘hateful’ things, Canada will turn into Rwanda overnight,” she said. “We’re told that Canada is infested with neo-Nazi groups just waiting to take over. Heck, there are more Nazis in a rerun of *Hogan’s Heroes* than there are in all of Canada. The government constantly tries to put forward this neo-Nazi canard; and then you see the crazy targets they actually decide to go after—like Alphonse de Valk, a Catholic priest, instead of some Muslim extremist who really does want to kill all the Jews.”

Apolitical, secular Canadians, Shaidle said, have allowed their government to “protect” them from imaginary threats.

“Our human rights commissions

only got this powerful because ordinary people either looked the other way, or outright defended them as ‘well-intentioned,’” she said. “Even now, after all the bad publicity, there’s still a wide sentiment that maybe speech *should* be regulated.”

### Spoiling for a Fight

In spite of the ascendancy of the “human rights” commissions, Kathy Shaidle has not yet given up on Canada.

“We could take our country back, if you could just convince people that they’re not alone,” she said. “Our conservative blogosphere is colossal, and one day it’s going to spill over into the real world.

“The world is not Toronto and Vancouver; but in Canada, that’s where all the power is centralized.”

Meanwhile, the libel suit against her is an annoyance, and also a disappointment.

“I’ve been trying to get charged with a hate crime for years now,” she said. “I wouldn’t respond in the normal way, I can tell you.

“Human rights commissions have the power to seize private property without a warrant—your computer, for instance. Well, I’d like to film that! I’d like to film them breaking down the door and grabbing my computer. I’d like for a lot of people to see that.”

### Coming to America ...

A few of the cases described in *The Tyranny of Nice* are American cases.

“Americans need to wake up,” Peter Vere said. “They need to fight this battle because this stuff is spreading south of the border. The big danger is that America is adopting many of the same practices that we have in Canada. If freedom is snuffed out in America, it won’t survive anywhere.”

Chalcedon has reported on a few of these American “human rights”

cases—the Christian photographer in New Mexico who was fined \$6,000 for refusing to photograph a lesbian “wedding”;<sup>10</sup> the Methodist church in New Jersey stripped of part of its tax exemption for not allowing same-sex “marriages” to be performed on its property.<sup>11</sup>

Now, in the wake of America’s national elections, persons receptive to Canadian-style speech restrictions have risen to power.

“Expect an atmosphere of intimidation,” Kathy Shaidle said. “Americans have a much stronger sense of freedom than Canadians do, even if that ‘freedom’ is nothing more than a vague sense that they have the ‘right’ to do whatever they feel like doing.”

But if the American people are vague about such things, those in government who would abridge freedom are chillingly precise.

On the immediate legislative horizon are such schemes as:

- Various federal “hate crime” laws, held back for the past eight years by the threat of a presidential veto, will certainly be reintroduced in the new Congress.<sup>12</sup>
- The Employment Non-Discrimination Act (ENDA), which could be used to force Christian organizations to hire transvestites, openly practicing sodomites, and other deviants, is sure to be reintroduced.<sup>13</sup>
- Congressional Democrats have called for the reimposition of the “Fairness Doctrine”—which would give the government the power to dictate the content of radio broadcasts, and probably drive conservative talk radio into extinction.<sup>14</sup>

Kathy Shaidle and Peter Vere are not able to tell us how to protect our liberties from a government determined to encroach on them. Out of frustration with its predecessor, and fear of current

disruptions in the economy, the American people have elected such a government.

Canada has at least provided us with examples of Christians, and some Jews, who have refused, under pressures not yet experienced by Americans, to bow the knee to the false idol of “human rights.” Kari Simpson. Ron Gray. Ezra Levant. Rev. Stephen Boissoin, Fr. Alphonse de Valk. Kathy Shaidle. And there are many more whom we have not yet interviewed.

We pray. We labor to set up Christian schools and Christian homeschooling programs so children can be brought up with a Christian education, resistant to the seductions of secularism. We labor to reform the churches so that God’s Word, and not the word of addled, sinful man, might be preached. We report on developments in Canada, here at home and elsewhere, so that our fellow citizens might be forewarned. We study our Bibles and try to conform our lives, and our family lives, to God’s laws.

We do all these things in faith, “because greater is he that is in you, than he that is in the world” (1 John 4:4). ■

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1. See [www.fivefeetoffury.com](http://www.fivefeetoffury.com).
2. Ezra Levant, “Richard Warman has sued me—and other conservative bloggers,” April 9, 2008, <http://ezrlevant.com/2008/04/richard-warman-has-sued-me-and.html>.
3. Not available in bookstores, but it can be ordered via <http://www.fivefeetoffury.com>.
4. Canadian Human Rights Commission, [http://www.chrc-ccdp.ca/proactive\\_initiatives/hoi\\_hsi/qa\\_qr/page4-en.asp](http://www.chrc-ccdp.ca/proactive_initiatives/hoi_hsi/qa_qr/page4-en.asp).
5. Ezra Levant, “Richard Warman has sued me.”
6. All quotations from the book are by permission of the authors.
7. See our website, [www.chalcedon.edu](http://www.chalcedon.edu), for

these articles, including “Canadian ‘Human Rights’ Commissions Bear Down on Christian Clergymen,” <http://www.chalcedon.edu/articles/article.php?ArticleID=2886>; “Canadian Doctors Warned to ‘Set Aside’ God’s Law,” <http://www.chalcedon.edu/articles/article.php?ArticleID=2885>; and “Fighting the ‘Human Rights’ Machine,” <http://www.chalcedon.edu/articles/article.php?ArticleID=2887>.

8. Canadian Human Rights Commission, [http://www.chrc-ccdp.ca/proactive\\_initiatives/hoi\\_hsi/page5-en.asp?highlight=1](http://www.chrc-ccdp.ca/proactive_initiatives/hoi_hsi/page5-en.asp?highlight=1).

9. Ezra Levant, Bernie Farber: the Internet “must be tamed,” <http://ezrlevant.com/2008/03/trying-to-block-foreign-websit.html>.

10. “How ‘Human Rights’ Commissions Erode Religious Freedom,” <http://www.chalcedon.edu/articles/article.php?ArticleID=2864>.

11. “Church Won’t Perform Lesbian ‘Union,’ So State Revokes Tax Exemption,” <http://www.chalcedon.edu/articles/article.php?ArticleID=2783>.

12. “New Hate Crime Bill: Power Grab!” <http://www.chalcedon.edu/articles/article.php?ArticleID=2702>; also, “Hate Crime Bill Rides Again,” <http://www.chalcedon.edu/articles/article.php?ArticleID=178>

13. Employment Non-Discrimination Acts (ENDA), [http://www.religioustolerance.org/hom\\_empl2.htm](http://www.religioustolerance.org/hom_empl2.htm).

14. John Eggerton, “Schumer Comments Prompt New Fairness Doctrine Concerns,” Broadcasting & Cable, November 5, 2008, <http://www.broadcastingcable.com/article/CA6611851.html?rssid=193>.

# Icondulism: Reaching Out and Touching God

Greg Uttinger



Does the church speak infallibly? No, only Scripture is infallible. The church can make mistakes, even grievous ones. But

in time the church will repent of those mistakes. And in time the branches of the church that won't repent will be pruned and finally cut off.<sup>1</sup>

In A.D. 787, the Empress Irene convened a council of bishops at Nicea.<sup>2</sup> It has generally been recognized as the "Seventh Ecumenical Council" of the ancient church. That council committed a grievous error, one that the churches of the Reformation rejected: it insisted on the veneration of images.

## Iconodulism

By the 700s, popular religion, especially in the East, had embraced the making and venerating of images. In theological terms, this was *iconodulism*, giving *dula* (veneration) to *icons*, pictures of Christ, the Virgin Mary, the apostles, and the other saints.<sup>3</sup> Practically speaking, the roots of this practice were in the older paganism. Once Christianity became a legal and politically popular religion, many nominal converts, sometimes men of great prominence, brought their attachment to religious images with them into the church. The images were justified as teaching tools, for most men and women were illiterate. Soon the images were seen as devotional aids, crude symbols for a crude, unlearned piety. In time the Eastern monasteries became insistent on their use and profited from their creation. Eastern theologians, too,

defended their place in the orthodox faith.

