

*Faith for All of Life*  
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# FAITH FOR ALL OF LIFE

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

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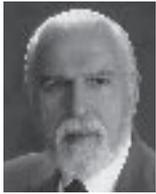
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# Post-Christian Era?

[Reprinted from *Roots of Reconstruction* (Vallecito, CA: Ross House Books, 1991), 824-829.]

R. J. Rushdoony



An idea very heavily promoted by humanists in recent years, and, unfortunately, picked up by all too many Christians, is that we are moving into a post-Christian era. According to this belief, the Christian centuries have come to an end, and we are now moving into a new age. Some call it the era of scientific humanism, others of scientific socialism, and still others call it the age of Aquarius. For the occultists, as of old, this is the “third age” or third world era. The occultist Foster Bailey, in *The Spirit of Masonry* (1957), wrote that “the Jewish dispensation came to an end, and the Christian dispensation began with the passing of our sun into the sign of Pisces, the Fishes ... Today ... we are passing rapidly into another sign, the sign of Aquarius.” The theologians who get their doctrine from the popular press and the streets have echoed this humanistic chorus, and they tell us we are in a post-Christian era. Is this true?

With the waning of the “middle” ages, Europe moved into an anti-Christian era which culminated in the Renaissance. The church was largely captured by cynical humanists who treated it as a prize to be exploited. The Reformation and the Counter-Reformation were reactions against this, and they strove to recapture church, state, school, and society for Christian faith. In varying degrees this was done. Humanism, however, was revived in the Enlightenment; it began its conquest of Christendom; it embarked on a deliberate and deter-

mined anti-Christian and post-Christian era. Historians have long masked and underplayed the militant anti-Christianity of the Enlightenment thinkers and their successors; it is to the credit of Peter Gay’s work, *The Enlightenment* (2 vols.), that he develops this aspect of their thought. It was clearly central.

With the eighteenth century, Europe moved steadily into a post-Christian era. Every area of life was steadily divorced from Christianity and reinterpreted in humanistic terms. True, there were Christian counter-movements against the humanistic culture, but, because these were largely pietistic, they did not challenge humanism as such. In fact, because pietism came to emphasize soul-saving above all else, it became thereby humanistic also: it put man at the center of its gospel, whereas Christ said, “[S]eek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you” (Matt. 6:33). The Shorter Catechism had taught, “Man’s chief end is to glorify God and to enjoy Him forever.” Now humanism and religion had come to agree that the glory of man is the end and purpose of all things.

The eighteenth and nineteenth centuries were humanistic and anti-Christian in their basic motives, and yet they were very largely influenced by still powerful Christian standards also. In the sciences and in various other areas of study, not only did Christian scholars predominate, but the idea of an ultimate and God-created order still governed men’s minds. In philosophy,

God had been abandoned; in everyday life as well as the sciences He was still the ultimate power, although receding in centrality. With Darwin and Freud, humanism abandoned the God-concept and at the same time committed suicide. For Darwin, not God but chance is essentially ultimate, although traces of providence still are strong in his system. The basic emphasis, however, was away from God’s design to chance variations and natural selection. Instead of an ultimate mind, man lived against the background of an ultimate meaninglessness, and man was depreciated. If all the area surrounding a man’s house is suddenly turned into a dump, then that man’s house is not only depreciated but possibly rendered untenable as rodents take over the area. Similarly, humanism, as it dispensed with God, dispensed also with the meaning, purpose, and dignity of life. Freud furthered this process, knowing full well what he was doing to humanism thereby. However, holding to an evolutionary position, he reduced mind to a frail late-comer whose every working was an outcropping of primitive motives from the unconscious. Philosophy could not very well survive under this premise. Darwin himself wrote in 1881 that “with me the horrid doubt always arises whether the convictions of man’s mind, which has been developed from the mind of the lower animals, are of any value or at all trustworthy. Would any one trust the convictions of a monkey’s mind, if there are any convictions in such a mind?” The effect of this collapse of humanism was apparent in every area of life. Prideaux has observed,

of Delacroix, “He was the last painter in whom the humanist Renaissance conception as a totality manifested itself with poetic fervor.” Since Delacroix, humanists have presented us with a limited world, then a fragmented world, and now an exploded and dying world. Suicidism has possessed the humanists. Fiedler has cited this weariness with life which marks humanistic writers. “There is a weariness in the West which undercuts the struggle between socialism and capitalism, democracy and autocracy; a weariness with humanism itself which underlies all the movements of our world, a weariness with the striving to be men. It is the end of man which the world of Burroughs foretells, not in terms of doom but of triumph.” The writer William Burroughs, to whom Fiedler refers, gives us a “vision of the end of man, total death.” Fiedler is right: modern humanistic man is “waiting for the end.”

The end of every age is marked by certain recurring interests. As meaning from God is abandoned, meaning is sought by man from below, in occultism, satanism, magic, and witchcraft. Rome in its decline was marked by such interests. As Christendom collapsed after the thirteenth century, these same movements revived and with intensity possessed the minds of despairing men. The same interests are again with us, not as signs of the birth of the age of Aquarius, but as evidences of the dying agony of humanism.

Are we facing a post-Christian era? The men who so declare are as blind as that false messiah, Woodrow Wilson, who believed that he had a better way than Christ, who held that a war could be fought to end all wars and to make the world safe for democracy, and who felt that paper documents could harness and control the evil goals of men and nations. Wilson’s great crusade did not

usher in a new world order of peace and prosperity; rather, it inaugurated the armageddon of humanism. Franklin Delano Roosevelt embarked on a similar crusade in Europe, and the breakdown of humanism was only hastened.

It is not a post-Christian era that we face but a post-humanistic world. Every thinker who evades that fact is past-oriented and blind; he is incapable of preparing anyone for the realities of our present situation. Humanism on all sides is busy committing hara-kiri; it is disemboweling itself with passion and fervor; it needs no enemies, because humanism is now its own worst enemy. We have lived thus far in a post-Christian era, and it is dying. The important question is, what shall we do?

We must realize that this is one of the greatest if not the greatest opportunity yet to come to Christianity. This is a time of glorious opportunity, a turning point in history, and the wise will prepare for it. True, the church is remarkably incompetent and sterile in the face of this crisis. It has very largely joined the enemy. This, however, has happened before. In the fourth century the church repeatedly condemned St. Athanasius, as the state listed him as a wanted outlaw. He was accused (by churchmen) of trying to stop the food supply to the capitol. He was accused of murder (but the dead man was proven to be alive). He was charged with magic and sorcery, and much else, and his life was lived in flight, with five periods of exile. All the same, it was Athanasius and not his enemies, nor the powerful churchmen of his day, who shaped the future. History then as now is not shaped by majorities but by men who provide the faith and ideas for living.

Smith has said of modern man, “How may we describe the present situation? Man is his own master, and thus aware that there are no bounds to

his powers. He can do anything that he wishes to do ... He is free, and come of age, but he is also the slave of ideologies. He recognizes that his existence as a man carries with it the demand to be himself, as a single personal being (in Kierkegaard’s phrase), and at the same time he finds himself continually threatened with immersion in the life of the collective—and he even desires this, in order that he may evade the hard demand to be a single person.” This is an interesting admission, coming as it does from a modernist position. It is an indication of the paralysis and helplessness of humanistic man. Men who are at war with themselves, and resentful of life and its requirements, are not able to command the future: they cannot even command themselves.

Every day our problem is less and less humanism and more and more ourselves. Is our life and action productive of a new social order? Are we governed by principles and ideas which will help determine the new direction of history? Is our thinking still directed by sterile statism, and do we believe that the answer to man’s problems is to capture the machinery of the state, or do we recognize that we must first of all be commanded by God before we can effectively command ourselves and our futures?

Leslie Fiedler aptly titled his study of the modern mood as reflected in literature *Waiting for the End*. We can add that it also involves waiting for a ready-made answer. The temper of our radicals is a demand for total solutions now; quite aptly, they call themselves the “now generation.” Quite logically, magic and witchcraft are very closely tied to the “now generation.” Magic and witchcraft offer a mythical alternative to patient work and reconstruction. A few words and formulae, and, presto, the desired thing supposedly appears. In

the politics of magic, a few catchphrases are endlessly repeated, some laws passed or some revolutionary action paraded, and, presto, paradise should suddenly come, but for the nasty work of the vile reactionaries. Push the right evolutionary button, such is the faith of the “now generation,” and the dream world will emerge: no sweat, only revolutionary heroics in terms of the late, late movies our radicals and their babysitters grew up with.

This generation would do well to remember the words of Christ concerning the Kingdom of God, words too rarely if ever preached on: “For the earth bringeth forth fruit of herself; first the blade, then the ear, after that the full corn in the ear” (Mark 4:28). There is a spontaneity of growth which is not dependent upon man: the earth brings forth growth. But man must sow the seed, till the field, and work to bring

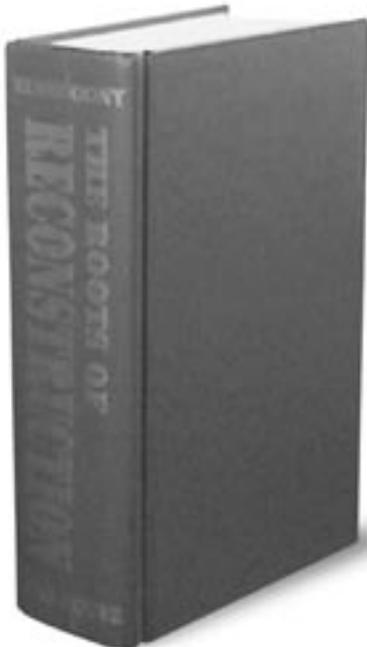
forth the harvest. There must be, first, faith that results will come, and, second, work to plant and till for that harvest. Men doubt today that God brings forth His purposed results, and they refuse to work for any goals. We live in an age when men want to harvest corn before they have planted it. We live, briefly, in a political or statist era, a day when men believe in the ability of the state and its politicians to solve problems by means of their legislative hocus-pocus.

But “first the blade,” and the blade cannot appear without a planting. This is the time to create new and free schools; Christian hospitals; independent professional societies, Biblically principled; and new enterprises of every kind. The time is now. I recall the words of a supposedly intelligent man speaking in 1939, holding that it was “too late.” No doubt those words are old as man, and still a mark of defeatism and

stupidity, still a mark of waiting for ready-made, pushbutton answers. I recall vividly as a schoolboy being told of automatic, thermostat-controlled heating systems, then a new thing, as the forerunner, it was held, of a pushbutton, automatic world, in which all answers came freely. Nothing was said about the work that went into producing the thermostat, nor the new industries it furthered, nor the new kinds of work it made possible. It was seen only as step forward towards the dream of instant paradise in a ready-made world. I did not know it then, but those teachers were preparing the way for the return of a faith in magic and witchcraft.

But our Lord said, “first the blade”! Done any planting lately? Or are you waiting for someone with the right hocus-pocus? If so, you will die with this dying non-Christian era. Don’t count on us sending flowers. 🌸

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# Money, Wealth, and Power

Mark R. Rushdoony

“The question, are there valid laws of economics, or is economics an area of pragmatic practice and social convention, is then a question with reference to the existence of God. And the biblical position is that every sphere, economic, political, educational, social, marital, scientific, and all others are governed by the absolute laws of God and are set within a context of law.”<sup>1</sup>

—Rousas John Rushdoony



In 1965, just before I turned eleven, my father taught my sisters and me how to examine every dime, quarter, and half-dollar we received.

Every silver coin (those minted before 1965) we were instructed to keep and never spend, because silver was valuable and would become even more so, while the new coins were what he called “slugs.” About that time he encouraged us to get our savings together and buy gold coins. I managed to scrape together, I believe, just under fifty dollars, and he bought me a one-ounce U.S. twenty-dollar “double eagle” gold coin.

My father did not restrict his advocacy to family. In the late 1960s my father gave crash courses on money and inflation to many people. He facilitated their purchases of silver and gold through a dealer he knew and trusted. He took delivery of bags of silver and gold coins at the air freight terminal at Los Angeles Airport and delivered them to the buyer. At the time he drove a 1960 Cadillac Coupe de Ville. Years later he would laugh at how he wrecked the rear springs of that car hauling coins. For this he took no fee or commission. His purpose was the empowerment of Christians by preserving their wealth in inflationary times.

## What Is Money?

Historically, there have been five necessary prerequisites for any money to gain widespread acceptance. Money

needs to be scarce, durable, divisible (into fractional units), transportable (and hence easily transferred), and easily recognized. From our earliest records gold and silver have fulfilled these requirements and served well as money.

