

Faith for All of Life  
July/August 2013

# FAITH FOR ALL OF LIFE

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

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# Rationalism: The Sinner's Big Head

By Mark R. Rushdoony



To whatever extent men reject God they must attempt to replace Him with something in their own experience. In rejecting

God men suppose that He is, in fact, easily removed by man's intellectual dismissal. Whenever man dismisses God from his thinking, however, a vacuum is left which must be filled.

As men seek to fill that emptiness, they find it necessary to "play God." To reject God inevitably leads to the elevation of another in His place. In modern thought the replacement for God is manifested as the authority conferred on man and the resulting folly of humanism. The humanist, in fact, can best be described as one who "plays God," or as Satan said in Eden, presumes to "be as gods" (Gen. 3:5).

## The Question of Authority

If God is real, then obviously the man in rebellion against accountability to Him has a problem—he's fighting a losing battle against reality; he's trying to "kick against the pricks" just like Saul (Acts 26:14). The consistent humanist has an impossible void to fill. Man without God seeks to know and understand in terms of himself what is, in fact, beyond him.

Biblical faith is in God, not man. Biblical man sees himself in terms of God and His revelation. There are two great limitations on men according to Scripture. First, creaturehood defines man's position and responsibility in relation to the Creator. A creature can

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never presume the prerogatives of his Creator. Even in Eden, sinlessness was still in the context of creaturehood. Man was under the authority of God and his life and its terms were at His discretion. A second limitation on man is the fall. Man's very creaturehood has been corrupted by his own actions. Accepting the reality of sin is prerequisite to true conversion, which involves repentance of sin and faith. The Christian must not only accept these limitations, he must understand himself as well as his relationship to God in terms of both creaturehood and the fall.

Non-Christian thought rejects both. Naturalism rejects man's creaturehood and effectively makes mankind the supreme being, the highest pinnacle of the evolutionary process. The roles are then reversed, because God is then at best an unnecessary concept created by man. He is, moreover, rudely dismissed as an illegitimate supernatural intrusion into naturalism's narrowly-defined reality. Without God there is

no creaturehood and no higher power to hold men accountable for sin. Freud thus described guilt as man's latent memories of the semi-human acts of the struggle for survival.

The doctrine of the sovereignty of God is essential to more than just man's salvation; it governs all of life and action. The premise that a Sovereign God not only decrees and determines but reveals Himself infallibly is central to Christian thought: it establishes a reliable authority, a source for truth on which man can depend. A limited or subordinate deity is an oxymoron.

Ancient man had no such certainty, and did not want it. The first heretical movement to challenge Christianity after the apostles was Gnosticism, a mingling of many religious traditions which acknowledged a supreme being as a very remote first cause but specifically defined him as unknown and unknowable even to himself. All knowledge of higher things, the Gnostics said, was indirect, known via many levels of truths from the supreme being. These emanations were known only to the select few. Faith in the Gnostic sense was faith in these men who were attuned to such secret knowledge. The theological battles of the early centuries of the church were largely battles against such ideas infiltrating the church as higher understandings of the faith.

## Rationalism

Rationalism is the reliance on reason as man's primary means to knowledge and truth. Rationalism overtly or

effectively ignores both creaturehood and the fall and therefore puts an impossible burden on man's mind. Reason, if defined as thought or logic, is a valid tool, but rationalism gives it a position of preeminence.

Rationalism emerged in the Enlightenment as a self-conscious move away from dependence on faith and revelation. This was a reaction to the theistic thought of medieval Christendom and, more immediately, to that of the Protestant Reformation. The Enlightenment was a revolution in Western thought and is still largely the framework of the modern world. The shift was toward a new authority, that of man's reason over revelation. Higher criticism of Scripture is thus a rationalistic religious trend that sees man as the highest authority and God's Word as subject to man's final word. The same could be said of religious modernism in general.