Theological and philosophical considerations were also at work: compromises with Hellenistic philosophy, particularly Neoplatonism, allowed for a new spin on icons. Icons brought the transcendent down to man; form became incarnate in the blessed particulars, and man had divinity at his fingertips ... a convenient thing for those in church and state who saw themselves as the vicars of Christ. More of this later.

## The Iconoclastic Controversy Begins

*Iconoclasm* is the name theology gives to the willful destruction of icons on religious or political grounds. What we call the Iconoclastic Controversy began in the East early in the eighth century. It lasted more than a hundred years, and the results of that conflict eventually touched the entire church. They are still with us today.

Leo (III) the Isaurian was the first of the iconoclastic emperors. Leo came to the throne of Byzantium in 717 and had to deal almost immediately with Muslim forces at his gates. Leo stubbornly and effectively resisted the siege, employing his Bulgarian allies against the Muslim armies and chemical warfare ("Greek fire") against their supporting fleet. Epidemics and violent storms battered the Muslim forces, and after twelve months they withdrew. Leo was able to turn his attention to civil and religious reform. The frightening eruption of the island volcano Thera in 726 may have spurred him on to deal immedi-

ately with the iconodulism, for he saw it as idolatry.<sup>4</sup>

Leo at first legislated only against the worship of images (A.D. 726): he insisted that the images be put up out of the reach of touch and kiss. But later he struck out against their use altogether. When the patriarch of Constantinople opposed his policies, Leo deposed him from office (730).

Why the Emperor Leo decided to open a campaign against them [icons] is not entirely clear and has been much debated. It is noted that he was not a Greek but was from the East and it has been suggested that, having been faced with the taunts of Moslems and Jews that Christians were idolaters, he wished to remove the ground for that charge and thus to facilitate winning the support of Moslems and Jews for the Empire ... Leo is reported to have been moved as well by a desire to make the throne master of the Church, to reduce the power of the monks, and to eliminate the control of education by the Church ... Some have seen in the iconoclastic movement primarily an effort at religious reform.<sup>5</sup>

R. J. Rushdoony emphasizes the political angle, and certainly it was not lacking.<sup>6</sup> Kenneth Scott Latourette addresses it as well:

The contest was in part from the conviction of many churchmen and especially of monks that the Church should be independent of the state, at least in matters of faith and religious practice, and the equally determined purpose of the Emperors to assert their authority over the Church. Monks, who had separated themselves from the world, were particularly active in their

opposition to the icon-forbidding Emperors. The Emperors may have wished to curb monasteries because the latter drew so many men from the service of the state and, tax-exempt, reduced the imperial revenues. The army often sided with the iconoclasts, apparently because it wished its head, the Emperor, to be supreme and to be revered without the rivalry of veneration for the icons.<sup>7</sup>

Rushdoony argues that the political conflict was fundamentally a manifestation of Neoplatonic theology.

Neo-Platonism infected both church and state. For ecclesiastical Neo-Platonism, the church as the realm of spirit, represented the higher order ... For political Neo-Platonism, the state represents the logos or structure of being.<sup>8</sup>

Both church and state saw themselves as manifestations of Christ, as extensions of His Incarnation. And so each tried to sever the other from its claims to represent divine immanence: each tried to destroy the other's icons.

There were thus two institutional incarnations in the world, church and state, and in both East and West there was a struggle on the part of both to limit the extent of the incarnation of the other. The iconoclastic controversy was the form the struggle took in the East. Both sides were iconodules, veneration of icons; the imperial party simply became iconoclastic with reference to the church.<sup>9</sup>

Pope Gregory II denounced Leo's iconoclasm: he accused him of ignoring the councils and the Fathers and of casting a stumbling block before the weak, who needed the icons as props to their faith. Leo responded with an appeal to the silence of the first six ecumenical councils on the matter and with an assertion of his own authority in both church and state. "He threatened to destroy the image of St. Peter at Rome and to imprison the pope."<sup>10</sup>

Gregory called together a Roman synod that pronounced excommunication against any who destroyed or removed icons (731). Leo retaliated by transferring the Greek bishoprics in Italy and Sicily to the jurisdiction of the patriarch of Constantinople. But the province of Ravenna would not cooperate, and Leo lost a fleet in his efforts to subdue it. Leo spent the last years of his life ending the Muslim threat to his empire.

### **The Iconoclast Council**

Upon Leo's death in 741, his young son Constantine came to the throne. He continued his father's war against icons, writing on Christological grounds against their use. In 754 Constantine summoned a council to denounce iconodulism. It did so with these words:

Wherefore we thought it right, to shew forth with all accuracy, in our present definition the error of such as make and venerate these, for it is the unanimous doctrine of all the holy Fathers and of the six Ecumenical Synods, that no one may imagine any kind of separation or mingling in opposition to the unsearchable, unspeakable, and incomprehensible union of the two natures in the one hypostasis or person. What avails, then, the folly of the painter, who from sinful love of gain depicts that which should not be depicted—that is, with his polluted hands he tries to fashion that which should only be believed in the heart and confessed with the mouth? He makes an image and calls it Christ. The name Christ signifies God and man. Consequently it is an image of God and man, and consequently he has in his foolish mind, in his representation of the created flesh, depicted the Godhead which cannot be represented, and thus mingled what should not be mingled. Thus he is guilty of a double blasphemy—the one in making an image of the Godhead, and the other by mingling the Godhead and manhood. Those fall into the same blasphemy who venerate the image, and the same

woe rests upon both, because they err with Arius, Dioscorus, and Eutyches, and with the heresy of the Acephali. When, however, they are blamed for undertaking to depict the divine nature of Christ, which should not be depicted, they take refuge in the excuse: We represent only the flesh of Christ which we have seen and handled. But that is a Nestorian error. For it should be considered that that flesh was also the flesh of God the Word, without any separation, perfectly assumed by the divine nature and made wholly divine. How could it now be separated and represented apart? ... Whoever, then, makes an image of Christ, either depicts the Godhead which cannot be depicted, and mingles it with the manhood (like the Monophysites), or he represents the body of Christ as not made divine and separate and as a person apart, like the Nestorians.

The only admissible figure of the humanity of Christ, however, is bread and wine in the holy Supper. This and no other form, this and no other type, has he chosen to represent his incarnation. Bread he ordered to be brought, but not a representation of the human form, so that idolatry might not arise. And as the body of Christ is made divine, so also this figure of the body of Christ, the bread, is made divine by the descent of the Holy Spirit; it becomes the divine body of Christ by the mediation of the priest who, separating the oblation from that which is common, sanctifies it ...

Christianity has rejected the whole of heathenism, and so not merely heathen sacrifices, but also the heathen worship of images. The Saints live on eternally with God, although they have died. If anyone thinks to call them back again to life by a dead art, discovered by the heathen, he makes himself guilty of blasphemy. Who dares attempt with heathenish art to paint the Mother of God, who is exalted above all heavens and the Saints? It is not permitted to Christians, who have the hope of the

resurrection, to imitate the customs of demon-worshippers, and to insult the Saints, who shine in so great glory, by common dead matter.<sup>11</sup>

The Council's argument from orthodox Christology is weak, and its understanding of the Holy Supper as a continuance of the Incarnation is absolutely wrong. But the Council denounced the veneration of images as idolatry on the level of the older paganism.<sup>12</sup> In this, at least, it is to be commended.

### The Tide Turns

Constantine counted his council as the Seventh Ecumenical Council. But Constantinople had no patriarch at the time, and Alexandria, Antioch, and Jerusalem were under Arab rule. The pope sent no representatives.