Money is commonly defined as a medium of exchange or a representation of wealth, yet these definitions invite statist, fiat money.<sup>2</sup> Silver and gold have been used as money not because they have been arbitrarily decreed to have the utility of the five characteristics but because they have these characteristics that have historically caused the marketplace to regard them as an honest medium of exchange.

If I barter my beef for your set of chairs, we have exchanged items we each regard as valuable—value has been voluntarily exchanged for value. The chairs do not represent the beef or vice versa—each has value. If you give me gold or silver for my beef, I have also received something that throughout all of human history has itself been valued.

Fiat money, however, has no historic value. Therefore, it is generally necessary that the government mandates its acceptance as money through legal tender laws.<sup>3</sup>

## Economic Law

If money merely represents wealth, or if it is merely a medium of exchange, then paper could serve that purpose. Legal tender laws could then decree any commodity as money. Why is such action wrong?

Economic law is a subset of God’s law, and all God’s law is by definition moral law, for God only speaks in terms of moral certainty. If we jump off a cliff, we can be certain that the laws of physics apply. When we create fiat money and by statist force order it to be accepted in the marketplace for things of real value, the laws of economic certainty will apply.

The fundamental law of economics is “Thou shalt not steal,” and fiat money and legal tender laws constitute theft because they demand the acceptance of nothing for something. Fiat money would naturally have no value in the marketplace. Its “value” is by order of state authority.

## Managed Money, Managed Men

This presumption to the right of theft is the basis for the state’s presumption of innocence when the effect of fiat money becomes noticeable. Inflation is the increase of fiat money, which decreases the value of all the money.<sup>4</sup> Just as adding water to milk decreases its value, adding more fiat money decreases the value of all other monetary units in circulation. Because its right to produce money and the nobility of its intentions are presumed by the state, blame for rising prices (which result from an increasingly worthless monetary unit) must be placed elsewhere. The statist creators of fiat money will define inflation as rising prices and ignore the fact that such prices are the market’s response to the increase

of monetary units. Business or labor is then blamed for inflation by its actual perpetrators, who offer relief in more government control of the economy.

A managed money means that the entire economy and all wealth represented by that money is managed by the state. Hard money (of precious metals, particularly gold and silver) cannot be created by the state; it comes from a great deal of investment and work. Hard money thereby limits the power of the state. Hard money is money controlled by the market (i.e., people). Individuals then have wealth and power.

Fiat currency is not controlled merely in its creation. It is also controlled in its value. The production of new money dilutes the value of all money, so one's managed money means one's wealth and savings are being destroyed. Inflation is often called the hidden tax. Though the government is not taking your money physically, it is taking the value of that money. This is only possible with managed money. Individuals are left to try to create more spending power with their money than they lose to inflation. This creates investment bubbles, which are speculations that grow in popularity and price beyond any logic of real value. When the bubble bursts, the "sure thing" drops precipitously in value. The reason for such recklessness is that investors become gamblers when they know their money is declining in value. They know they have to hit it big quick or they will lose it progressively to the decline of the value of their monetary unit. Character and thrift are also casualties of fiat money.

The state is empowered when it creates money in exactly the same way a counterfeiter is when he trades his fiat money for things of value. This is why there has never been a fiat currency that was not inflated. Fiat money allows the state the ability to be every special interest's "sugar daddy," increase its civil servants (and control of its people), fight

wars, and more. Like other counterfeiters, the state spends its fiat money at current value and receives top value for it. The people who get the money late spend it when prices are inflated. Managed money is thus a means of exerting statist power that is taken from the people.

## An Artificial Economy

When I was in high school, my history teacher said the Great Depression was caused by reckless speculation in the stock market (i.e., the stock market crash caused the depression). In reality, the stock market crash of 1929 itself was caused by the money management decisions of the Federal Reserve. The 1920s was a boom economy caused by the Federal Reserve's rapid expansion of the money supply. Money was easily available. Economically, this meant a great deal of money was put into the stock market, causing prices to soar. Culturally, the easy money led to a "good times" mentality, the "Roaring '20s." When the Federal Reserve decided to slow the availability of money, the bubble burst. A depression is the correction to inflation. The government tried to stimulate the economy with public spending and debt (which decapitalizes a people). Their efforts did not return prosperity. The massive spending during WWII was another inflationary round that repressed, or hid, the depression.

Since WWII the U.S. economy has gone through periods of boom and bust. The booms are when fiat dollars are easily available. The holders of those new dollars need a place for them, so they spend and speculate (savings makes no sense when the currency is losing purchasing power). These boom periods look like prosperity, and politicians take credit for them.

Soon enough, however, it becomes obvious that the new dollars have caused rising prices. When this becomes a political concern, money managers slow

the input of dollars and credit. The effect is like rain on the local fair—no dollars mean no more good times. The artificial boom turns into a bust. The bust is called a recession, which is repressed depression. The answer of the Federal Reserve and our political leaders is another round of inflation in order to avoid a return to depression and bring about another boom.

The economic history of the U.S. since the Great Depression has been an avoidance of the consequences of managed money. Our policy has been a balancing act of boom and bust. The 1990s was a boom period; its speculative bubble was stocks, particularly the dot-coms. It got Bill Clinton elected twice (remember "It's the economy, stupid"?), but the recession of 2000–2001 was instrumental in turning voters to George W. Bush. The boom of the Bush years involved speculation in stocks and the real-estate bubble. The bust that put us in the current recession helped propel Barack Obama and the Democrats to power. Obama's inflationary stimulus has thus far failed to produce a boom, which his declining popularity reflects.<sup>5</sup>

## Conclusion

A fiat currency is always a managed currency, which takes liberty from the individual and fuels a powerful state.

A fiat currency is always an inflated currency, which robs everyone of his wealth and subsidizes a parasitic state.

A fiat currency is not going to lead us to socialism; it is the socialistic system within which Washington, D.C., and the Federal Reserve presently rule us.

The good news is that the system is failing. Booms and busts are getting closer together and more pronounced. The dollar is so inflated its utility is now commonly called into question.

The bad news is that our wealth and our liberty decline with the dollar.

*Continued on page 16*

# Patriarchy versus Feminism

Martin G. Selbrede



In the war of the worldviews, we now find ourselves wedged between exposés of feminism launched by patriarchalists and exposés of Biblical patriarchy published by feminists. The Biblical family and its defenders stand on one side of the fixed chasm, and the autonomous individual woman and her defenders stand on the other side. The chasm is infinitely deep, but not so wide as to prevent arrows fired across it from reaching the other side.

Among the arrows launched from the feminist side is the publication last year of Kathryn Joyce's book, *Quiverfull: Inside the Christian Patriarchy Movement*.<sup>1</sup> It would do Joyce a disservice to associate the inside of her book (which I read cover to cover) with the incendiary promotional barbs spicing up the back of the dust jacket (particularly Michelle Goldberg's attributing "misogyny taken to sadomasochistic extremes" to the proponents of Biblical patriarchy). On the spectrum of responsible secular reporting and scholarship, Joyce is closer to the Jeff Sharlet school of investigative journalism than she is to the more judicious approach of scholar Michael McVicar. Sharlet's ideas have been examined here before.<sup>2</sup> He didn't respond to our sincere offer to initiate a correspondence to clarify the issues. McVicar, on the other hand, delights in digging through original source materials, and the fascinating results are evenhanded enough to warrant publication in this periodical despite McVicar's divergence from our views.<sup>3</sup> For the record, we

officially extend the offer to correspond with Kathryn Joyce here and now. In the meantime, an examination of her book and its significance is in order.

## The Inherent Weakness of Books on Both Sides

The problem that comes to light in reading books like Joyce's is that firsthand reporting like this tends to generate a mass of anecdotal evidence.<sup>4</sup> Joyce unfolds a cornucopia of stories reflective of the problems generated by the patriarchy movement. But Joyce's opponents can produce just as much anecdotal evidence of the evil effects of feminist thinking on women. *So Much More*,<sup>5</sup> written by Anna Sofia Botkin and Elizabeth Botkin, weaves such anecdotal evidence in and around the two authors' attempt to put Biblical legs on their primary thesis.<sup>6</sup> If every story Joyce puts forward detailing how a woman has been harmed by a specific expression of patriarchal thinking has a corresponding story by the Botkins and other writers<sup>7</sup> of how women have been harmed by feminist thinking, we are left at an impasse.

The only way to discriminate between the two theses is by comparing the stated worldview commitments of the respective sides.<sup>8</sup> Joyce, however, isn't equipped to evaluate the opposing side's consistency with its stated Biblical worldview. For this reason, she misses many critically important details. In the meantime, however, each side accuses the other of living as chained-up slaves in Plato's cave.

Joyce clearly discounts the idea that the Botkins' book accurately sets forth the feminist worldview, dismiss-

ing the sisters' summary as "a collection of contextless feminist quotations."<sup>9</sup> Not surprisingly, Joyce's perspective on Christian Reconstruction is vulnerable to the same criticism. Had she simply examined R. J. Rushdoony's essays on "The Family,"<sup>10</sup> "The Attack Against the Family,"<sup>11</sup> "The Failure of Men,"<sup>12</sup> and "The Place of Women"<sup>13</sup>—essays that arc across the chasm between the respective camps—she would have seen what she was missing.<sup>14</sup> She would have recognized that the second- and third-hand information she appeals to is a sad caricature of Rushdoony's position.

Joyce reveals some animus and cripples her projected objectivity by labeling the Botkins as "Dorothies in a perpetual Oz."<sup>15</sup> She alludes to a link between patriarchal teachings and Calvinism<sup>16</sup> but fails to make it rigorous.<sup>17</sup> She finds grist for her critical mill in a host of Titus 2 ministries (many of which do vastly overreach the text they're based upon, but Joyce isn't theologically adept enough to recognize it). Her critique of mandates for large families (her book's title comes from Psalm 127's martial description of the blessings of fathering many sons) culminates in the Andrea Yates tragedy,<sup>18</sup> and the untold misery of women forced to stay in abusive or deadly marriages is laid at patriarchy's doorstep.<sup>19</sup>

## The "No Exit" Marriage

Here is a jarring tale about one church's response to a woman whose husband secured a Mexican divorce to marry another woman to indulge in drunken sex orgies:

A lawyer advised the original and Godly wife to get a divorce, since her state did

not recognize Mexican divorces, and consequently she could lose her hard-earned house.

The home church did *not* condemn the husband but the wife. She was expected to sit by the window with a light on, praying for her husband to return.

The prominent, nationally known and published pastor told her to leave the church; they wanted no divorced women. Moreover, he said, she was probably guilty and *drove* him to sin by “keeping her legs crossed” ... This all happened thirty years ago. Since then, the ex-husband has twice eluded warrants for his arrest for swindling aging widows of large sums of money. His ex-wife is still abused by the church for “her part,” but nothing is said about the man.<sup>20</sup>

There are many similar stories in Joyce’s book, except for one thing: this particular story *didn’t come from Joyce’s book*, it came from R. J. Rushdoony’s *The Cure of Souls*. Rushdoony has for decades consistently indicted the no-divorce-ever ethos as an abomination. Joyce (like almost all journalists) fails to make distinctions among the players on the stage, lumping them together. This failure further weakens her book.

Despite discussion of divergent fringe subgroups, Joyce treats the patriarchy movement in a functionally monolithic way. By implication, R. J. Rushdoony and Bill Gothard (who figures repeatedly in Joyce’s book) are birds of a feather. But the divide between Gothard and Rushdoony on divorce was a deep and abiding one. Gothard proposed using Rushdoony’s *Institutes of Biblical Law* as a resource for his massive ministry; the sheer volume of the resulting sales would have made Rushdoony both rich and famous. Gothard’s condition for moving forward on this was letter-simple: Rushdoony merely needed to remove the section on divorce from his book, and the highly profitable deal would be sealed.

Rushdoony refused the offer.

Therefore, when Joyce writes that “there’s a temptation to look for Rushdoony’s influence in the wrong places,” she’s quite right.<sup>21</sup> But she needs to take this to heart more seriously in respect to her own work.

In her introduction, Joyce points to the Ted Haggard scandal and the “perfect Christian wife” Gayle Haggard is expected to be, regardless of her husband’s conduct.<sup>22</sup> Gayle Haggard’s recent appearance on Oprah likely corroborated Joyce’s concerns, while dovetailing with Rushdoony’s thesis, “On Feeding a Hungry Tiger.”<sup>23</sup> This Buddhist tale of a Bodhisattva, who threw himself down a cliff so that a hungry mother tiger with unfed and hungry cubs could kill and eat him, sets forth a theology of self-sacrifice that “regularly presents itself as true Christianity,” but which is anything but, as Rushdoony repeatedly demonstrated.