The Enlightenment's emphasis on reason represented more than a shift in thinking; it meant a change in the very concept of reality. If religion addresses ultimate concerns, the change since the Enlightenment has been a religious shift of monumental proportions, so much so that we might consider Darwin's later naturalism as a necessary corollary to rationalism. Evolution removed the necessity of God as a "first cause"; it completed the restructuring of reality and thought into a godless world and life view. Man was no longer merely preeminent; he was alone in a pantheon of his own construction.

Many will hyperventilate if you speak against reason. They will assume you might also deny gravity or advocate a flat earth. For many people reason is "all we have" because they assume reason is man's most reliable intellectual tool. They do so because they think along rationalistic lines.

## **The Limits of Reason**

Reason is limited by man and his experience. Aside from his creaturehood and sin, man is limited by his finitude. Man cannot experience all the potentialities of his world and there are certain realms he cannot experience at all. Rationalism ascribes to man's reason unlimited responsibility with limited ability. If reality is at all what Scripture says it to be, however, reason is a valid but limited tool.

Rationalism limits understanding by effectively denying there is a mind greater than man's. This is why Intelligent Design is rejected by the rationalist. One would think design implied a designer, but such an implication is too theistic for the modern naturalist. Intelligent Design is rejected out of hand because it implies a higher designer, effectively a deity. Intelligent Design is not creationism and will not end in the God of Scripture, so its limitations are real. It is, however, an interesting point of logic that questions the very reasonableness of naturalism's exclusion of God.

Man cannot understand everything he experiences. All the collective minds of men of all time could not understand all reality, yet rationalism demands that we limit our thinking to the parameters of human experience and exclude as illegitimate the revelation of God in Scripture.

## **Rationalism in the Church**

One's view of the place of reason is based on one's view of man. If man is seen in subordination to God, reason will be seen as subject to faith in Him and His revelation of truth and knowledge. If reason is not so limited by faith and revelation it will be seen as superior to both. Any approach which places such an undue reliance on reason will rewrite both its theology and its anthropology to give man preeminence.

Sadly, rationalism has had quite an influence in the church. For some, reason has been equated with the image of God in man, so that man becomes closer to his Creator by his intellectual pursuits. This, of course, goes hand in hand with an effective denial of the full effects of the fall, for the mind of man then becomes not a manifestation of sinfulness but a glimpse of his divine potential.

Rationalism has not been limited to the liberal church, though. Many conservative thinkers so believe in the modern reliance on reason, they begin their theological discussions with the supposition that all doctrines must be understandable to man because reason is a kind of common bond between the mind of God and that of man. The result is a convoluted and ostensibly erudite language by which they discuss what they do not and cannot truly understand. The faith of such men is in reason as much as in God and His Word. Their presupposition about the dependability of human reason makes it and not faith their fall-back position.

## **The Irrationality of Rationalism**

We cannot put full reliance on our reason or we make more of ourselves than Scripture says we are. We would then become the authority; we would then be playing God with a swelled head. It was, after all, the rationalizations of the serpent that Eve relied upon when he made God sound unreasonable. The answer to such intolerable behavior by God was for Adam and Eve to defy His law-word. The question in the garden quickly came down to one of authority—God or Satan, and Satan's logic made sense in Eve's mind. Her sin, then, began when she intellectually ascribed greater authority to the serpent and her own discernment than to God. Is our reason now more reliable than Eve's?

When man elevates his reason, conflicts will result. He therefore has to define certain areas of thought as illegitimate. Modern science is now wholly dependent on rationalism, just as medieval thought was self-consciously (if imperfectly) theological. Truth is now seen as a scientific fact, not a theological one. God has thus been excluded from science, and the supernatural is seen as illegitimate in a naturalistic worldview. The logic of rationalism ends up excluding God from a discussion of His own Creation.

When a rationalist does address faith and religion, he does so as mere aspects of man's experience. Faith is then an aspect of man's psychology, of man's pursuit of a felt need. Religion represents man's primitive means of searching for truth. It is viewed as a crutch for an area man does not yet understand but might yet one day. The rationalist sees faith and religion as side rails where many stop while others pursue truth more scientifically. To them, faith is a blind belief in nothing by those who have abandoned reason. The question rather is one of authority, man or God.