In 775 the throne passed to Leo IV, but his own premature death five years later left the Empire to his six-year-old son. The queen mother, Irene, assumed the regency and ran the Empire. She moved quickly to restore iconodulism. In 787 she convened a council at Nicea: the council not only declared icon worship to be orthodox, it declared it to be mandatory. Here is what the council wrote:

We, therefore, following the royal pathway and the divinely inspired authority of our Holy Fathers and the traditions of the Catholic Church (for, as we all know, the Holy Spirit indwells her), define with all certitude and accuracy that just as the figure of the precious and life-giving Cross, so also the venerable and holy images, as well in painting and mosaic as of other fit materials, should be set forth in the holy churches of God, and on the sacred vessels and on the vestments and on hangings and in pictures both in houses and by the way-side, to wit, the figure of our Lord God and Saviour Jesus Christ, of our spotless Lady, the Mother of God, of the

honourable Angels, of all Saints and of all pious people. For by so much more frequently as they are seen in artistic representation, by so much more readily are men lifted up to the memory of their prototypes, and to a longing after them, and to these should be given due salutation and honourable reverence ... not indeed that true worship of faith ... which pertains alone to the divine nature, but to these, as to the figure of the precious and life-giving Cross and to the Book of the Gospels and to the other holy objects, incense and lights may be offered according to ancient pious custom. For the honour which is paid to the image passes on to that which the image represents, and he who reveres the image reveres in it the subject represented. For thus the teaching of our holy Fathers, that is the tradition of the Catholic Church, which from one end of the earth to the other hath received the Gospel, is strengthened ...

Those, therefore who dare to think or teach otherwise, or as wicked heretics to spurn the traditions of the Church and to invent some novelty, or else to reject some of those things which the Church hath received (e.g., the Book of the Gospels, or the image of the cross, or the pictorial icons, or the holy reliques of a martyr), or evilly and sharply to devise anything subversive of the lawful traditions of the Catholic Church or to turn to common uses the sacred vessels or the venerable monasteries, if they be Bishops or Clerics, we command that they be deposed; if religious or laics, that they be cut off from communion.<sup>13</sup>

The acclamation from the members of the Council is noteworthy:

We salute the venerable images. We place under anathema those who do not do this. Anathema to them who presume to apply to the venerable images the things said in the Holy Scripture about idols. Anathema to those who do not salute the holy and venerable images. Anathema to those who call the sacred images idols. Anathema to those

who say that Christians resort to the sacred images as to gods. Anathema to those who say that any other delivered us from idols except Christ our God. Anathema to those who dare to say that at any time the Catholic Church received idols.<sup>14</sup>

Those who would not salute the icons were anathematized. "Orthodoxy" now required the veneration of images.<sup>15</sup> But if Christ is in the image, the requirement is not without reason.

### The Arguments of the Iconodules

Henry Chadwick summarizes the arguments of the iconodules as follows:

- a) We venerate not the icons but those whom they depict;
- b) Honour addressed to Christ's servants the saints is relative, not an absolute worship;
- c) Icons are a necessary consequence of the invocation of saints;
- d) If value is ascribed to relics, why not also to icons?
- e) The second commandment was only temporary legislation;
- f) Icons aid devotions and are universally used.<sup>16</sup>

What shall we say to these things?

First, the argument that worship passes from the image to God Himself is the basic assumption of paganism. Few sophisticated pagans actually believed that the statues were gods. They were points of contact, means of communication, ways of reaching out and touching the divine. And it was in exactly this context of pagan thought that God forbade idols, whether they were images of false gods or images of Himself.

Second, though God allows us to bow in respect to other men—being the true image of God—He forbids us to treat them as divine, and He forbids us to bow to any image of them. Indeed, He forbids us to bow down to the image of any creature at all.

Third and fourth, icons, relics, and the invocation of saints *do* belong together. To Protestants, at least, this is an argument against the use of icons. They belong to the magic of pagan priestcraft, not to the gracious gospel of Jesus Christ.

Fifth, the second commandment is by its very nature eternal. God is transcendent and invisible in His essence (John 1:18). Though all of creation reflects something of His glory, He does not look like anything He has made (Isa. 40:18, 25; 46:5; Acts 17:29). Any attempt to portray Him in visible terms must necessarily misrepresent who He is. Any picture of God is, therefore, a lie (Hab. 2:18; Isa. 44:20; Rom. 1:25). In the New Testament, as in the Old, idolatry is sin (1 Cor. 5:10-11; Rev. 21:8; 22:15). But does the second commandment apply to pictures of Jesus in His humanity?

In the person of Jesus Christ, God took on true humanity: He became visible. Men saw Him; they touched Him. He was not an apparition or a phantom. It might be argued, then, that although we cannot picture Christ's deity, we can and may picture His humanity.<sup>17</sup>

But Jesus Christ is a divine person. His human and divine natures cannot be separated. This, as Leo's council argued, was the heresy of the Nestorians.<sup>18</sup> If we portray Christ's humanity, we portray His person. If we portray Jesus of Nazareth, we portray the Son of God, the Creator of the universe. The Reformed and Presbyterian confessions, following similar logic, see such portrayals as violations of the second commandment.<sup>19</sup> Lutheran and Anglican traditions demur, however, as do most American evangelicals. But when it comes to bowing down to such images or lighting candles before them, there should be no argument: the second commandment has not been abrogated.

Sixth, whether or not icons are devotional aids is the very question at issue. If God does not approve of them, then they do not aid personal devotion and piety at all—no matter how would-be worshippers may feel when they use them. The claim for the “universality of their use” is certainly overstated, but in ages of apostasy many superstitious and useless practices find a wide reception within Christendom. That large numbers of professed Christians clung to these images only makes the issue a more pressing one to understand Biblically; it does not, in itself, tell us who is right. For that, we need the Bible. We need to listen to what God actually says.

### Epilogue: The Natural Logic of Image Worship

The attempt to worship the God of the Bible through images is ancient. First, there was Aaron: “These be thy gods,<sup>20</sup> O Israel, which brought thee up out of the land of Egypt” (Exod. 32:4). Five hundred years later Jeroboam tried the same pitch as a political move to maintain his newly acquired kingdom (1 Kings 12:28). Both Aaron and Jeroboam were pointing at a golden calf. Now no one actually thought that God *was* a calf. The calf was just a reminder: it was strong and powerful; like God, it provided so much—meat and leather, pulling and carrying. More than that, it was the chief of the sacrificial animals. And God used gold in the Tabernacle and Temple. So golden cherubim, golden lampstand . . . why not golden lamb, or golden calf? The answer is, because God said, No.

Man in his rebellion wants to worship his own creative power. He wants to find divinity within himself; and so he makes “God” in his own image. What he finds in his idol or talisman or icon is exactly himself. The image reflects back his own thoughts and

feelings. It will not chide; it will not command; it will not rebuke.<sup>21</sup> Images are dumb. And yet for this very reason idols are tools of the power state: for if “God” will not speak, then someone must speak for him, as Jeroboam and his rag-tag priests knew only too well. Image worship, whether in its most blatant or most sophisticated forms, assumes a continuity between the divine and the human, and the human in question is usually the state. Christianity, on the other hand, insists on a radical discontinuity between God and man, between the Creator and the creature. Only in Jesus Christ did God become man, and that without any confusion of substance. And Christ comes to us in His gospel, not in images and icons. This is the Christianity of the first six councils; it is also the Christianity of the Reformation. ■

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1. See Romans 11 and Revelation 2–3.
2. This was not the same Council of Nicea that in A.D. 325 produced the famous Christological Creed.
3. Roman Catholic theologians make a distinction between *dula*, veneration or honor, and *latría*, the worship that may be given to God only. See Rushdoony's comments in *Foundations of Social Order* (Vallecito, CA: Ross House Books, 1998 edition), 158.
4. Medieval culture still regarded earthquakes and erupting volcanoes as signs of God's wrath against sin.
5. Kenneth Scott Latourette, *A History of Christianity, Beginnings to 1500* (Peabody, MA: Prince Press, 1975), 293.
6. See “Iconodulism” in R. J. Rushdoony, *Foundations of Social Order* (n.p.: Presbyterian and Reformed Publishing Company, 1968).
7. Latourette, 293.

*Continued on page 31*

# None Dare Call It Phariseeism

Martin G. Selbrede

“In vain do they worship Me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men.” (Matt. 15:9)



In Matthew 15, a well-known collision between the Pharisees and the Lord is precipitated by a question over table manners. Christ’s

disciples didn’t wash their hands prior to eating bread. To fail to wash hands was to “transgress the tradition of the elders” (v. 2). This transgression of the received tradition ignited and shaped the criticism leveled against Christ and His disciples.