### Male Responsibility

Consider the following two quotations. First, this one:

The lack of men’s responsibility or culpability for their own actions and the acceptance of male “urges” as irresistible forces of nature is the understructure of Christian modesty movements and their secular counterparts: seeing women’s bodies as almost supernaturally perverse and corrupting.<sup>24</sup>

And now this quote:

Because of their generally undisciplined nature, it is common for young males (and older ones as well) to believe that sex in men is an ungovernable drive and urge. Such a belief is an indictment of God; it is an insistence that chastity is a physical impossibility. I recall ... hearing an arrogant pastor treat male sexual offenses lightly, insisting it was all due to those “male gonads.”<sup>25</sup>

The first is by Joyce, the second by Rushdoony. The modern modesty

movement lurches dangerously into the fallacy of “environmental determinism,” which takes the moral component in man’s being off the table to blame the things around man as the sources of temptation and “stumbling.”<sup>26</sup> The spirit of *direct personal responsibility* illustrated so clearly by Job is tragically missing from our modern dialogue:

**I made a covenant with my eyes  
not to look lustfully at a girl.  
(Job 31:1 NIV)**

When I introduced these points to a Bible study group in 2007, the blowback was swift and predictable,<sup>27</sup> and the reversal of true responsibility was total—“turning men into moral zeroes” as Rushdoony puts it.<sup>28</sup>

### Self-Abnegation

Joyce hammers the theme of woman’s self-abnegation under patriarchy quite a bit. The logic, as she sees it, is clear:

It should be a lesson to outside observers of the patriarchy and submission doctrines as well that to follow these ideas to their conclusion can mean, in very real ways, to disappear.<sup>29</sup>

One possible answer to Joyce can be found in Noelle Wheeler’s fascinating book, *Daughters of Destiny*, which details the prominence of many Christian women in ways utterly inconsistent with Joyce’s hasty conclusion.<sup>30</sup> Wheeler’s book puts to rest the caricatures that Joyce has prematurely universalized; perhaps Joyce would see things differently after reading it.

This deadly self-abnegation, as Joyce reports, takes several forms, including a prohibition against women owning property.<sup>31</sup> But Moses acknowledged that the daughters of Zelophehad indeed owned property (Num. 27:7, 36:8) that could not be alienated and absorbed by another tribe, while Proverbs 31:16 is self-attesting in this regard,

despite tendentious revisionists who feel justified in rewriting the Biblical text.

Joyce repeatedly asserts that patriarchalists uphold the husband's allegedly unlimited right to sexual access to his wife.<sup>32</sup> But Rushdoony was clear that Leviticus 20:18 "placed the woman beyond the man's use for regular intervals of time ... No man can thus make a woman his creature, nor can any woman make herself a man's creature."<sup>33</sup> Ezekiel speaks of such relations as an evil, unjustifiable humbling of the woman (Ezek. 22:10).<sup>34</sup> Joyce keeps suggesting that the problem before her eyes is *too much* Biblical literalism, but the truth is that the problem is actually *still not enough* Biblical literalism!

One problem is that Joyce seems to think "dying to the self" to be the sole lot of women, whereas this general concept applies equally to both men and women.<sup>35</sup> This idea is found upon the lips of the greatest man born of women, John the Baptist, who made it clear that "He must increase, but I must decrease" (John 3:30). This statement by John the Baptist naturally brings us to a consideration of a key prophecy about him found in Malachi 4:6: "[H]e shall turn the heart of the fathers to the children, and the heart of the children to their fathers, lest I come and smite the earth with a curse."

### Turning the Hearts of Which Fathers?

Malachi 4:6, a text sloganized by various patriarchy groups, is referenced by Kathryn Joyce several times.<sup>36</sup> Patriarchalists routinely quote this prophecy about John the Baptist's coming because they believe it concerns the strengthening of family ties between fathers and sons and *between fathers and daughters*. The problems with this view are fairly serious: (1) there is no New Testament evidence that John the Baptist did any such thing; (2) it is based on the

Septuagint reading that St. Augustine expressly said was a false rendering of the Hebrew; (3) the sin that would lead to the curse is that described in Malachi 3:5, not 4:6; and (4) the term "fathers" in this prophecy should refer to the "fathers in the faith," Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, while the "children" were their ungodly descendants in the current generation (see also Malachi 2:4–9 and verse 10, "... every man against his brother, profaning the covenant of our fathers"). John the Baptist *did* call upon his generation to repent, challenging their claim of having *Abraham as their father* (Matt. 3:9).

These conflicting expositions of Malachi 4:6 often appear side by side, sometimes literally from the same pulpit, as they did at Chalcedon's Atlanta Conference in 2005 when the intra-family interpretation was referenced by Doug Phillips and the cross-generational interpretation<sup>37</sup> was disclosed by this author.

Doug Phillips, to his credit, has affirmed that after several generations of neglect, there will inevitably be growing pains involved in putting legs back under a Biblically informed relational consensus. Said he, "We're still working out the details, and we're likely to make mistakes, but we'll learn from them and ultimately get it right." We suspect that Malachi 4:6 will be part of this corrective process as well.

Among issues that will be corrected (sooner than later, we trust) is the projected use of boycotts. Boycotts by the patriarchalists are touched on at least twice in Joyce's book,<sup>38</sup> but there is strong Biblical evidence that boycotts are illegitimate weapons for Christians to use.<sup>39</sup>

Pronatalism (an emphasis on large families) provokes Joyce to quote Doug Phillips's observation that had past generations of Christians been fertile, the

people of God would now outnumber the secularists, and "the army of God would be more powerful in this hour."<sup>40</sup> She quotes an anonymous doctor who claimed that for patriarchalists, "the womb is seen as a weapon of demographic warfare."<sup>41</sup> But since God is in control of the womb, He can and will supernaturally impose antinatalism on the wicked, as in Psalm 109:13: "Let his posterity be cut off; and in the generation following let their name be blotted out." In contrast to this, God's people have the blessing of "declaring his righteousness to a people not yet born" (Ps. 22:31).

### The Ultimate Problem: A Conflict of Interest

After all is said and done, Kathryn Joyce has a fundamental issue with the idea that *the family is the basic unit of society*. She considers it axiomatic that *the individual is the basic unit of society*. For her, the family should serve and equip the individual, and in her telling of it, patriarchalists invert this and subsume the individual completely under the family, causing the "de-selving" of the females in the family.

We have here, then, an asserted *conflict of interest* between the family and the individuals comprising it, and not a harmony of interests. The assumed conflict of interest is then decided either in favor of the family (patriarchy) or the individual (feminism)—familistic collectivism versus atomistic individualism and egalitarianism.<sup>42</sup>

Rushdoony has clearly demonstrated that God's law specifically protects and upholds the family and its rights. Nonetheless, Rushdoony is *no less stringent* in extolling the Bible's forthright protection of the *individual*, of *women in particular*, and has shown that the rights of a woman often trump the husband's or family's prerogatives. Within Rushdoony's exposition of Scripture,

a true *harmony of interests* prevails. And only within a balanced, totalistic Biblical worldview is a true (rather than synthetic) harmony of interests possible. Just as unity and multiplicity are equally co-ultimate in the Trinity, both find equipoise in God's law respecting families and individuals.

If some patriarchal groups run roughshod over the individual, it's not because they're applying God's law, but rather because they are *not applying its every jot and tittle*. The resulting conflict of interest that arises is thus based on a false dichotomy. Feminists and patriarchalists then play a dialectical game, taking their thesis and the opponents' antithesis and creating a synthesis that's arbitrarily bent in their camp's direction. They necessarily talk past one another.

Yes, Rushdoony undisputedly held that the family was the basic unit of society. That statement can be found hundreds of times throughout his voluminous published works. But what Kathryn Joyce missed was Rushdoony's equally emphasized idea that the *fundamental government* in the world is *self-government*. Because Joyce evidently thinks in comfortably statist categories (the framework where feminist political power is ostensibly wielded), this self-government concept is quite alien to her and is never properly integrated into her research. Therefore, she sets forth the prevailing *conflict of interest* and asserts her side's agenda in terms of it. The patriarchalists will also ratchet up the *conflict of interest* as well in the name of emphasizing the famed "antithesis."

We will know we're on the right path when a *true* harmony of interests prevails. Such a harmony will arise only when God's law is treated totalistically, for only then shall both family and individual find their ultimate footing. Until then, both sides will continue to hammer square pegs into round holes. 🚧

1. Kathryn Joyce, *Quiverfull: Inside the Christian Patriarchy Movement* (Boston: Beacon Press, 2009). It is noteworthy that Joyce never sailed under false colors when "infiltrating" groups and meetings, making it clear to others that she was an unsaved nonbeliever. Such candor is all too rare.
2. Martin G. Selbrede, "The Emperor's Continued Nudity: Jeff Sharlet's Critique of Historiography Examined," *Faith for All of Life*, Mar/Apr 2007, 16f. See also Selbrede, "The World in God's Fist: The Meaning of History," *Faith for All of Life*, Jul/Aug 2008, 23f.
3. Michael McVicar, "Working With Pygmies: R. J. Rushdoony, *Christianity Today*, and the Making of an American Theologian," *Faith for All of Life*, Jul/Aug 2008, 14f. See also McVicar, "'First Owyhee, Then the World': The Early Ministry of R. J. Rushdoony," *Faith for All of Life*, Nov/Dec 2008, 18f.
4. It would be a disservice to Joyce to fail to acknowledge the considerable evidence she brings to light, but the same disservice applies the other way as well when evidence put forward by critics of feminism is disdained. In point of fact, *neither* side's evidence should be dismissed because their mutual indictments are two sides of the same bad coin. Both sides see their opponents as tendentious and biased; ironically, they're both right in making that judgment. Arguing across presuppositional systems generates this kind of inherent fruitlessness: the tendency to talk past one another is all but guaranteed.
5. Anna Sofia Botkin and Elizabeth Botkin, *So Much More: The Remarkable Influence of Visionary Daughters on the Kingdom of God* (San Antonio: The Vision Forum, Inc., 2005–2007, 4th printing).
6. Our readership would naturally extend charity and grace to the authors in deference to both their youthfulness and the circumstance that many of their ideas are, in the nature of the case, admittedly derivative. However, writing in terms of moral mandates that bind the conscience is no small matter. In the interest of full disclosure, I acknowledge that I do count the Botkin family as dear friends. Nonetheless, *So Much*

*More* warrants revision, not only due to trivially mundane issues (e.g., a disruptive twenty-one-word typographic instruction on page 198 has yet to be removed after four printings) but also with respect to substantive issues, such as those identified in the main text of this article. Furthermore, while the Botkins' book quotes Rushdoony's works, the connection between the quotes and the Botkins' application of them is sometimes tenuous and strained. This flaw marks far more mature authors too, and so we'd expect the Botkins to take constructive criticisms to heart as they plan the tightening up of this first effort, one significant enough to catch the attention of critics like Kathryn Joyce.

7. John Piper and Wayne Grudem, *50 Crucial Questions: An Overview of Central Concerns about Manhood and Womanhood* (The Council on Biblical Manhood & Womanhood, 1992). Appropriately, Joyce directs attention (pp. 16–17, and elsewhere) toward the CBMW, publisher of this booklet and issuer of similar manifesto-like statements that bear on the patriarchy question, seeing such ideas as ultimately justifying the oppression and "abject submission" of women (p. 43).

8. One must note that one side believes the millions of lives lost in abortion clinics, half of whom were unborn women, should likewise be placed on the scales when measuring relative "harm" being done by the opposing side's agenda, but worldviews invariably predetermine the admissibility of such evidence.

9. Joyce, 226. Joyce correctly asserts that the Botkins pulled these quotes from "the antiabortion Web site Fathers for Life." See Botkin & Botkin, 329–333. Original source citations would have reflected better on the two authors, who (perhaps wisely) placed this material in an appendix. While the quotations are *prima facie* quite damning against feminism, they stand to divert our attention from the primary focus of this essay.

10. R. J. Rushdoony, *Roots of Reconstruction* (Vallecito, CA: Ross House Books, 1991), 34f.

11. *Ibid.*, 111f.

12. *Ibid.*, 168f.