To the Christian, faith is a God-given confidence in the truth of His revelation. True knowledge then starts with faith: "Through faith we understand ..." Hebrews 11:3 instructs us. Faith is not in nothingness. It opens our sin-plagued understanding to the higher authority of God and His Word. It is rationalism that restricts thought to man and his narrow realm of experience.

### **When Reason Became Unreasonable**

The modern cult of reason began with the Enlightenment's self-conscious revival of ancient humanism as an alternative to the Reformation's theistic thought. The ability to reason is now

**"Modern thought is now largely void of any real conception of truth or knowledge. This is evidence of its decline and coming death. In a time of crisis it will offer no hope or solace to man, only the echo of his descent into meaninglessness."**

said to be what makes man different from other organisms, not the image of God. (This is why scientists are still unduly fascinated by any observation of sequential thought processes in animals.) The reasonableness of placing so much importance on man's mind was never itself established, however, because it was assumed as part of Enlightenment thought. This rationalistic supposition is essentially no different than what the Christian calls faith. Rationalism is faith in man and his reasoning, whereas Christianity is faith in God and His revelation.

The Enlightenment's confidence in reason was predicated on an intellectual and moral climate still heavily dictated by centuries of Christendom. What was "reasonable" was in fact the influence of Christian morality and thought. People were in the habit of acting in those long-established patterns, just as many people in the 1950s and '60s acted along more traditional lines even when they had no personal Christian faith.

Even "God" was borrowed by the Enlightenment thinkers. He was retained as a first cause, even though His "revelation" was transferred to a new vehicle that came to be called "Nature." God was still the originator of all things even if it was now interpreted in terms of the laws of Nature.

Eventually, however, a spoiler

came along in the person of Charles Darwin. Darwin's naturalism claimed that man's reason came very late in the evolutionary development. If Darwin's chronology is accepted, giving any credence to reason is illogical. If anything was ultimate and determinative in Darwin's science it was chaos, randomness, and violence by the physically strong, certainly not reason.

Darwin's thinking, when assumed to be correct, really makes rationalism's dependence on reason itself unreasonable and illogical in terms of the newly accepted evolutionary timeline. Modern thought since Darwin has often, in fact, followed this backward progression into meaninglessness, chaos, and revolution. The assumption of progress borrowed from Christianity has now broken down as man's reason tells him all is meaningless nothingness. Darwin's naturalism removed any Biblical view of God from the realm of modern thought. In removing Him from the hierarchy of authority it left only man and his reason. Darwin thus elevated man, yet the implications of his thought also made man irrelevant and his life void of any possibility of relevance. Any meaning presumed by naturalism today represents a borrowing from Christianity, unconvincing makeup on Darwin's pig.

Rationalism is still given lip service by modern man, but it has been largely abandoned by modern thought. It represents an obviously borrowed desire for meaning and progress. Modern thought is now largely void of any real conception of truth or knowledge. This is evidence of its decline and coming death. In a time of crisis it will offer no hope or solace to man, only the echo of his descent into meaninglessness. The alternative, a rigorously Biblically-based faith and thought, will then appear far more reasonable to humbled men. 🐷

# Does Theonomy Have a Fatal Flaw?

Martin G. Selbrede



Last year, publisher Wipf & Stock released Timothy R. Cunningham's new book, *How Firm a Foundation*.<sup>1</sup> The

book's purpose was two-fold: to expose reportedly fatal weaknesses in the late Greg Bahnsen's views on how God's law applies in the New Covenant era, and to promote a return to the Westminster Confession's position on the legitimate extent of God's law in the lives of believers and nations today.<sup>2</sup> Readers unprepared to confront this book's detailed argumentation will be hard pressed not to retreat before the challenges it seems to mount.

Cunningham's subtitle makes clear that his specific target is the pro-law perspective set forth by Bahnsen in *Theonomy in Christian Ethics*.<sup>3</sup> His critique proceeds on the notion that a successful attack upon Bahnsen's exposition of a key Biblical text (Matthew 5:17–20, "Think not that I am come to destroy the law ...") will invalidate Bahnsen's practical conclusions concerning the law of God. Since Cunningham knows not to fight something with nothing, he advances an alternative view unencumbered by the kind of flaws he identifies in Bahnsen.