In response, Christ indicted the scribes and Pharisees, saying, “Thus have ye made the commandment of God of none effect by your tradition” (v. 6), or as it stands elsewhere, you make “the word of God of none effect through your tradition” (Mark 7:13). In effect, “they have made void thy law” (Ps. 119:126).

There are many important aspects to “making God’s commandment void,” and if we fail to grasp them, we’ll quickly fall into the same trap. The most important point to grasp—more important even than recognizing that God’s commandments are overturned in the process of elevating a tradition to a moral obligation—is the following implication: by creating such traditions, men serve notice that *God’s law is insufficient*. Such men feel that we need to go beyond what is written, to fill in the gaps, and elaborate upon God’s Word. As R. J. Rushdoony has often said, the modern mind insists upon being *more holy than God* by setting up ethical imperatives that are allegedly superior to those found in Scripture.

**“[T]hese writers hold that a personal quiet time is “the single most important factor” in our Christian lives, that it must be “the first priority of the day,” the importance of which “cannot be overestimated,” such that failure to do so constitutes “an incredible sin.” It should last “at least fifteen minutes.”**

Now, *if* the Scripture is insufficient, and one accepts that men can correct this deficiency through native ethical wisdom, then it also follows that such amendments to God’s Word, being *improvements designed to correct various deficiencies and omissions*, can override Scripture itself, for the *correction* of an insufficiency surely has priority over the incomplete, insufficient account found in God’s law. By treating God’s law as an insufficient guide, man has asserted ethical superiority over God’s law as a critic, a critic who judges that law using his own homespun parameters and standards.

The very act of assessing God’s law as insufficient puts man in the Legislator’s Seat. Man takes possession of this seat by ejecting God from it. There is no surprise whatsoever that the Pharisees regarded the practice of the disciples as abominable: Christ’s disciples are trampling underfoot an ethical standard that the Pharisees implicitly treated as being superior to Scripture. The Pharisaic tradition completed the edifice of moral

instruction, an edifice otherwise left incomplete by various deficiencies and omissions riddling the law of God.

## The Whole Is LESS Than the Sum of the Parts

The supreme irony is that adding things to the law of God doesn’t improve it at all; it only weakens it and saps it of moral strength. God’s law plus human traditions does not equal something greater than God’s law, but something decidedly less than God’s law. This is true for many reasons.

*First*, the implicit message that God’s law is insufficient to man’s need for moral instruction clearly undermines the law’s value, degrading the law and the lawgiver in the process.

*Second*, Christ served notice that such intermixture “makes the command of God of none effect.” It unhinges God’s Word and detaches it from the frame of moral relevance.

This destroys the law because, *third*, the law of God in its purity, regarded as wholly sufficient (2 Tim. 3:17), *maximizes* liberty (James 1:25, 2:12; Ps. 119:45)—but adding traditions on top of that law *reduces liberty*. By calling God’s law “the perfect law of liberty,” James serves notice of the law’s perfection, completeness, and sufficiency, as well as what that law is intended to firmly undergird: our liberty under Him. The new constraints tacked onto that law, the new obligations glued into place alongside it, are what render the law imperfect—because the law has thus been defaced. As Matthew 23:4 puts it, those who draft up such additional legislation “bind heavy burdens and

grievous to be borne, and lay them on men's shoulders."

In all such cases, the ethical and moral *rightness* of the new man-generated legislation is never for a moment doubted. Men clean up God's unfinished business, as it were, and mediate God's law to their fellow men by allegedly enhancing it.

## Reversing the Burden of Proof

In ancient Israel, the Pharisees bristled when Nicodemus tried to remind them of the principle of due process. Nicodemus asked, "Doth our law judge any man, before it hear him, and know what he doeth?" (John 7:51). The reply of the Pharisees *leveraged the people's ignorance of Scripture*. They answered Nicodemus by saying, "Art thou also of Galilee? Search, and look: for out of Galilee ariseth no prophet" (v. 52).

But nobody bothered to "search and look," because the raw challenge to do so was delivered so scornfully that everyone assumed the Pharisees just *had* to know what they were talking about. But they were completely wrong: the Scriptures *did* speak of the Messiah in connection with "Galilee of the nations" (Isa. 9:1–7). From this episode, we learn that people often blindly accept that something is *not* in the Scripture when it is, in fact, very much there.<sup>1</sup>

But we've done one worse than the Pharisees. At least the Pharisees issued a challenge to examine the Scriptures! It wasn't their fault if nobody took up the challenge. Failure to examine Christ's claims for oneself is labeled *hypocrisy* by our Lord (Matt. 16:3)—men cannot delegate this responsibility to others, especially not their leaders (the context for Christ's rebuke).<sup>2</sup>

Modern evangelicalism tends to reverse the burden of proof. We generate new doctrines and practices, bind the consciences of men with them, and speak and write as if these doctrines and

practices are fully Biblical. At least the Pharisees distinguished their tradition from the law. We blur and blend our traditions with the Word of God in such a way that *nobody can perceive the sleight of hand behind that mixing process*.

The Pharisees denied Christ by asserting the absence of any scriptural teaching regarding a prophet coming out of Galilee.

Today's evangelicals mount new ideas and doctrines by asserting a full range of Biblical proof texts that *don't support a single iota of the doctrines and moral obligations they lay on men's shoulders to obey*.

The burden of proof has thus been reversed. Of the two (the Pharisee and the modern evangelical), the Pharisee has been the more honest.

## The Anatomy of a New Doctrine

The Reformation cry of *semper reformanda*, the call to always reform our doctrine and practice and peel away unscriptural traditions, has often gone unheeded. We tragically tend to head the opposite direction entirely, accumulating new ideas and practices and bolting God's authority onto them without divine warrant.

To illustrate this trend, I have selected the very modern idea of a "quiet time" with the Lord. I am not opposed to anyone having a quiet time with the Lord: this certainly falls within the range of Christian liberty for people to enjoy. But this is *not* what modern teachers are seeking at all: for them, quiet time with God has been elevated to a brand new principle, a doctrine, a full-blown moral obligation. It is instructive to walk through some representative samples of modern teaching on this topic to see that I'm not exaggerating my point at all. We will also see that the alleged scriptural proofs for a mandated "quiet time" are thin and vacuous.

I looked up some representative

claims regarding a personal quiet time to see if anybody—anywhere—supported the notion with anything other than a weak, out-of-context inference from a verse concerning Jesus praying away from the crowds that pressed upon Him. None of the sources provide a single command in Scripture concerning the doctrine of a personal quiet time. The Great Commission states that we are to teach the nations "all things whatsoever I have commanded." Where God did not command, we have no imperative to teach, especially to teach something as a divinely binding obligation! As we shall see, teaching the necessity for a personal quiet time is to teach something that God has not commanded (since no command in Scripture concerning it exists—anywhere).

None of the following evangelical writers has found a Biblical command to support what they, nonetheless, feel is commanded. It is supremely strange that a fairly new tradition has gotten this entrenched so quickly, with so little scriptural support (actually no support at all, if we use the Bible's own standard for what obligates God's creatures).

Consider the following quotes from major sources on the topic:

Your personal "quiet time" is probably the single most important factor to produce a growing, exciting Christian life ... [Y]our quiet time needs to become a habit as regular as brushing your teeth or watching the 6 o'clock news ... Your quiet time helps you grow to become all that Christ wants you to be. —Dr. Ralph F. Wilson. [Astonishingly, NO Scripture is provided in support of any of this—MGS]

The Christian must have a proper diet to grow. This diet should consist of prayer and Bible study. This is what we call consistent quiet time ... Establish a definite time. Choose a definite place. Set goal and content of the devotional time. Have a goal. —www.cnetweb.

org pamphlet on *Developing a Personal Quiet Time* [The only Scripture provided in support is Mark 1:35 that Jesus went out to pray early in the morning—MGS]

The Southern Baptist Convention of Virginia, in “A Personal Quiet Time With God,” provides a similar inferential Scripture (not a command or instruction) when Jesus was in the Garden of Gethsemane: “Jesus went alone to be with His Father (Matthew 26:36), and so should we.” There are several surprising things about this ill-considered citation. Jesus’ time with His Father was anything but quiet (He sweated blood and cried out to God in anguish); it wasn’t private (a stone’s throw from his disciples was about twenty yards so they could hear Him); and, more to the point, He had told Peter, John, and James to pray together (NOT have a private quiet time, obviously), and He criticized them for falling asleep instead. If you read only verse 36, you might conclude that Jesus left all the disciples behind, but he took three with Him (v. 37).