13. Ibid., 215f.

14. Rushdoony points out that “one reason for the uneasiness of many men at the feminist challenge is that the indictment strikes home” (Ibid., 172). The women’s liberation movement he saw as demanding the same irresponsibilities for women that men had claimed for themselves (p. 169); he consequently sees the solution in terms of reasserting responsibility, not institutionalizing yet more irresponsibility. Further, Rushdoony consistently undermines bald appeals to 1 Peter 3:1–7’s teaching concerning Sarah’s relationship with Abraham by emphasizing the narratives of Genesis 16:5 and 21:12 concerning Sarah’s ultimatums to Abraham (which God endorsed). Rushdoony notes of Genesis 21:12 that it is a passage “men rarely if ever use as a sermon text!” (p. 215). An extended exhibition of Rushdoony’s refusal to be pigeonholed by the commonly assumed strictures of patriarchal thinking can be found in the DVD series *The Ten Commandments for Today*. His interlocutor, Rev. Brian Abshire, tries unsuccessfully to get Rushdoony to agree with him that women must only work as housekeepers at home. Rushdoony, seeing the bigger picture of economic harm inflicted on families by unbiblical statist policies, repeatedly confounds Abshire’s expectations, showing that while the questions may have been scripted, Rushdoony’s answers definitely were not.

15. Joyce, 222. Ms. Joyce’s rhetorical excesses usually arise when “speaking to the choir,” her target audience, something she has in common with many of her opponents. We are grateful to her for providing the correct plural form of Dorothy, of which we were previously unaware.

16. Joyce, 13, 26, and elsewhere, including the back flap of the dust jacket.

17. She could have done so had she been familiar with Rev. Scott Brown’s book, *Family Reformation: The Legacy of Sola Scriptura in Calvin’s Geneva* (Wake Forest, NC: Merchant Adventurers, 2009). Brown collates the bulk of Calvin’s writings on the question of family, women, daughters, and marriage. The text in many places contradicts assertions reported in Joyce’s book, e.g., Calvin’s view of a daughter’s consent to marriage (p.

242). Brown informs us, “Feminists tell us that a wife under submission is a doormat and a slave. Calvin believed otherwise” (p. 127). Had Joyce dug deeper, she’d have found the correct roots of Biblical patriarchy and could have identified inconsistencies that had since accumulated in the movement. She reports but fails to analyze or synthesize the data except as it supports her preconceived thesis concerning “good, solid, patriarchal, male supremacist theology” (p. 85, quoting Andersen). She therefore cites (favorably, it seems) Andersen’s revisionist creed that “Everything that we read in the Bible isn’t from heaven” (p. 88).

18. Joyce, 161f. The influence of the cultic Woroniecki, “who believes that only he and his family are saved among all the world’s Christians and non-Christians alike” (p. 162), is properly acknowledged by Joyce as the dominant factor in the Yates tragedy.

19. Joyce, 83f (the entire eighth chapter of her book, entitled “Submission and Abuse,” is apposite).

20. R. J. Rushdoony, *The Cure of Souls* (Vallecito, CA: Ross House Books, 2007), 214. See other cases Rushdoony cites on pages 131–132, 200–201, and elsewhere in this landmark posthumously published volume. The prevailing pattern Rushdoony reprehends is laid out on page 230: “Of late, several women have consulted me, and have provided documentation of their victimization by their husbands and their churches” (more egregious illustrations follow this statement).

21. Joyce, 26. The full quote reads, “There’s a temptation to look for Rushdoony’s influence in the wrong places, aligning his thought with the clumsily crusading Bush administration and the publicity of a Christian political class determined to take power in any way possible.” Joyce credits McVicar for these important insights.

22. Joyce, xi–xiv, esp. xiii. The hint of “the possible resurrection of [Ted’s] good name” is astonishing on theonomic grounds, let alone the clear teaching of Ezekiel 34:10 where such shepherds are *permanently* removed from tending the flock so that *they may no longer feed themselves* as shepherds.

23. R. J. Rushdoony, *The Institutes of Bibli-*

*cal Law, Vol. 2: Law and Society* (Vallecito, CA: Ross House Books, 1989), 478f.

24. Joyce, 80.

25. Rushdoony, *The Cure of Souls*, 200.

26. Joyce, 38, describes the “modesty survey” on the Rebelution blog in precisely this way. Such thinking on the part of Christians evidences a studied ignorance of St. James’ argument concerning the true source of temptation: one’s own lusts. Evil is always a moral concern, never a metaphysical one. To hold to the latter is to adopt Manichaeism over Christianity.

27. When the women in this group upheld their dress as “modest,” I pointed out that if we had brought St. Paul back from the first century and dropped him into this church meeting room, he would likely have assumed all the women present were prostitutes. For a better than average evaluation of these questions, Phillip Kayser’s booklet, *Dressed Up for Church: A Contrarian Rag on Appropriate Clothing* (Omaha, NE: Biblical Blueprints, 2006, 2009) has some useful insights. Although Dr. Kayser is a friend of mine whom I hold in high esteem, I do not find his exegetical/theological case to be particularly strong, but in the land of the blind, the one-eyed man is king. Dr. Kayser’s orientation is impeccable, even if his execution doesn’t quite bring this difficult topic under control.

28. Ibid., 229f. It should also be pointed out, as an aside, that if men don’t look, demand is reduced and supply will fall accordingly. Men’s failure to “hold their vessel in honor” and maintain a covenant with their own eyes invariably creates the demand. For a different perspective, see Jeff Pollard, *Christian Modesty and the Public Undressing of America* (San Antonio, TX: The Vision Forum, Inc., 2004–2008), esp. pp. 63–69. As it turns out, Pollard quotes the passage from Job 31 (pp. 49, 51) but doesn’t let it divert him from his thesis or from essentially charging any would-be critics of “mental gymnastics not befitting a Christian” (p. 65). Canvassing the justly revered works of the Puritans, Pollard cites (among others) Thomas Manton to the effect that women’s failure to fully cover up “lays a snare for the soul” of men (p. 67). Unfortunately, this

again plays into the heresy of environmental determinism: at this point, the Puritans had a blind spot no less serious than their inadvertent adoption of the hegemony of autonomous reason over revelation via Thomas Aquinas. Nonetheless, Pollard does us a service in attempting to lay out a Biblical argument. The validity and exegetical soundness of his intriguing arguments (esp. regarding Genesis 3:21) and backup documentation can then be evaluated on the merits. Although he mentions the robes given to the saints in Revelation 6:9–11, he doesn't touch on the fact that they were apparently unisex apparel (setting aside the question of what a disembodied soul is able to wear in the first place).

29. Joyce, xiv.

30. Noelle Wheeler, *Daughters of Destiny* (Bulverde, TX: Mantle Ministries, 2000).

31. Joyce, 28: "And women would certainly be second class citizens, not property owners."

32. Joyce, 53, 79, 136.

33. R. J. Rushdoony, *The Institutes of Biblical Law, Vol. 1* (Cherry Hill, NJ: Presbyterian & Reformed, 1973), 429. The entire section, pp. 427–430, is apposite.

34. *Ibid.*, 428.

35. Joyce, 12.

36. Joyce, 223 in particular.

37. Ernst W. Hengstenberg, *Christology of the Old Testament, Vol. 2* (MacDill AFB, FL: MacDonald Publishing Company, n.d.), 1234–1238. This exposition dominates Reformed commentaries on Malachi.

38. Joyce, 33, 170.

39. If ever there was occasion for a boycott from today's ill-considered perspective, it was in Nehemiah 13:15–21, but Nehemiah never objected to transacting business with unbelievers who used the proceeds for evil purposes, he objected rather to transacting business on the Sabbath. Christians have reversed this completely, glibly shopping on the Sabbath while boycotting companies because of what they do with their money, in forgetfulness of Ezekiel 18:1–5's clear assertions about direct individual responsibility. Use of such carnal weapons (2 Cor. 10:4) entails their use in revenge against Chris-

tians, since those who live by the sword will likewise die by it.

40. Joyce, 157. The thought Doug Phillips (a staunch Calvinist) expressed is inadvertently anti-Calvinistic and deals in "heretical hypotheticals" primarily for their rhetorical (teaching) effect. Joyce may not have caught that didactic nuance. Joyce repeats this charge on page 201: "[T]he pro-family movement's focus on procreation ... requires a world of women to dedicate their lives and wombs to demographic battle," a view no less dangerous, in Joyce's telling of it, than Yassir Arafat's opinion that the wombs of Arab women are his secret weapon, or, more ominously yet, the mindset driving the Nazi Lebensborn breeding program. Joyce also draws attention to the concept of a demographic winter. All these numbers games miss the point: if those who adopt the name "Christian" actually took the Bible *seriously*, the battle would already be won for Christendom. The poor *quality* of today's Christians is hurting us far more than the numerical *quantity* of Christians!

41. Joyce, 185.

42. The issue of political power for women often lies at the heart of the egalitarian question. Patriarchalists cite the third chapter of Isaiah to prove that "women in power over men" is a sign of God's judgment on a nation. As a bald fact, this is true enough. However, from a practical point of view, patriarchalists regard *the placing of women into political office* as the *cause* of God's judgment, rather than *a consequence of His judgment*. But taking Isaiah 3 contextually, God decimates the land of competent males (the "stay and the staff") so that the best rulers remaining are women. This reflects on something that Rushdoony calls "The Failure of Men" (cf. note 12). Women in power are the medicine God dishes out to Israel to shame the men. To reject God's prescribed judgment on the nation is to compound that judgment. Some patriarchalists treat it as axiomatic that no Christian should vote to put a woman into political office, even if the woman adopts rigorously Biblical positions across the board, because her gender represents an instant disqualification. Such patriarchalists are forced to abstain from voting altogether, or knowingly vote for a

male candidate who will undermine justice and further enslave them. More commendable would be attempts to raise up *better men* for office who will honor their oaths of office and uphold justice, and to take one's medicine in the meantime. Israel refused to realize they'd reached a point of no return (Deut. 1:41–46) and tried to reverse the judgment against them presumptuously. Although they were instructed to accept the ignominy of the later Babylonian exile (Jer. 29:4ff), and warned that fighting against the Babylonians would be fruitless (Jer. 32:5, and elsewhere), many still refused to take their medicine, to their own hurt. Theonomically, the standard for a ruler ("being just and ruling in the fear of God," where justice is defined wholly with respect to God's law) would be the one to apply (meaning that I'm obviously not referring to Sarah Palin or any other statist), and if a woman fills that criterion better than any male candidate, *that is the form that God's judgment is taking on that people*. There is, therefore, some authority for regarding any subsequent vote for the male candidate as an attempt to defang the divine judgment laid out in Isaiah 3. This egalitarian question is exacerbated in the case of women attorneys who work tirelessly to save lives in futile care and right-to-life cases, often doing so in a vacuum where no men are laboring, and yet the woman is excoriated for *usurping male prerogatives*. She valiantly fights Christ's enemies in front of her, and is shot from behind by Christ's friends. "The LORD looked and was displeased that there was no justice. He saw that there was no one, he was appalled that there was no one to intervene" (Isa. 59:15b–16a NIV). But some think God would be more appalled if a woman stands in the very gap that men failed to stand in, an attitude at least somewhat akin to the Sanhedrin's reaction to Christ's cleansing of the Temple (they knew it should have been cleansed, but were offended when Christ cleansed it before they got around to it).

# Turf Warfare: Equipping Families in Pulling Down the Strongholds of the Enemies of God

Andrea Schwartz



When I was first learning arithmetic, I remember being corrected when I attempted to subtract a larger number from a smaller one. It was dutifully explained that if I started with only eight objects, it was impossible to take away ten. That made sense to me, and I was satisfied because I now knew the “truth” about numbers. In later grades, the subject of integers arose, and I was angry when I discovered there were such things as negative numbers. I was livid! Why had my teachers lied to me? It turns out that you *can* take larger numbers away from smaller ones. My mother attempted to console me in my wrath, explaining that conventional wisdom did not think small children could understand this advanced concept. By the time I was teaching my own children in a home-school setting, I better understood the choices my teachers had made. Yet, I was certain to qualify my instruction of subtraction with the disclaimer, “You can’t subtract a larger number from a smaller one, in most cases.” When asked about those cases, I responded with examples that would make sense to each child. For my son, I explained it was like someone who spends money he does not have and overdraws a checking account, resulting in a negative balance. For my daughter, who had grown up around the golf world, the explanation was much easier since in golf, scoring involves the use of negative numbers for good shots—birdies and eagles.

I recount this because the perspective that children are unable to deal with “difficult” concepts often transfers to areas more important than arithmetic. It seriously underestimates what young ones can comprehend. In matters of Scripture, many parents shy away from “unpleasant” subjects like hell, sin, punishment, God’s wrath, and condemnation because they wish to present a picture of the faith that is pleasant and inviting. By assuming these ideas and realities are beyond their children’s grasp, the substance of the gospel is lost because the antithesis is not presented. Children have the capacity to digest these concepts and respond with the honest, emotional responses that Jesus commended (Mark 10:15). Contrary to the nonsensical ideas of child psychology, children are not injured when they are told the truth about their depravity. However, this view is not rampant among secularists alone.

Dr. Rushdoony, theologian and founder of the Chalcedon Foundation, recounts an incident from his childhood that became a defining moment for him. From a very early age, he had been an avid reader of the Bible, having read it through a half a dozen times or more by the time he was in his teens. When he was about ten or eleven, a congregational minister, rather than being delighted that someone so young was such a serious student of God’s Word, was shocked when he learned that Rush had already read the *entire* Bible, cross-examining him as to whether he had, in

fact, read *everything*. Because the pastor kept pressing the point, Rushdoony remembers being very embarrassed and horrified that there was something wrong with certain passages of the Bible.

This incident had a different result than the “well-meaning” minister intended. Rushdoony, in relating this story, said that it naturally predisposed him to take everything in Scripture very seriously and to believe that it was all the Word of God and therefore all binding. He credits this perspective with predisposing him as a child to Biblical law.<sup>1</sup>

However, it is not enough to identify for children their need of a Savior. Children born into Christian families are also born into the front lines of warfare for Christ’s Kingdom, against the unregenerate world. Christian parents must teach their children to understand this, as soon as possible, and to live with God’s Word as the openly acknowledged authority in every area of life.

## The Covenantal Model

As Christian parents raise their children in the nurture and admonition of the Lord, it is important to place the emphasis on *teaching* the faith rather than pushing for a profession of faith. Rebirth in Christ is a supernatural act of God, and no amount of prompting, manipulating, or cajoling will produce a regenerated servant of Christ.

Being born into a believing family does not guarantee a saving faith. So, if the parents’ role is not to persuade, what is it? The answer lies in God’s prescription for family bonds found in Deuter-

onomy, where God instructs parents to make it their number one priority to *teach* their children God's precepts, etc., morning, noon, and night.

4. Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God is one LORD:

5. And thou shalt love the LORD thy God with all thine heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy might.

6. And these words, which I command thee this day, shall be in thine heart:

7. And thou shalt teach them diligently unto thy children, and shalt talk of them when thou sittest in thine house, and when thou walkest by the way, and when thou liest down, and when thou risest up.

8. And thou shalt bind them for a sign upon thine hand, and they shall be as frontlets between thine eyes. (Deut. 6:4–8)

Whether or not children are of God's elect, Christian parents should expect them to behave in accordance with God's mandates while under the care and jurisdiction of their parents. As time goes by and they are steeped in the principles and tenets of the faith, if God grants them new birth, there will be no need to cajole them to embrace the faith fully: they will seek out ways to satisfy their hunger and thirst for righteousness. Rushdoony makes this point in his discussion of election when he notes,

[O]ur election is not our choice, but God's choice. St. Paul tells us that, apart from our election and salvation in Jesus Christ, we are "dead in trespasses and sins" (Eph. 2:1; Col. 2:13). Dead men cannot make choices. The sinner, insofar as any ability to save himself is concerned, is a dead man. He is given over to death and hell. His salvation is a miracle, and miracles are certainly not made by sinners or dead men!<sup>2</sup>

### An Earthly Illustration

Recently I asked my youngest daughter to tell me when she knew that she was a Schwartz. At first, she gave me an erudite answer, "I never had any doubt I was a Schwartz." I told her not to evaluate in hindsight, but to tell me her first recollection that she was part of our particular family and not another. After thinking a short while, she said she knew she was a member of our family when she was around other families whose children could have as much candy and as many treats as they wanted *and* who were not required to ask permission before they did. She also noted that since our family observed the Biblical dietary laws, she was not always free to eat anything at a church potluck, friends' homes, or extended family gatherings, but needed to inquire what was in a particular dish so she could eat or not eat accordingly. These seemingly small matters helped her see her identity.<sup>3</sup>

When she was very young, her dad and I made sure she knew her name and where she lived in case she ever got lost, but the realization of her identity came when she viewed herself in a greater context than our family. She was never under the impression that she had chosen which family she was born into, or that she had established the rules and regulations that were a part of membership in our family. She grew into an understanding of her role as daughter and sister, and embraced these roles more fully as she matured and attained greater comprehension. We did not have to persuade her to be a Schwartz. She was a Schwartz, and as she matured, that became more and more real.

In a like matter, we do not determine if and when we are going to be born again. This is supremely an act of God in us and in our children. From a parental point of view, we provide the context and guidelines for being a cov-

enant child, and as the child matures, he embraces this identity, even if he is unable to pinpoint the exact moment of his conversion. However, if he has been raised with the knowledge of God's law being the governing rule of conduct, then when the reality of his heart of stone being turned into a heart of flesh becomes apparent (Ezek. 36:26), he is better able to understand the tutoring he had received that led to comprehending the magnitude of his conversion. It is in this way that Christian family culture is nurtured.

### Christian Family Culture

Henry R. Van Til noted that *culture is religion externalized*. Thus, every Christian family has a family culture that either reflects God's law-word as the starting and ending points for all actions and decisions, or it does not. As God's law-word is taken seriously, decisions regarding educational choices, where the family will live, selection of friends, and the choice of a church congregation will be dictated by that standard. Although rarely exercised in a fully consistent manner, our goal should be to treat God's directives not as a smorgasbord from which to choose, or according to our personal likes and dislikes, but as fully authoritative, setting aside personal preferences.

As God's foundational institution, the health of the Biblical family will be the barometer of the health of the church, the state, and the health of the culture in general. When Scripture is the standard, the Christian family becomes a strong foundation and a strong participant in all cultural institutions. It is in *this* context that the doctrine of election can have the greatest impact.

[W]e are not only *chosen* by God the Son, but *ordained* by Him. To *ordain* (*tithemi*) means to appoint to a particular form of service. It is a serious distortion of Scripture to limit the meaning and scope of salvation and

ordination to our rescue from reprobation. Such a focus is common to Calvinists and Arminians alike; men are saved from wrath, from hell, and are redeemed for heaven, we are often told. This is a dangerous partial truth which results in humanism. It reduces the goal of salvation to man, and man's security, whereas Our Lord declares that it points beyond us.<sup>4</sup>

This ordination to service necessitates that Christian parents embrace the reality of the war that has been ongoing since the fall of man and will extend until the culmination of history. Indicative of their resolve to be counted among those on the Lord's side will be the Christian education of their children, acquainting the children with and equipping them for the daily battles for their hearts and minds. Since the earth is the Lord's and the fullness thereof, His people are *daily* involved in a war between principalities and powers in high places that are intensely opposed to letting the light of the Christian family and its individual members advance in the culture and claim ground for Jesus Christ. Covenant children need to understand that as Christians, their light (the reflected light of Jesus Christ) is in view wherever they go. Rather than believe they can make truces with the devil, they need to appreciate that their very presence in a covenant household places them on the scope of God's enemies.

As they move in and through a dark world, they will be targeted by the powers of darkness and evildoers who do all in their power to marginalize Christians, move them off the narrow path, and promote defeat. Those who decide to "remain neutral" in this conflict, wishing to play it safe, should realize there are no God-free zones. Either they are for Christ or against Him; there is no middle ground. The enemies of God know this; it is time that the Christian family realizes this fully.

## The Full Armor of God

Christian children need to be taught that the entire earth is contested ground and usurpers can only be effectively challenged with the weapons ordained for this warfare—the full armor of God (Eph. 6:11–17). These are the very weapons that God's enemies hope God's children never discover, or if discovered, never use! For when Christians stand in truth, with righteousness, ready to share the good news of Jesus Christ according to His rules for establishing a godly culture, God's enemies on earth and in the spiritual realms are rightly disturbed. Their strategy to win the turf war is to convince the people of God not to fight!

Protected by our faith, which is our shield, strengthened by the helmet of salvation, which directs our thoughts and undergirds our knowledge, Christian families thus apply the law-word of God (our sword, or weapon of attack) to individual lives and our culture as a whole. This is how we destroy the strongholds of the enemy where unbelief and wickedness rule, so that the truth of God's Word can bring forth healing.

If one is not schooled in these realities, and is taught instead a nicey-nice religion of compromise, watered-down doctrine, and appeasement, the enemies of God have much less to worry about. However, when ambassadors of Christ move in their various positions and influence their individual spheres, the victory that the Bible teaches Christ won at Calvary will be increasingly visible.

As we teach and pray the Lord's Prayer, we are proclaiming the victory accomplished by the cross and sealed with the resurrection and ascension. That is why this prayer ends with the acclamation: "For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory." God already knows this about Himself. We repeat it in acknowledgment that we are part of that victory. In our own strength,

we are no match for the devil. However, in the power of the risen Christ, the devil flees from us (James 4:7).

## Take Off the Blinders; Put On the Glasses

The lies that permeate our culture are meant to discourage and sidetrack the people of God. Even those who witnessed Jesus' death remained covered in a room and ineffective Kingdom workers until they were given spiritual eyes to see and ears to hear what their physical eyes and ears had seen and heard. When the blinders came off and the glasses of God's Word were used, thanks to the gift of the Holy Spirit, the disciples turned the world upside down. It is no different today. Although our situation seems dire, we have no business proceeding in the Lord's service with a defeatist attitude. We must come into the presence of the living God with thanksgiving in our hearts and into His throne room with words of praise on our lips. The good news is that the enemy has been defeated and we are privileged to be a part of the clean up operation to establish the crown rights of Jesus.

[T]o become productive, we obey God's commandments (John 15:14). To be productive in Jesus Christ is not a vague and gushy fact: it is the reality of taking God's law-word seriously and applying it to every area of life and thought.<sup>5</sup>

## Discerning the Battleground

It is a romantic illusion that the turf wars exist only out in the culture. While it is true that the hijacked arena of the university and the morally reprobate mass media are competing for the hearts and minds of young people, the devil can have a field day in families where God's authority structure is abandoned and the interpersonal relationships of family members are not governed by God's law-word.

How many perceive themselves to be faithful servants of Christ when it comes to dealing with strangers and potential converts, but have no compunction about dishonoring a parent or failing to fully nurture and train their children? Unfortunately, too many have bought into the idea that holiness need not be of primary importance as they deal within their family culture. Can we bear fruit elsewhere if we do not bear fruit in our families?

[O]ur Lord tells us that we are ordained to bear fruit, to be productive. We are compared here to fruit trees; a good tree bears fruit. A little earlier, our Lord compares us to the branches of a vine, Himself, “the true vine” (John 15:1). Again, the emphasis is not on being in the Lord or in the vine, but on bearing fruit. “Every branch in me that beareth not fruit he taketh away and every branch that beareth fruit he purgeth it, that it might bring forth more fruit” (John 15:2). Thus, God either casts us, as dead branches, into the fire (John 15:6), or else He prunes to make us more productive. Very plainly, all of God’s dealings with us are designed, not to give us comfort in our salvation, but to make us productive. We cannot resist that purging and pruning without resisting God. Our desire to have a comfortable corner and an easy life have no standing before Him.<sup>6</sup>

It is an illusion that one can bear fruit elsewhere if such is not evident within the family environment. That is why hands-on, responsible parenting involves making this a number one priority.

### The Promised Land

When Jesus commissioned the church prior to His ascension, He expanded the scope of the Promised Land to include the entire world. As we fully engage in the turf war that we find ourselves in, we can take comfort and direction from the words originally given to Joshua to be shared with the

families of Israel,

**3. Every place that the sole of your foot shall tread upon, that have I given unto you, as I said unto Moses.**

**5. There shall not any man be able to stand before thee all the days of thy life: as I was with Moses, so I will be with thee: I will not fail thee, nor forsake thee.**

**6. Be strong and of a good courage: for unto this people shalt thou divide for an inheritance the land, which I sware unto their fathers to give them.**

**7. Only be thou strong and very courageous, that thou mayest observe to do according to all the law, which Moses my servant commanded thee: turn not from it to the right hand or to the left, that thou mayest prosper whithersoever thou goest.**

**8. This book of the law shall not depart out of thy mouth; but thou shalt meditate therein day and night, that thou mayest observe to do according to all that is written therein: for then thou shalt make thy way prosperous, and then thou shalt have good success.**

**9. Have not I commanded thee? Be strong and of a good courage; be not afraid, neither be thou dismayed: for the LORD thy God is with thee whithersoever thou goest. (Josh. 1)**

As we go and make disciples of all nations, let us remember that the covenant children of Christian families have an enormous role to play in the sharing of the gospel of Jesus Christ. As they are taught the reality of their depravity and the awesome grace of God to save, they will be better equipped to silence the foe and the avenger (Ps. 8). 