The prayer in the Garden of Gethsemane is a unique and special event in the Lord’s earthly life, but it makes for a poor proof text for a “quiet private time” considering the *actual* instructions He gave to His disciples. More to the point, examine the underlying logic: “Jesus did X, and so should we.” No mainstream evangelicals really think this way (after all, Jesus didn’t get married, or eat pork, etc.). This manifests arbitrary picking and choosing to try to prop up an under-supported doctrine where there is no clear Biblical mandate, instruction, precept, command, or direction whatsoever.

Cheryl R. Carter, writing in [www.MomTime.net](http://www.MomTime.net), is even more adamant about the sinfulness of not having a private quiet time with God:

There’s an incredible sin—a secret sin in the body of Christ. All of us have been guilty of this sin, at one time or another. Few would admit it but the consequences of this sin are evident in all our churches and our personal lives. In fact, conservatively speaking fifty-to-eighty percent of all churchgoers are guilty of this sin. It is the sin of neglecting God; not spending time with Him. I am referring to quality quiet time with the Lord without a personal agenda, just an open heart and a ready ear.

Ms. Carter doesn’t bother to supply a single Scripture in support of her contention. She doesn’t even try. She simply mows down “sinners” by equating neglect of God (obviously bad) with not having a personal quiet time (a modern theological innovation).

Gospel Ministries to Children offers a similarly strong warning: “The importance of a personal quiet time (daily devotions) in the life of a Christian cannot be overestimated.” No Scripture cited in support. (Astonishing, isn’t it, how legalistic evangelicals actually can be when it comes to their own traditions?)

ElevateYourLife.net insists that you “set aside at least 15 minutes of each day for a quiet time ... the first priority of your day” because “many Christians testify that nothing has been as important to them as this daily quiet time.” This is clearly not an argument from Scripture, but from what other Christians say. The website resorts to this argument because there is no scriptural requirement to have a personal private quiet time (although there is nothing to forbid it, either). However, if it were important and/or critical, why did the Bible (which is supposed to be a sufficient guide to us) contain no instructions concerning it? Why isn’t it mentioned as part of the whole armor of God?

Further, the “many Christians testify X” argument runs aground: all we have to do is find Christians who testify to

the opposite. The fact that “personal quiet time” as a formal doctrine isn’t much more than a century old leads us to conclude that Christians did much better without it: the advent of personal quiet time occurred at the same time the church became more culturally irrelevant and gave up more ground to secularism and to worldliness.

There are even entire ministries built around personal quiet time. “Six Secrets To A Powerful Quiet Time” ([www.thesixsecrets.com](http://www.thesixsecrets.com)) is one such ministry run by Catherine Martin, who has introduced the trademarked P.R.A.Y.E.R. Quiet Time Plan (also trademarked). How did Christians survive without this for centuries? Hard to imagine!

On Catherine Martin’s website, we get four paragraphs listed under the large bold headline, “What is a ‘Quiet Time’?—The biblical basis for quiet time with the Lord” ([www.quiettime.org/whatisqt.htm](http://www.quiettime.org/whatisqt.htm)). Note the promise inherent in the title: we should expect to find the *Biblical basis* for the doctrine somewhere on that page! But only one of the Scriptures she supplies even remotely touches on the topic, and it’s the kind of verse I referred to earlier (i.e., a weak inference based on something Jesus did). She chose a parallel passage to Mark 1:35 (Luke 5:16). The text does *not* teach us that Jesus had a quiet time, and He certainly did *not* have a quiet time in the sense that people would because He didn’t lack for intimacy with the Father (“I and the Father are One”), and He elsewhere states (John 11) that His open prayers are for the benefit of those around them hearing His words, and not for His own benefit at all. *This* is the other hazard of equating ourselves to the Second Person of the Trinity and trying to extend the Son’s relationship with the Father (which is intimate beyond any human

language to explain) to twenty-first century Christians.

## Rubber Hitting the Road

Jesus Himself defeated Satan by saying, “Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God” (Matt. 4:4). In light of this, we are justified in asking these evangelical teachers, “Show us the word that proceeded from the mouth of God that commands a quiet time.” There is none: God commanded no such thing, nor did He forbid it. We are not committing a great sin by not having a personal quiet time, and we are not more obedient when we do have a personal quiet time.

What the Scriptures *do* command (obviously) is prayer and study of His Word, but these cannot be blithely equated with a personal quiet time. Centuries of Christians have faithfully obeyed these actual commands of God without a personal quiet time. If I were inclined to follow Jesus concerning a personal quiet time, the Biblically honest way to follow that alleged example would be to literally drive out to the desert or wilderness (the word used in the Gospels). Jesus never retreated to a room in a house, even if (big IF) He had a personal quiet time of any kind. His prayer became a lot like “the voice crying in the wilderness.”

Each writer above who promotes the notion of a personal quiet time with Jesus claims to have a better idea of how to improve our Christian walk—and doesn’t hesitate to hang his or her ideas on everyone else’s neck like a millstone. The fact is, the emperor is wearing no clothes. If this was a clearly taught command of Scripture, why can nobody provide a supporting verse in the sixty-six books that compose the Bible? It shouldn’t be that hard to support the doctrine with a command in the Scriptures. The Bible is loaded with

commands—why is this one conspicuously missing?

Let’s recap: these writers hold that a personal quiet time is “the single most important factor” in our Christian lives, that it must be “the first priority of the day,” the importance of which “cannot be overestimated,” such that failure to do so constitutes “an incredible sin.” It should last “at least fifteen minutes.”

You can see how terribly inadequate the Bible really is: all these important things were left out of it! Thank God we can supplement the deficiencies of Scripture with the valuable instructions laid out by these helpful folks. It is also helpful that we modern Christians have access to watches and clocks to make sure we spend at least fifteen minutes each day discharging this crucial moral obligation.

## The Ultimate Price We Pay

The tragedy inherent in walking the road of good intentions is, of course, the place where such roads inexorably lead. The plain fact is, the conscience of man can only be bound by the Word of God. This means we must be ever vigilant in determining whether a doctrine is Biblical or not. We must truly live out the spirit of *semper reformanda*. We must *never* assume we no longer need to clean house on our various Christian practices and assumptions. We must perpetually “prove all things” (1 Thess. 5:21) against God’s Word (Isa. 8:20).

But more tragically, the propagation of such doctrines in this obligatory form not only undermines the law of God, but it diverts the Christian’s attention away from aspects of His Word that might *actually* constitute “the single most important factor” in their lives. Inherent in every such displacement of Biblical authority is what I call the “Psalm One Bait-and-Switch.”<sup>3</sup> We cannot put a human tradition or practice on the front burner without relocating the moral

imperative God had originally placed there to the back burner. In this instance, the law of God is slacked (Hab. 1:4) and Christian liberty is infringed in the name of improving one’s Christian walk, with this entire dislocation being propped up with the most threadbare of Biblical supports imaginable.

We tend to marvel at how many accretions and additions on top of Scripture were slathered onto the Bible by the scribes and Pharisees, but are completely unaware of our own culpability in regard to this practice. We talk about being Berean in our outlook, but few examine the proof texts offered up in support of various ideas, and fewer yet evaluate and weigh the significance of the proof texts if they do happen to look them up.

We will continue to fall prey to the strength-sapping siren call of various doctrines and practices being foisted upon us by very nice, well-meaning Christian people until we recognize three things.

*First*, we must look up every proof text that is peppered throughout various teachings, *no matter how much we might initially agree with that teaching or how right it might at first seem*.

*Second*, we must weigh the Scriptures to insure they’ve been handled properly (2 Tim. 2:15). Stop reading right now. Did you look up that reference I just provided? Unless you’ve memorized the Scripture, you should look it up and read it in context.

*Third*, we must wholeheartedly accept the premise laid out in 2 Timothy 3:17 that the Scriptures are indeed sufficient, and with them the man of God is fully equipped (not partially equipped) for every good work. The only way that Phariseism can ever be choked out of existence is when the men and women of God regard the Bible as fully sufficient. The doctrine of the

*sufficiency of Scripture* is the linchpin of Christian liberty. The slightest chink in this doctrine leads to tyranny because any alleged hole in the Bible's sufficiency invites men in to fill that hole. Man then corrects God—the death knell of liberty, for we then fall into the hands of man (1 Chron. 21:13).

In sum, the “perfect law of liberty” is—in a word—perfect. It alone insures liberty for all. We must zealously guard God's law against all attempts to add to it, to bind the conscience of men apart from His Word and His Word alone.

The great irony today is that although evangelicals routinely characterize Christian Reconstructionists as Pharisees, in reality it is modern evangelicalism that cannot resist the pull toward Phariseeism. The antinomianism of today's evangelicals is nothing less than an engraved invitation to Pharisee-

ism to enter in and dominate Christian ethical discourse. A return to a high view of God's law will not only magnify God's grace and Christian liberty but will also drive out the remnants of Phariseeism, against which we must be ever vigilant.

It is time to hand Phariseeism its well-earned walking papers and for us to stand, with *both* feet, on the Scriptures alone—no matter what the cost. If we do so, Christians will weigh their status in the Kingdom of Heaven by their attitude toward the least of God's jots and tittles (Matt. 5:19)—as well they ought.

And if we do not reject Phariseeism? Whom then will we regard as great in the Kingdom of Heaven?

The Christian with the longer quiet time. ■

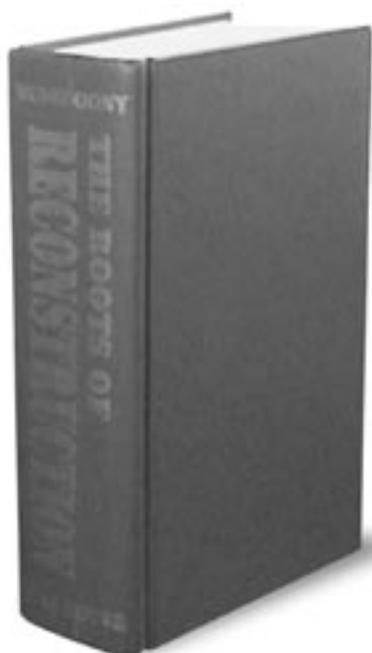
1. For example, the religion editor of *Newsweek*, Lisa Miller, cited the *Anchor*

*Bible Dictionary* to the effect that the Bible says nothing about sex between women (*Newsweek*, Dec. 15, 2008), providing Dr. Albert Mohler the occasion to point out that Romans 1:26–27 explicitly references the matter in clear terms.

2. This point dovetails with Bible translator William Tyndale's intention to extend Biblical literacy to the ploughboy in the field.

3. Martin G. Selbrede, “The Blessing of Dominion Theology,” *Faith for All of Life*, March/April 2008, 13ff. The supplanting of “law of God” with the phrase “Word of God” in modern pastoral teaching on this Psalm constitutes an unconscionable distortion of the Scriptures, yet it is one indulged in regularly by Christians of all stripes. The premise of Matthew 5:19 is completely undercut by such a bait-and-switch technique, for God's people are then diverted away from keeping and teaching the least of God's commandments (the basis for becoming “great in the kingdom”).

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# Thou Shalt Have No Other Gods Before God

Bret McAtee

Every child entering school at the age of five is insane because he comes to school with certain allegiances to our founding fathers, toward our elected officials, toward his parents, toward a belief in a supernatural being, and toward the sovereignty of this nation as a separate entity. It's up to you as teachers to make all these sick children well—by creating the international child of the future. —Psychiatrist Chester M. Pierce, addressing 1973 Childhood International Education Seminar

Despite the pagan educator's explicit intent to indoctrinate children into a worship of the state, Christians continue to send their children to government schools. Some Christians believe that their local schools are different because the teachers there are "nice" and maybe even "smart." What they fail to realize is that "nice" and "smart" are buzzwords used in service of the reprogramming of children—often without the nice and smart teachers being themselves aware of the malevolent design of government schooling to program and indoctrinate their children into a pagan statist religion.

The most effective reprogramming is done with a smile on the teacher's face. The Christian community has to realize that the Christian teachers in the school system to which they are sending their children have yoked themselves to a system that is at war with Biblical Christianity. Further, we must realize that the Christianity of "Christian" teachers is either a Christianity that is in abeyance or a Christianity that has been reinterpreted to fit the mold of the humanistic agenda of the government schools in which they are employed. A Christian teacher who taught his subject matter from a Biblically Christian worldview in a humanistic school system would be fired in weeks if not days. Government schools are not populated by the kind of Christians who can help your children think God's thoughts after Him.

Government schools are committed to the religion of humanism, where man considered either individually or collectively is the god of that system. The man-centered idolatry of humanism is so obvious that government schools really ought to be considered churches. Just as Christian fathers in concert with Christian churches are charged with teaching children to think as Christians through catechesis, so the government schools are charged with teaching children to think as humanists through their lessons.

In the church of humanism, the teachers are the ministers. In the church of humanism, the curriculum of its schools is the equivalent to the catechism in the church of Christianity. In the church of humanism, there are high holy days, which its adherents celebrate, just as Christian churches have their own high holy days that they celebrate. In the churches of humanism, people can be expelled for sinning against humanistic rules of political correctness just as in Christian churches people can be excommunicated for sins against the Christian faith. All the dynamics that one finds in Christian churches and in the Christian faith are present in government schools. Government schools are the temples of humanism where the initiates are indoctrinated in the ways of a false religion. Don't let anyone say that Americans don't have an established religion.

Let's briefly examine some of these claims and see if we can find evidence from those who are associated with government education to support this premise.

## More Than Reading, Writing, and Arithmetic

When considering whether government schools are committed to the religion of humanism, we read from Charles Potter, a former honorary president of the National Education Association:

Education is thus a most powerful ally of humanism, and every American school is a school of humanism. What can a theistic Sunday school's meeting for an hour once a week and teaching only a fraction of the children do to stem the tide of the five-day program of humanistic teaching? (Charles F. Potter, "Humanism: A New Religion," 1930.)

When considering whether teachers are the ministers of humanism, we learn from humanist John Dunphy:

I am convinced that the battle for humankind's future must be waged and won in the public school classroom by teachers that correctly perceive their role as proselytizers of a new faith: a religion of humanity that recognizes and respects the spark of what theologians call divinity in every human being ... The classroom must and will become an arena of conflict between the old and new. These teachers must embody the same selfless dedication as

the most rabid fundamentalist preachers, for they will be ministers of another sort, utilizing the classroom instead of a pulpit to convey humanist values in whatever subject they teach, regardless of the educational level—preschool day care or large state universities. (*The Humanist*, Jan/Feb 1983)

When we combine Dunphy's quote with a quote from the father of outcome-based education, Benjamin Bloom, we begin to see that Dunphy's vision fits well within the vision of those who are "shaping" public education:

By educational objectives, we mean explicit formulations of the ways in which students are expected to be changed by the educative process. That is, the ways in which they will change in their thinking, their feelings, and their actions. (*Taxonomy* – Handbook I – pg. 26)

When considering how the nature of the curriculum serves the ends of religious humanism, we have only to read from Dr. John I. Goodlad, former director of research and development at the Institute for Development of Educational Activities, who many years ago wrote that future curriculum "will be what one might call the *humanistic* curriculum." Looking forward to the future, Goodlad could say that his humanistic curriculum would "become significantly evident by 1990 or 2000." (NEA Journal, "Directions of Curriculum Change" -- March 1966)

### **Outcome-Based Education and Its Rotten Fruit**

The idea that government schools are in reality government churches is not only supported by the quotes I've provided thus far, but perhaps the best support for this claim can be seen by the overall structural methodology that informs the world of government education. This structural methodology is named Outcome-Based Education (OBE).