1. Excerpted from the transcript of an oral history given by R. J. Rushdoony to Janet Larson.

2. Rousas John Rushdoony, *Systematic Theology* (Vallecito, CA: Ross House Books, 1994), Vol. 1, 522.

3. Our children were also taught not to use either of these Schwartz distinctives as a way to act in a superior or an inferior manner. These were family rules, and the children were expected to comply without “attitude.”

4. Rushdoony, Vol. 1, 522.

5. Rushdoony, Vol. 1, 523.

6. Rushdoony, Vol. 1, 523.

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### M. Rushdoony ... Money cont. from page 6

The economic laws, which are applications of “Thou shalt not steal,” will prove insurmountable. Do not look to politicians or bankers to solve the problem. The solution will come in spite of them, and it will be a difficult one. Our managed fiat money represents a socialistic revolution in U.S. history. Changing to an honest money will be no less a momentous change, however necessary and overdue. 

1. R. J. Rushdoony, *Politics of Guilt and Pity* (Vallecito, CA: Ross House Books, 1970, 1995), 234.

2. Fiat money is something declared money by the power of the state without any intrinsic value.

3. Legal tender laws are necessary to fiat money. Without them, the marketplace would not accept the state’s notes in trade.

4. Legal tender laws mean “good” money becomes a commodity and is no longer circulated as currency because its market price is increased.

5. One reason the massive inflation represented by the Bush-Obama stimulus packages has not yet produced inflation is that much of those fiat dollars have not found their way into the economy. Much of it was used by banks to recapitalize themselves. When those dollars begin to be loaned, the influx of dollars will be noticeable and an inflationary boom will likely result.

# Book Review: *Intellectuals and Society* by Thomas Sowell

(New York: Basic Books, 2009) Review by Lee Duigon



This is both a brilliant book and a maddening one—brilliant because Dr. Sowell has with searing accuracy skewered intellectuals, and maddening because he has not addressed the nature of the problem.

The problem is “intellectuals”—in particular the intellectuals of the Western world today—and their baleful, sometimes disastrous influence on society. Sowell explains who the intellectuals are, what they believe, and how they influence the world. Practically all of what they believe is wrong, and practically all of their influence has been for the worse.

Before we discuss what Dr. Sowell has missed, let’s look at some of the many direct hits he scores against his target.

## Who Are They?

As defined by Sowell, “An intellectual’s work begins and ends with ideas” (p. 3), and intellectuals are those “whose occupations deal primarily with ideas—writers, academics, and the like” (p. 2). Actual intelligence, let alone wisdom, has nothing to do with it.

Sowell repeatedly points out that people like engineers, surgeons, and chess masters are just as intelligent (if not more so!) as any professor of sociology, women’s studies, or linguistics. An engineer, a surgeon, or a chess master is not a pure “intellectual,” because he performs work in the real world and that

work must meet objective, real-world standards. An engineer who designs bridges that fall down will be considered a failure. No such standard applies to an intellectual who spouts inanities. “George Orwell said that some ideas are so foolish that only an intellectual could believe them, for no ordinary man could be such a fool,” writes Sowell (p. 2).

Intellectuals claim to possess special knowledge that qualifies them to make decisions for the rest of society. “John Dewey, for example, spelled it out: ‘Having the knowledge we may set hopefully at work upon a course of social invention and experimental engineering.’ But the ignored question,” Dr. Sowell adds, “is: Who—if anybody—has that kind of knowledge?” (p. 18). Who indeed?

John Dewey (1859–1952), the “pragmatic” philosopher, is one of Sowell’s favorite targets: this punching bag gets hit twenty-five times in the course of the book. A dominant figure in the intellectual history of the twentieth century, Dewey—to boil his thought down to its essentials—was a statist whose vision of “democracy” was a mass of docile plebeians micromanaged by a tiny class of intellectual patricians. For Sowell (and for us, too), Dewey is the quintessential elitist fathead who ordains himself an oracle for all of humankind. As such he is a typical intellectual.

## What Do They Believe?

What do intellectuals believe? Sowell draws on one of his earlier

books, *The Vision of the Anointed*, to show that intellectuals, overwhelmingly, share a particular vision of the world and their place in it. You might think there would be as many core beliefs as there are intellectuals, but you’d be wrong. Despite their incessant appeals to “diversity,” intellectuals display a surprising uniformity of thought.

To sum up this “vision of the anointed”:

- The world’s problems are not due to human nature but to faulty institutions such as the family, capitalism, religion, etc.
- If these institutions are properly torn down and reconfigured, the problems of the world will disappear.
- Intellectuals are uniquely qualified to do the reconfirming, and the rest of humanity should yield to them.

“Above all,” writes Dr. Sowell, “they exalt themselves by denigrating the society in which they live and turning its members against each other” (p. 313). He repeatedly chides them for their penchant for offering their “credentialed ignorance” as a substitute for actually knowing what they are talking about (p. 29).

Virtually to a man, or woman, Western intellectuals believe in big government, internationalism, redistribution of wealth, the promotion of sexual license as a form of “liberation,” and the creation of an earthly paradise by means

of government coercion following the prescriptions laid down by themselves. Sowell makes these points again and again throughout the book, so there is no need to reference page numbers.

### Why Do They Believe Such Things?

Here we must deviate from the usual procedure of a book review to explain something that Dr. Sowell has not explained—*why* do intellectuals believe as they do?

The explanation is simple: it's because intellectuals have explicitly rejected God.

Consider this from the preface to *Humanist Manifesto II*, a 1973 document signed by thousands of intellectuals, including hundreds of Nobel Prize winners in various fields:

“As in 1933”—the publication date of *Humanist Manifesto I*, written by John Dewey and others—“humanists still believe that traditional theism, especially faith in the prayer-hearing God, assumed to live and care for persons, to hear and understand their prayers, and to be able to do something about them, is an unproved and outmoded faith. Salvationism, based on mere affirmation, still appears as harmful, diverting people with false hopes of heaven hereafter. Reasonable minds look to other means for survival.”<sup>1</sup>

And a little further into the document:

“We believe, however, that traditional dogmatic or authoritarian religions that place revelation, God, ritual, or creed above human needs and experience do a disservice to the human species. Any account of nature should pass the tests of scientific evidence; in our judgment, the dogmas and myths of traditional religions do not do so . . . We find insufficient evidence for belief in the existence of a supernatural; it is either meaningless or irrelevant to the question of survival and fulfillment of

the human race . . . we can discover no divine purpose or providence for the human species.”<sup>2</sup>

There it is—the very foundation of what intellectuals believe. It could not be more plainly stated.

Having rejected God, it is inevitable that just about everything else intellectuals believe will be wrong: “Professing themselves to be wise, they became fools” (Rom. 1:22). Why should this lead them into error? R. J. Rushdoony explains:

“But if God has created heaven and earth and all things therein, and has decreed beforehand all things that come to pass (Acts 15:18, Rom. 9, etc.), then nothing can be understood apart from the sovereign God and his word.”<sup>3</sup>

Rushdoony also speaks of “the elitism which marks the intellectual. The intellectual believes that his rationality gives him an autonomy from God and from the herd-like emotions and appetites of the masses. As a result, he feels that he can determine what is good or evil for mankind. For him, the tempter’s program (Gen. 3:5) is the epitome of wisdom which he is called upon to impart to mankind.”<sup>4</sup>

“The fool hath said in his heart, There is no God,” the Bible teaches (Ps. 14:1). Without God, intellectuals cannot reason from a basis of truth: some of them, indeed, are in the business of “the discrediting of truth” itself, Dr. Sowell notes (p. 195). They can only reason—if we can even call it reasoning—from a false premise, the nonexistence of God.

Having rejected God, they must find something to put in His place. They offer the state as God; but the state is a false god, an idol manipulated by its priests, the intellectuals. They see themselves in God’s place as the determiners of good and evil, the arbiters of truth, and even as the rulers of the world.

From that point on, their arc of folly becomes predictable. With themselves in God’s place, they must reject original sin and insist on human perfectibility—as defined and directed by themselves. Wise in their own eyes, blind to their own failings, they must promise utopia. Where God gives us salvation and regeneration, they must promise “social justice,” “equality,” “democracy,” “fulfillment,” etc.—all to be brought about by the irresistible coercive power of the state. The historical fact that the state never, never gets past the coercive phase and always seems to get stuck on oppressing or even murdering its own citizens does not register with intellectuals.

We do not understand why Dr. Sowell addresses these issues from a purely secular plane of reference. The problem with intellectuals is obviously spiritual. They don’t believe in God. Therefore they can never be anything but blind guides who fall into the ditch. Their entire body of thought rests on the foundation of a lie.

How could Thomas Sowell have let that pass? We tried to ask him, but he was not available. But to ignore the religious dimension of this problem makes it impossible to understand it, let alone find a solution. That in itself is a kind of blindness. It is as if Dr. Sowell wrote a book on diseases without writing about germs.

### How Do They Influence Society?

Intellectuals have two ways of influencing society, according to Sowell.

Usually, he explains, their influence is not direct, but rather exerted indirectly on society by what he calls “the intelligentsia,” and defines thus: “Around a more or less solid core of producers of ideas there is a penumbra of those whose role is the use and dissemination of those ideas. These latter individuals would include those teach-

ers, journalists, social activists, political aides, judges' clerks, and others who base their beliefs or actions on the ideas of intellectuals" (p. 5). This would also include most of the media, including entertainers and commentators. Where would any intellectual-originated movement be today without rock stars, movie stars, and other celebrities to push it? Think of Sheryl Crow promoting global warming.

Intellectuals wouldn't count for much without this "intelligentsia" to make sure their ideas reach the public. This is accomplished in school and college classrooms, on the airwaves, in print, on stage, and in the offices of Congressmen and judges.

Intellectuals and intelligentsia, writes Sowell, are motivated by the same thing: "a huge investment of ego" (p. 314), which gives them a vision of themselves as superior to the rest of society. "The one over-riding consistency . . . is the self-exaltation of the intellectuals," he says. "Unlike great cultural achievements of the past, such as magnificent cathedrals, which were intended to inspire kings and peasants alike, the hallmark of self-consciously 'modern' art and music is its inaccessibility to the masses and often even deliberate offensiveness to, or mockery of, the masses" (pp. 316–317). We see innumerable examples of this in television programming, movies, and art exhibitions—even going so far as to cast verbal and actual filth on symbols of the Christian religion.

Strange, isn't it, that people who are mostly hostile to the society they live in would have much influence on it? What are we to make of a mostly Christian populace who sends tens of millions of its children, every day, to public schools and universities staffed by persons who despise Christianity and Christians, and who themselves spend many hours

watching television shows written by persons who hold Christians and their beliefs in deep contempt? We think Dr. Sowell should have hit this nail quite a bit harder.

In addition to having their ideas furthered by a rather large and obtrusive class of intelligentsia, intellectuals can make their ideas seem convincing by employing what Dr. Sowell calls "verbal virtuosity." It does take a big bag of tricks to make intrinsically asinine ideas look reasonable, even wise or noble. Among the rhetorical tricks analyzed by Sowell are these "arguments without arguments" (p. 80):

- Assuming the "unworthiness" of opponents and opponents' arguments. Such arguments are deemed simplistic, foolish, even immoral. To argue with a pacifist, for instance, is to be accused of "loving war." To argue against welfare programs makes you "greedy" or "uncompassionate."
- "Virtually any answer to virtually any question can be made to seem simplistic"—that is, unworthy—"by *expanding the question* to unanswerable dimensions and then deriding the now inadequate answer as simplistic" (p. 81). A good example of this would be to reject police action while demanding to know the unknowable "root causes" of crime (p. 82).
- To describe any social or legislative innovation favored by intellectuals as a "right" hitherto denied to some class of victims by a heartless society is the Rolls-Royce of intellectual "arguments without arguments." Examples abound: the "right" to same-sex "marriage," the "right" to enter the United States illegally, "abortion rights," "animal rights," "transgender rights," ad nauseam (p. 88). It

always looks bad to be opposed to someone else's "rights," even when the "right" in question has only just been invented by intellectuals and pushed by the intelligentsia at teachers' union conventions, in TV sitcom episodes, and in editorials in *Newsweek*.