OBE is anchored in anti-Christian behavioral psychology and is committed to inculcating a particular socio-political agenda that guides the student to adopt an anthropocentric value system based upon the precepts of pagan humanistic psychology. This stands in contrast to a Christian worldview, or a worldview based upon historic categories arising out of Western civilization. When the government schools use OBE as the methodology that structures their teaching, the result is to indoctrinate students who favor group-think over individualism, socialism over free market competition, and subjective oriented ethics over ethics that are transcendent. The end is the humanist "new man" who has been taught to prefer egalitarian conformity and is prone to faulting individuals oriented toward industry and achievement. All of this is accomplished by manipulating students by means of emotive control. In OBE mind control, solid academics are thrown out in favor of pursuing self-esteem, being "self-directed," and achieving "process skills." OBE is dedicated to creating a culture of slavery.

In light of this very small sampling, and given that the first commandment forbids us to serve other gods, why do Christians send their covenant children to government schools? Why do Christians send their and God's children to an institution where they are immersed in learning the covenant ways of a false religion? Further, why are Christians surprised when their children, upon maturity, abandon the Christian faith? Having saturated them in the belief system of humanism, why would we expect them to be unfaithful to humanism? One reason why our children leave the church is because by placing them in government schools, we train them to be pagans.

### **Objection #1 Anticipated – Education Is A-Religious**

Most "Christian" teachers employed by government schools are not self-conscious about their contribution to building an anti-Christian culture in the way that they are teaching children. These teachers are too often Christians only in the sense of embracing a particular religious brand identity. Unfortunately, these "Christian" teachers have never had the opportunity to probe and examine the presuppositions that inform the curriculum they are teaching and have accepted as their own.

Some would object to this by positing that education does not need to be specifically Christian since education is not spiritual but only intellectual. The objection reasons that education is not religious: that education is one of the disciplines that falls within a "creational common realm" where both Christians and non-Christians labor together, in spite of significant differences in presuppositions. These folks insist that education is to be done not by the standards of God's Word, but rather by the standard of natural law. They believe that God's Word doesn't teach anything with regard to the disciplines one might expect to find in a liberal arts education. The truths of these disciplines, in their view, are taught by natural law and are self-evident.

But this is a peculiar minority reading raised only by some Reformed Christians. Other adherents of other faith systems understand perfectly well the importance of an education in keeping with their faith. This is why we can find people of other non-Christian faiths insisting on the importance of an education that is in keeping with their beliefs.

He alone, who owns the youth, gains the future. —Adolf Hitler

Give me your 4-year-olds, and in a generation I will build a socialist state.  
—Vladimir Lenin

Even were we to concede that education is not a spiritual discipline, we still have to come to grips with which metaphysical, epistemological, teleological, and axiological starting points should be presupposed in the educational process. Education always presupposes some theological order as standard. So even agreeing that education belongs to a spiritually undifferentiated common realm, we must still ask, in the midst of many disputes in a pluralistic culture, which starting points will be presumed as the context in which the various educational disciplines find their meaning? The real issue is determining which regime's creation order will be presupposed. Obviously, if Christians agree that education is an "undifferentiated common realm project," then all Christians absolutely must agree that that project will explicitly and implicitly center on no other God than the God of the Bible who alone can provide the starting points that can render the educational disciplines rational.

### **Objection #2 Anticipated – Keep the Schools Secular**

A second objection by Christians who do not object to placing their children in government schools is that public schools do not teach humanist beliefs any more than they teach any other belief. The schools, so the thinking goes, are simply secular and neutral, neither promoting nor demeaning religion. Therefore, any calls for Christians to pull their children from government schools are unwarranted.

But teachers can't teach in a presuppositional vacuum; they must educate according to some perspective, worldview, or philosophical paradigm—and this paradigm, because it descends

from a theological system of belief, is inherently religious. As we have noted, the worldview of government schools, regardless of any insistence to the contrary, is humanism.

### **The End of the Matter**

Christians are commanded to set no other gods before them. When American Christians send their children to those schools—in spite of what they know about their humanist indoctrination—they are worshipping at the altar of humanism. There is simply no other way to put it. There may be rare exceptions, but as a whole, government schools are committed to sanitizing the Christian faith of those who enter their doors.

Many Christians have been praying for reformation and religious awakening. If we genuinely desire this, we must immediately stop sending our children to government schools. Looking for reformation in our culture while at the same time immersing our children in a belief system that is at war with Christianity is a very odd way to prepare for reformation and religious awakening. Indeed, it is extraordinarily difficult to understand how prayers for reformation and awakening will be answered by God as long as God's people continue to disobey God and poison their children's minds against Christ by sending them to government schools. Certainly we can say that one sign of reformation and awakening in the church will be Christian parents removing their covenant seed from humanist schools, thus taking the first commandment seriously again. ■

Bret McAtee lives in Charlotte, Michigan where he pastors a small Reformed Church and dwells in familial contentment with his wife, Jane, and their three children. Pastor McAtee's other writings can be found at [www.ironink.org](http://www.ironink.org).

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M. Rushdoony ... Time cont. from page 5

attempts to replace what is repudiated in the Biblical message—that God controls both time and eternity and man must not only conform his thought but his heart and his life to that Providence, or he shall be shaken until he can no longer stand.

The psalmist believed that history involves an eschatology when he wrote, “My times are in thy hand” (Ps. 31:15). Our view of the future is very much a part of our view of the past and present. The future we envision shapes our life today. It is no accident that all of Scripture is in the context of human history. The Bible does not give us a religion as a spiritual exercise we add to life, but an entire world and life view in which every second of every moment, every nation and every individual, is part of the purpose of the Sovereign God.

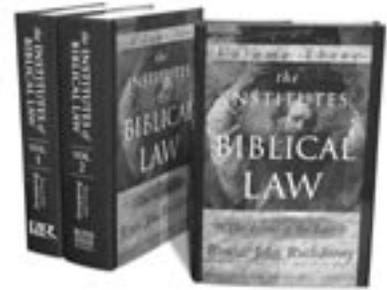
As creatures, we are subject to the movement of time. Each passing day brings us closer to our death, and each birthday and each passing year reminds us of this limitation. We can decry this certainty or rest in the assurance that God reigns and that our responsibility is not to lament our mortality but to praise the immortal God.

There is little in our lives that cannot be shaken. Whole civilizations have come and gone. Mass murders and starvations have been common throughout history, as have been the uprooting of people emotionally and physically. The future may hold great challenges; certainly the artificial prosperity of fiat money is coming to an end before our eyes. The direct consequences of man’s evil are part of God’s shaking.

Our faith must be unshakable no matter what our circumstances today or tomorrow. Our faith must not only be in the promises of God, but also in the justness of God, even when He shakes our culture, our times, and us. ■

Uttinger ... Icondulism cont. from page 22

8. Rushdoony, 149.
9. *Ibid.*, 150–151.
10. Albert Henry Newman, *A Manual of Church History*, Vol. 1 (Philadelphia: The American Baptist Publication Society, 1933), 389.
11. Henry Percival, ed., *The Seven Ecumenical Councils of the Undivided Church* in Philip Schaff and Henry Wace, ed., *The Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers*, Vol. XIV (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1899), 544.
12. Cf. Rushdoony, 158.
13. *The Seven Ecumenical Councils of the Undivided Church*, 550.
14. *Ibid.*, 550–511.
15. The council met with resistance, particularly from Charlemagne’s empire, where a council meeting at Frankfurt in 794 allowed for pictures of Christ but completely rejected the idolatry of bowing to them.
16. Henry Chadwick, *The Early Church* (London: Penguin Books, 1993), 283.
17. There is a crucial issue here that we may easily overlook: “can” does not imply “may”; ability does not imply permission. Wicked men could and did crucify our Lord. They were by no means right in doing so.
18. Rushdoony rejects the council’s conclusions at this point. See *Foundations*, 156–157.
19. *The Westminster Larger Catechism*, Q. 109; *The Heidelberg Catechism*, Q. 96–98.
20. Or, “This is your God.” The Hebrew word is *Elohim*.
21. James B. Jordan, *The Liturgy Trap, The Bible Versus Mere Tradition in Worship* (Niceville, FL: Transfiguration Press, 1994), 27ff.



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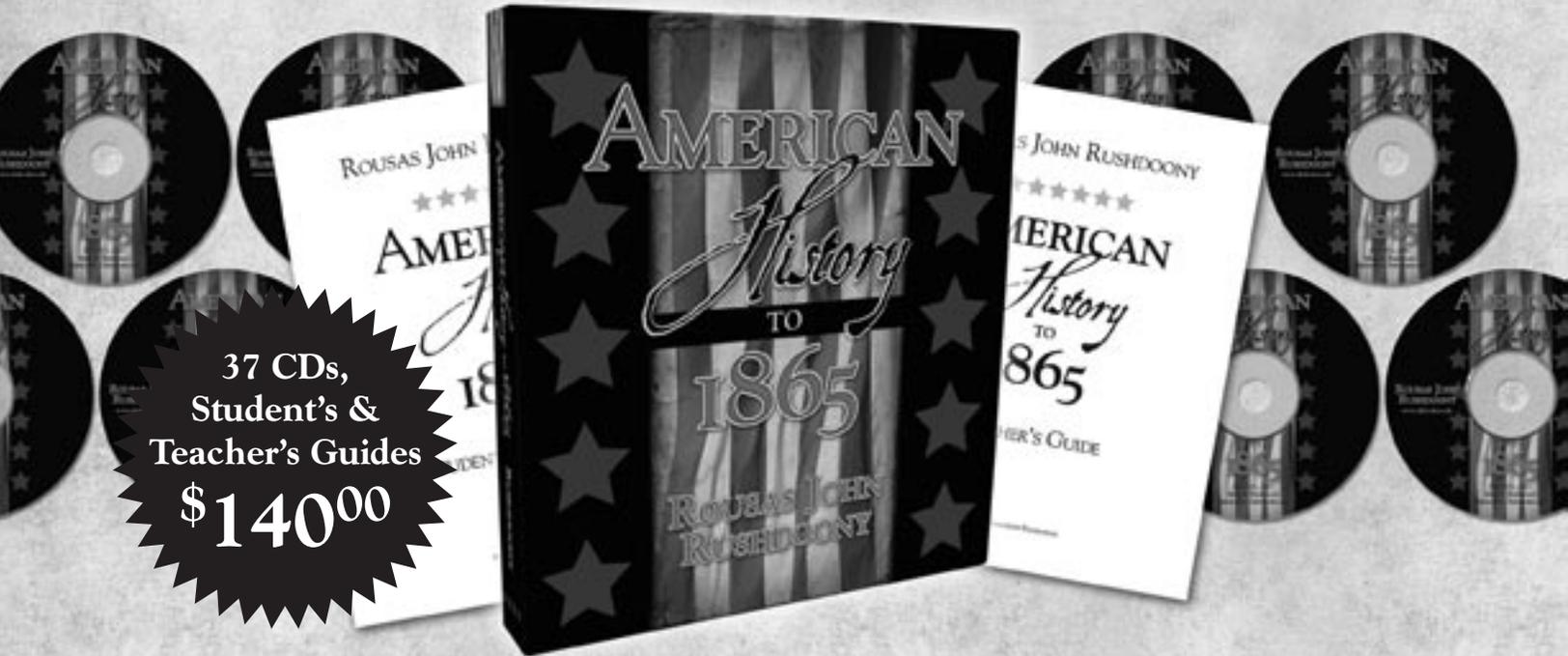


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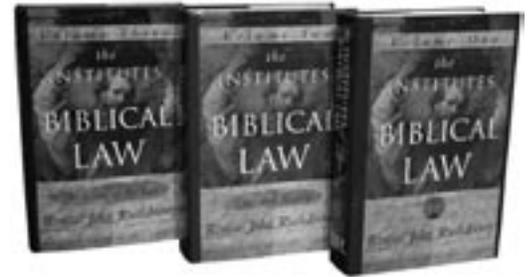
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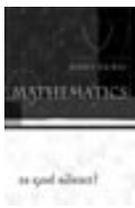
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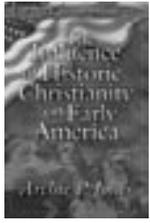
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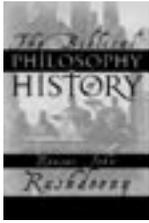
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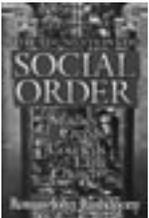
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## Philosophy

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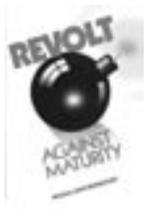


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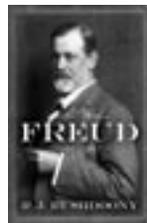


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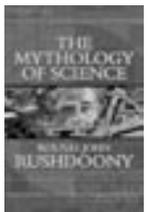


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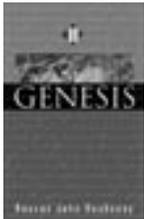
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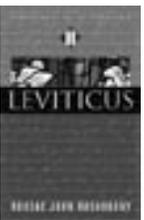
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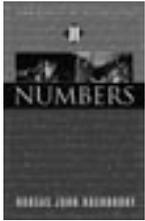
Much like the book of Proverbs, any emphasis upon the practical applications of God's law is readily shunned in pursuit of more "spiritual" studies. Books like Leviticus are considered dull, overbearing, and irrelevant. But man was created in God's image and is duty-bound to develop the implications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

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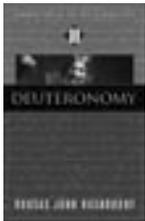
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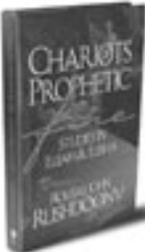
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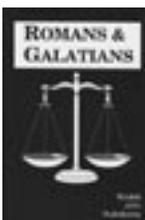
By R.J. Rushdoony. In this commentary the author maps out the glorious gospel of John, starting from the obvious parallel to Genesis 1 ("In the beginning was the Word") and through to the glorious conclusion of Christ's death and resurrection. Nothing more clearly reveals the gospel than Christ's atoning death and His resurrection. They tell us that Jesus Christ has destroyed the power of sin and death. John therefore deliberately limits the number of miracles he reports in order to point to and concentrate on our Lord's death and resurrection. The Jesus of history is He who made atonement for us, died, and was resurrected. His life cannot be understood apart from this, nor can we know His history in any other light. This is why John's "testimony is true," and, while books filling the earth could not contain all that could be said, the testimony given by John is "faithful."

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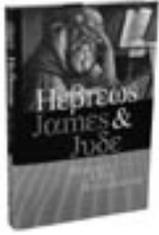
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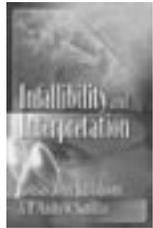
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following the Enlightenment's humanism, of reason. They affirm Biblical infallibility because the God Whom the Bible reveals could speak in no other way than infallibly, and because the Bible in which God is revealed asserts that God alone speaks infallibly.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

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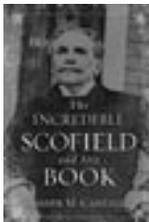
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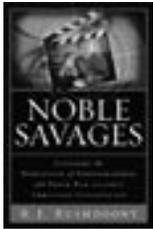
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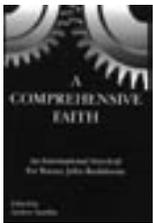
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Edited by Andrew Sandlin. This is the surprise *Festschrift* presented to R.J. Rushdoony at his 80th birthday celebration in April, 1996. These essays are in gratitude to Rush's influence and elucidate the importance of his theological and philosophical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

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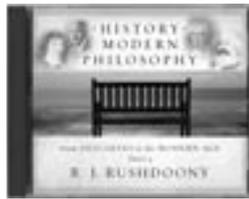
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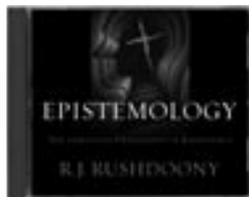
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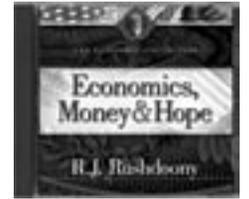
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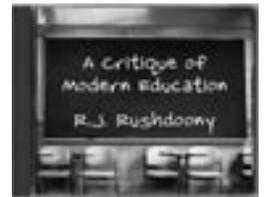
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