- Intellectuals also discredit their opponents by verbally banishing them to "the right wing," a term which for Dr. Sowell has no meaning beyond expressing dissent from the prevailing intellectual group-think (p. 91). "The far right," he says, is very largely a straw man created by statist intellectuals.

All of this "verbal virtuosity" is very clever and has been shown to be effective, especially when backed up by friendly media and education establishments. It all falls under one generic term: lying. But if one has rejected God, the basis of truth, it is a small step to the rejection of truth itself.

Why are intellectuals more influential now than they were a hundred years ago? Sowell's analysis is simple: because there are many more schools and colleges than there were, and many more people attending them; there is more media, more different kinds of media, and more people consuming media (and more leisure time in which to do it); there are more ways to create a climate of public opinion shaped by intellectuals: more lobbying groups, more community organizing, and more special-interest fund-raising—making it more tempting to politicians to go with the flow and harder for them to swim against it. It is easy to imagine, for example, what would happen to any presidential candidate who said, "I'm opposed to what is commonly but misleadingly called gay rights."

But here again, by ignoring the religious dimension of the problem,

Thomas Sowell has missed something important.

## They Never Learn

He has not missed the fact that intellectuals are often so hopelessly wrong in their opinions as to stray into out-and-out evil. George Bernard Shaw, for instance, when he wasn't busy praising and promoting Hitler (p. 11), or Stalin's Russia (p. 254), where he bewailed the very existence of "detestable" working class people who, he said, "have no right to live" (p. 98). One cannot think of any blood-soaked tyranny of the twentieth century that was not extolled by Western intellectuals, and they're still at it today. *New York Times* commentator Thomas Friedman recently wrote, "One-party autocracy certainly has its drawbacks. But when it is led by a reasonably enlightened group of people, as China is today, it can also have great advantages. That one party *can just impose* [emphasis added] the politically difficult but critically important policies needed to move a society forward in the 21st century."<sup>5</sup> Confoundingly messy, those free countries—it would be so much more efficient to have a communist dictatorship running the show! Intellectuals haven't learned a thing since the 1930s.

But what if America were a more solidly, deeply Christian culture? Would intellectuals like Shaw and Friedman have any power to influence us at all? Would a Christian society generate whole tribes of Christophobic teachers, professors, newsies, entertainers, and pundits to disseminate the intellectuals' ideas? It's hard to imagine they would have gotten very far with "gay marriage" or government control of health care in 1810. How would they make themselves heard in a society that doesn't breed a friendly intelligentsia to be their megaphone?

Or what if the intellectuals themselves were Christians? If they were,

they certainly wouldn't be stumping for Stalinism, lauding sodomy, or teaching college students that there's no such thing as objective truth. They might even come up with ideas that did society some good.

Dr. Sowell does not take into account the creeping de-Christianization of the Western world. The French Revolution, Darwinism, Marx, Freud, two world wars unprecedented in devastation and loss of life—Christendom has taken some very hard hits in the past two hundred years or so. At the same time, the material prosperity of the Western nations dramatically increased—leading into a well-known, ancient pattern of complacency and ingratitude. The Bible describes it: "For when I shall have brought them into the land which I swear unto their fathers, that floweth with milk and honey; and they shall have eaten and filled themselves, and waxen fat; then will they turn unto other gods, and serve them, and provoke me, and break my covenant" (Deut. 31:20). Human nature has not changed since Moses' day.

What if Americans repented of their estrangement from their God and earnestly sought His face again? What if they removed their children from the public schools and gave them Christian education? What if they formed strong, Biblically faithful churches and tithed to them? What if they consciously stopped consuming anti-Christian "news" and entertainment?

## "Tragic Vision" vs. Christian Vision

Dr. Sowell has not offered a solution. The best he can do is to oppose "the vision of the anointed" with what he calls "a tragic vision of the human condition"—"not in the sense of believing that life must always be sad and gloomy, for much happiness and fulfillment are possible within a constrained world, but tragic in limitations that can-

not be overcome merely by compassion, commitment, or other virtues which those with the vision of the anointed associate or attribute to themselves" (p. 78).

We don't think his "tragic vision" takes into account the power of God or of God's promises. As Christians, we offer something better:

- God is sovereign over all Creation, all-wise and all-powerful.
- Christ reigns, and the Father has promised to make His enemies His footstool and to put all things under Him.
- God has promised to regenerate all Creation.
- As Christ's people, we have been ordained to work for the establishment of Christ's Kingdom on the earth. As impossible as that task may often seem to us, we do have Almighty God to make it come to pass.

We salute Dr. Sowell for cataloguing the idiocies and the crimes of intellectuals, but he has not penetrated to the heart of the matter—faith in God vs. unbelief. We hope he will address it in his next book.

Meanwhile, we advise the intellectuals to practice being footstools. 🦶

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1. <http://www.americanhumanist.org/about/manifesto2.html>
2. Ibid.
3. R. J. Rushdoony, *Revolt Against Maturity* (Vallecito, CA: Ross House Books, 1977: 1987 edition), 328.
4. Ibid., 127.
5. <http://www.smalldeadanimals.com/archives/012150.html>

# Theology, Law, and Liberty

Martin G. Selbrede



## Theology – America’s Foundational Issue

The source of law for a nation is the god of that nation. All law is enacted morality.

Morality presupposes a religion as its foundation. Law rests on morality, and morality on religion. Weaken a nation’s religion and you weaken its morality by undermining the foundations of its law. The progressive collapse of law and order, and the breakdown of society, follows. Theology is therefore foundational to law, order, and liberty.

### *Theology of the founders*

The historic vitality of the West has been in Biblical faith and law. What did America’s founders’ Christianity look like? What theology motivated them to risk all to build a “city on a hill”? Their writings reveal they avidly and systematically studied the Bible as a seamless document, saw God as deterministic in history and man’s only rightful Governor (Ps. 22:28), promoted Christian duty to resist tyranny, embraced an optimistic view of the future under Christ’s lordship, equally revered God’s law and God’s grace, regarded both physical and spiritual life as holy, and labored to apply God’s Old Testament laws in private and civic life (2 Tim. 3:16–17).

## The Underpinnings of American Liberty

### *God’s law, human rights, and civil government*

America’s founders understood that sovereignty belongs to God, not “nature” or a “natural law” that denies God as man’s sole lawmaker (Isa. 33:22).

They knew God’s law is the precondition for human rights, tying them to *responsibilities* (1 Samuel 8 lists the rights lost when civil government grows beyond Biblical limits). They realized God’s law embraces all domains of government (personal, familial, ecclesiastical, scholastic, vocational, societal, etc.), the first and most basic being individual self-government (the alternative of which is statist slavery) and LAST being civil government.

### *God as rightful owner of everything*

God is ultimate owner of everything, so His law upholds *stewardship of property* as the foundation of liberty and human rights. When Thomas Jefferson borrowed the phrase “life, liberty, and property” from John Locke, he changed property to the vague term *pursuit of happiness*, thus eroding true liberty’s foundation.

### *God’s law in Early America*

Centuries before Lincoln borrowed the phrase for his Gettysburg Address, John Wyclif had said of his English Bible translation, “[T]he Bible is for the government of the people, by the people, and for the people.” New Haven Colony records show the law of God was made the law of the Colony: *April 3, 1644: Itt was ordered thatt the judiciall lawes of God, as they were delivered by Moses ... Be a rule to all the courts in this jurisdiction in their proceeding against offenders.* In Early America individuals were free to govern themselves under God’s law. Biblically grounded civil laws were written only to punish and restrain evil, provide justice for all, and protect life and property. It was understood that

God enforces many of His laws Himself, and His law was regularly preached from the pulpit. The church taught the people that the power of the state, under God, has its origin in the people and that civil governments are bound by His law. The church led the way in rightful resistance against injustice and tyranny, and established our heritage of liberty under law—God’s law. Christian libertarianism spurred responsibility, productivity, and God’s blessing according to Deuteronomy 28.

## Theology – America’s Downward Spiral

### *America fires the Lawmaker – the deceptiveness of idolatry*

Since the late 1700s sovereignty and the source of law transferred from God to the people (the civil state), which amounts to civil idolatry. America is still religious, but the nation’s god is now essentially the state. In trading the liberty of God’s law for the enslavement of humanistic law in both church and state, we’ve seen the laws of men proliferate like a tyrannical cancer (because total control requires total law).

### *Humanism vs. Christianity*

Today’s oppressive humanistic laws contrast sharply with the Biblically based laws that once undergirded liberty because man-made humanistic law aims to save man and remake society through civil government so that salvation becomes an act of state. Today our nation tries to save by acts of state and works of law instead of by Jesus Christ, and our salvation depends on passing the right set of laws. The Prohibition Era exposed the futility of using statist law to save

man from himself. The founders understood that law and order *restrain* a man, but he can only be *changed or saved* by God's grace through Jesus Christ; they did not attempt to use state laws to save man, eliminate poverty, usher in a brave new world, etc.

## Looking back to our heritage

History and experience prove that the only alternatives to God's "perfect law of liberty" (James 1:25) are anarchy or human law, and that man's will and the laws of men always lead to tyrannical governmental structures. Our forefathers found in the jots and tittles of God's law a guaranteed way to end poverty<sup>2</sup>; wisdom that says justice demands restitution to the offender (not prison and fulfilling a "debt to society"); and warnings against fiat currency, long-term debt, fractional reserve banking, and international war that breaches the defender's borders. Those jots and tittles reveal our current tax structure constitutes tyranny far worse than what our forefathers fled in England. Oppressive taxation is only one consequence of replacing God with the state. How did it happen that whereas our forefathers worked earnestly to apply *God's jots and tittles* to every area of life, today we work to block or pass *man-made humanistic state legislation*?

## Theology – Essential to Reestablish Liberty

### Law and grace – the mix-up of the century

Our forefathers would cringe at the modern notion that the opposite of grace is law, an idea that splits God in two (a nice guy on the right side of the Bible and a mean guy on the left). This modern notion leads many to assume Old Testament believers were saved by keeping the law while New Testament saints are saved by faith (being "under grace" and not "under law"), and

thus to neglect application of the Old Testament.

### Correcting the record

Romans 4:3 tells us Abraham believed God and it was reckoned to him as righteousness; he was, as we are, graciously saved by faith. Genesis 3:15 is the first proclamation of God's grace via the gospel. Saints from Adam and Eve on anticipated a deliverer to save them from their sin. They looked ahead in history to that gracious Redeemer. We look back.

### The law and the Son – God's timeless, unchanging plan

Christ's atoning work was intended to elevate man from covenant-breaker to covenant-keeper. Through Christ man is restored to a position of law-keeping. God, in creating man, ordered him to subdue the earth and to exercise dominion over it (Gen. 1:28). Man, attempting to establish autonomous jurisdiction over the earth (Gen. 3:5), fell into sin and death. God reestablishes His Kingdom, calling Abraham, then Israel, and now us, to be His people, to subdue the earth, to exercise dominion under Him. The law given through Moses provides the basis of godly society, of man's development under God. The prophets repeatedly recalled Israel to this purpose. The Ten Commandments were a covenant *summary* of God's full legal code. Through grace in Jesus Christ, the redeemed are called to the original purpose of man to build His Kingdom on earth, to be covenant-keepers, and to fulfill "the righteousness of the law" (Rom. 8:4). Jesus is *not* Plan B after the law failed; He is the fulfillment of God's *only* plan. The law remains central to God's purpose for man and society.

### Grace and law – no contradiction

Grace and law cannot be contrasted as opposites because they don't contradict each other. Grace has to do with

*justification* or *salvation* (becoming right with God). Law has to do with *sanctification* (how we live *after* we become known by God through Christ's gracious work in the heart; it's the process by which a Christian is transformed into the image of Christ). *Grace* is the opposite of *works* (as regards *salvation*), not law. *Law* is the opposite of *lawlessness* (as regards *sanctification*), not grace. Law and grace unite as David asks God, "[G]rant me thy law graciously" (Ps. 119:29). We are *saved* via *God's grace*, not by our own works under *God's law*. *After* we are saved, we are *sanctified* as we work out our salvation through our obedience to *God's law* (1 John 5:2), which He writes on our hearts and minds (Heb. 8:10). Man's *salvation* is and always has been by the *grace* of God in Jesus; man's *sanctification* is and always has been by the *law* of God. A Christian's righteousness is through Christ alone. We keep the law *after* becoming a Christian; we don't keep it to *become* one.

### Jesus – God's key to understanding His Law

Jesus rejected the law as mediator between God and man and reestablished it as *the way of holiness*. Through Christ man is "dead to the law" as a legal sentence of death against him (Gal. 2:19; Rom. 7:4), now freed "from the law of sin and death" (Rom. 8:2). Man is now under "the law of the Spirit of life in Christ" (Rom. 8:2) and is alive to the law "[t]hat the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us" (Rom. 8:4). In Romans 6:14b ("[F]or ye are not under the law, but under grace"), Paul was *not* referring to the law of Moses, which God gave us for our good always (Rom. 7:12), but a law-based system of justification: *the King James places the word "the" in front of "law" to suggest otherwise, but "the" is absent in the Greek of Romans 6:14b*. Christ takes

away the eternal “curse of the law” (Gal. 3:13), the “handwriting of ordinances ... against us” (Col. 2:14), in His own body that we might now “establish the law” (Rom. 3:31). The *entire point* of the New Covenant was for God to put His law in our inward parts and write it on our hearts (Jer. 31:33; Heb. 8:10).

## ***God’s law – timeless source of liberty, justice, and blessing***

Jesus made it clear through word and example that we are not to neglect God’s law. Had He broken the law even once, He would have been a blemished lamb unfit for sacrifice on our behalf. He presupposed his audience’s knowledge of it, since it was “nigh, even in your mouths” (Deut. 30:14). With the woman caught in adultery (John 8:3–9), Jesus upheld the law requiring faithful witnesses with clean hands (by applying “in any sin that he sinneth” from Deuteronomy 19:15a to the *witness*, not the *suspect*; see the parallel thought in Romans 2:21–23). Jesus told the rich young ruler, “You know the commandments” (Mark 10:19 NKJV). He told the people to observe *all* that the scribes taught out of the law (Matt. 23:2–3 – things spoken from *Moses’ seat*): “If they hear not Moses and the prophets, neither will they be persuaded, though one rose from the dead” (Luke 16:31). In Matthew 5:19, Jesus warns: “Whosoever therefore shall break one of these least commandments [*the jots and tittles of Old Testament law in verse 18*], and shall teach men so, he shall be called the least in the kingdom of heaven: but whosoever shall do and teach them, the same shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven.” God’s law is central to Christian duty. Jesus repelled Satan with a hammer blow from Deuteronomy 8:3, “[B]y every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of the LORD doth man live” (Matt. 4:4).

## ***Lawlessness vs. righteousness – the Biblical definitions***

Appealing to the Greek, some teach that sin is “missing the mark.” The Bible actually says *sin is the transgression of the law* (1 John 3:4). All lawlessness is a religious offense, a sin against God (Ps. 51:4). Likewise, righteousness is keeping God’s law: *[F]or all thy commandments are righteousness* (Ps. 119:172). *Righteousness exalteth a nation* (Prov. 14:34).

## ***Legalism or Phariseeism?***

*Legalism* is a belief that God’s law leads to justification (*justification by works*). Scripture makes clear “by the works of the law shall no flesh be justified” (Gal. 2:16). Paul condemns both legalism (*salvation by obeying God’s law*) and Phariseeism (*replacing God’s laws with man’s laws*).

## ***A sound theology is a terrible thing to waste***

Today we live by some, not all, of God’s words (Deut. 8:3; Matt. 4:4). The Biblical knowledge that characterized Americans 250 years ago is a distant dream, both in *content* of faith and doctrine, and in respect to how *thorough and sound* the scholarship is. Sound bites and shallow paperbacks supplanted the scriptural insights our forebears gained from enduring sound doctrine (2 Tim. 4:3). Early Americans saw a four-hour sermon as shallow; today’s sermons average twenty-one minutes. Modern Bible commentaries do not compare with Jean Daillé’s 698 pages of small print on Colossians (1672), or with John Owen’s 4,014 pages on Hebrews (1668–1683). Our ancestors embraced God’s law as delivered once for all (Mic. 6:8; Ps. 119:96; Jude 3) and believed “His commandments are not burdensome” (1 John 5:3 NKJV). In contrast, today’s Christians are more informed by Fox News than by the Bible, and the full-orbed faith and uncompromising Biblical worldview that motivated

our ancestors to build God’s Kingdom on His earth has been replaced with fragmented, emotional, self-centered, retreat-oriented thinking that indulges the humanist/socialist worldview. Deuteronomy 28 says cultural darkness is God’s judgment because His law is “slacked” (Hab. 1:4). Nations that break His law experience earthquakes, famines, wars, moral decay, etc.

## ***God’s law – the only answer that will deliver us***

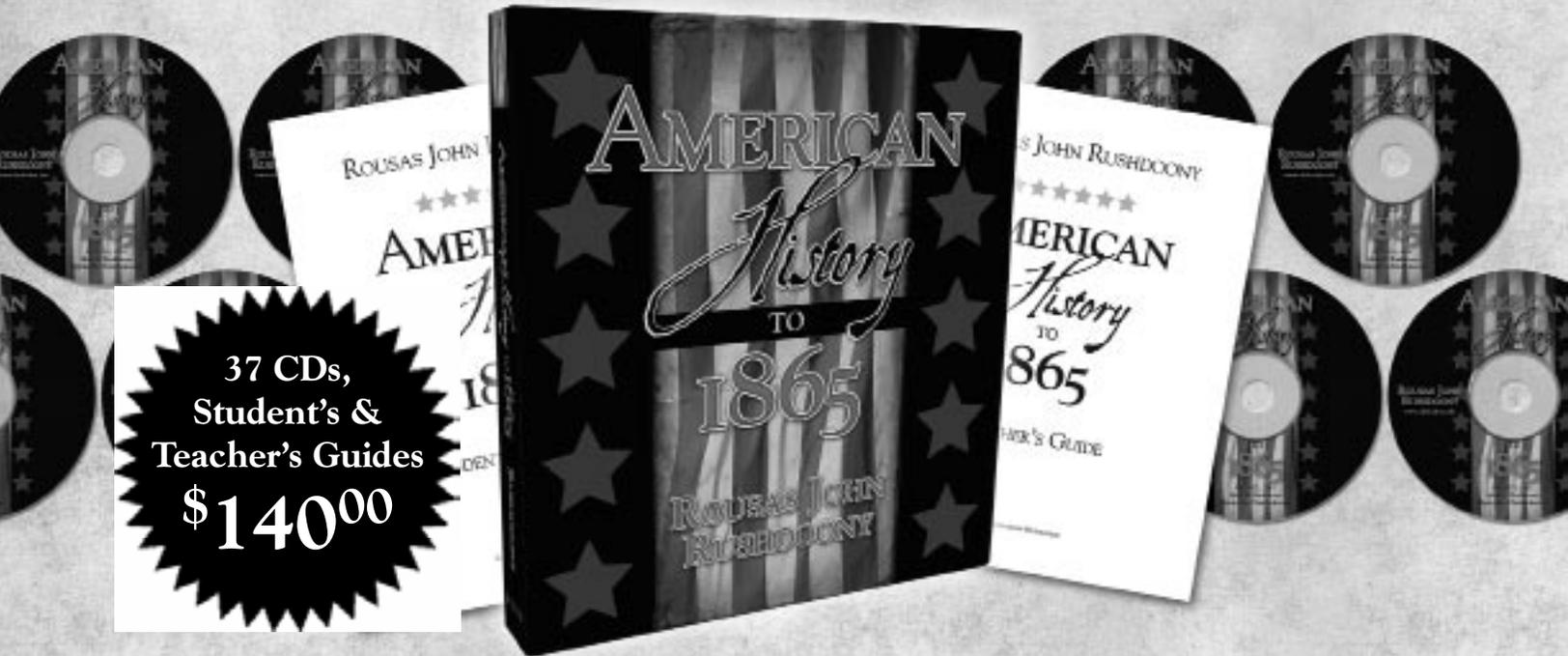
We cannot fight something with nothing. History proves that an uncompromising Biblical worldview that delights in God’s law (Psalms 1 & 119) is a nation’s only effective weapon against the tyranny of man. Only God’s law can replace the state’s ever-proliferating man-made laws that restrict our freedom and diminish our wealth. Liberty and blessing will again flow in America when we realize that “the law is good, if a man use it lawfully” (1 Tim. 1:8) and learn once again how to lawfully apply it. “Do we then make void the law through faith? God forbid: yea, we establish the law” (Rom. 3:31). 🇺🇸

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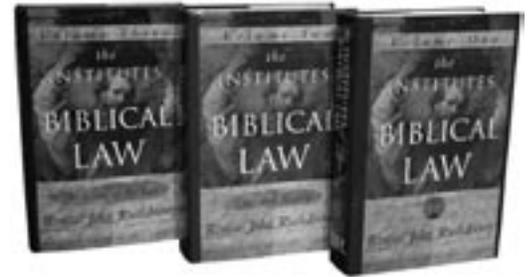
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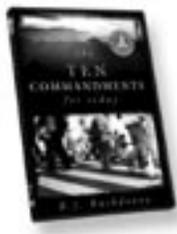
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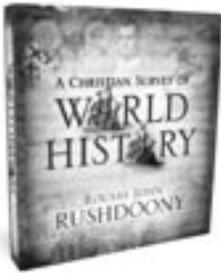
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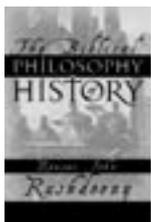
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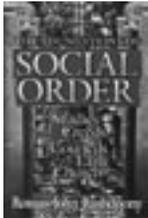
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## Philosophy

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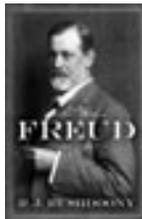


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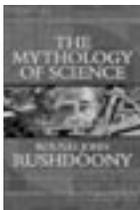
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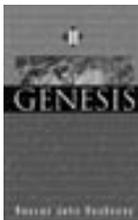


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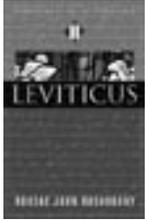


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Essentially, all of mankind is on some sort of an exodus. However, the path of fallen man is vastly different from that of the righteous. Apart from Jesus Christ and His atoning work, the exodus of a fallen humanity means only a further descent from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

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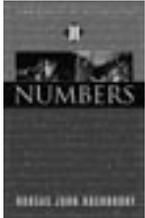
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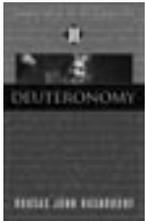
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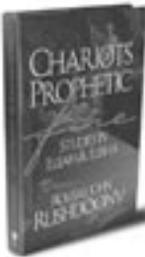
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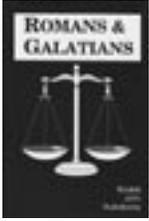
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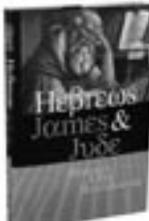
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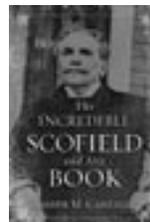


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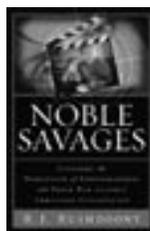
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the Marquis de Sade argued, then all that man does is normative. Rushdoony concluded, "[T]he world will soon catch up with Sade, unless it abandons its humanistic foundations." In his conclusion Rushdoony wrote, "Symptoms are important and sometimes very serious, but it is very wrong and dangerous to treat symptoms rather than the underlying disease. Pornography is a symptom; it is not the problem." What is the problem? It's the philosophy behind pornography — the rejection of the fall of man that makes normative all that man does. Learn it all in this timeless classic.

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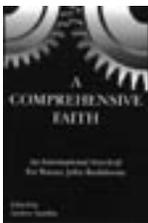
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Edited by Andrew Sandlin. This is the surprise *Festschrift* presented to R.J. Rushdoony at his 80th birthday celebration in April, 1996. These essays are in gratitude to Rush's influence and elucidate the importance of his theological and philosophical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

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

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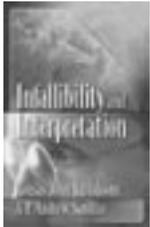
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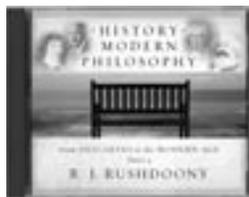
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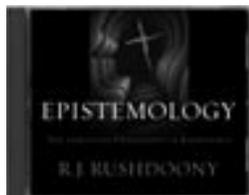
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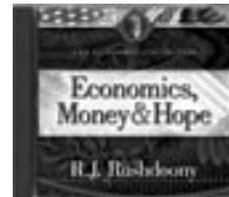
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