If the only views in the running were Bahnsen's and Cunningham's, the latter's analysis would prevail (especially since Dr. Bahnsen isn't in a position to rebut him posthumously). The unaware reader would likely reach the same conclusion that appears on the book's back cover: "the Reconstructionist

ethical perspective is unbiblical, unconfessional, and ultimately unhelpful."

But Cunningham failed to take into account the elephant in the room, and it is to edify our readers that we now take this involved journey so that we can introduce that elephant to you.

## The Elephant in the Room

Benjamin Breckenridge Warfield (1851–1921) was one of the greatest Christian theologians God has raised up. As William Hendriksen (quoted favorably by Cunningham<sup>4</sup>) said of Warfield, his "views on matters theological generally command the utmost respect."<sup>5</sup> He was capable of chairing *any* of the departments at Princeton, so broad was his learning and acumen. And in 1915, he published an exposition of Matthew 5:17–20 that remains, to this day, the most self-consistent interpretation of this key passage available.<sup>6</sup>

I have drawn attention to this superior alternative to Bahnsen's approach since 1981, incorporating it into a published book review of Bahnsen and Gentry's *House Divided* in 1989 and featuring it in *The Journal of Christian Reconstruction: Symposium on Eschatology* in 1998. In this last publication, I wrote:

Warfield's view of theonomy's famed *locus classicus*, Matthew 5:17–20, deserves separate attention, and that on several grounds. On its own merit, his exposition should be permitted to compete with the prevailing exegesis of Bahnsen, so that our era will at least be able to evaluate both viewpoints side by side, rather than being spoon-fed one to

the exclusion (and deliberate omission) of the other.

Warfield taught the abiding validity of the law in exhaustive detail (and more consistently than did Dr. Bahnsen) ... [His exposition] is quietly swept under the rug as we are informed about the "majority opinion" of today's theonomic postmillennialists (which may well simply reflect all those influenced by, and uncritically repeating, Dr. Bahnsen's *magnum opus* argumentation).<sup>7</sup>

You might well wonder why nobody seems to know about Warfield's exposition. In an otherwise thorough 600+ page synthesis of Warfield's theology published in 2010, the topic was omitted.<sup>8</sup> In other words, you have to dig to find these treasures.<sup>9</sup> If Cunningham was aware of Warfield's views, his book doesn't show it,<sup>10</sup> asserting instead that "the sole scriptural support for the Theonomic hermeneutic remains Bahnsen's understanding of Matt. 5:17–18."<sup>11</sup>

This massive hole in Cunningham's initial research must be dealt with. Even if Cunningham's critique of Bahnsen rings true (and in some particulars we will see that it does), it is insufficient to discredit theonomy. Cunningham must show that Warfield's view is unscriptural, unconfessional,<sup>12</sup> and unhelpful as well. Then and only then has he met the actual challenge before him. Since Warfield antedates Bahnsen, Cunningham cannot argue that theonomists are unfairly moving the goalposts on him. Yes, some promoters blew Bahnsen's horn for years, but sometimes the truth simply doesn't lift up its voice in the street (Isa. 42:2).

### The Interpretation of Matthew 5:17

Bahnsen and Cunningham differ in regard to standards of proof. Bahnsen held that if a line of plausibility connects each of the proposed interpretations he makes, then context can solidify it. Cunningham sees this differently, especially in regard to Matt. 5:17, and has caught Bahnsen in at least one erroneous citation and several instances of special pleading. As Cunningham expounds the verse, it should be understood to say,

**Do not think I came to destroy the law or the prophets [that is, the Old Covenant]. I've not come to destroy but to fulfill [by inaugurating the New Covenant to complete the tenure of the Old]**

Bahnsen's rendering would come closer to this interpretation:

**Do not begin to think that I came to annul the law and the prophets [the ethical stipulations of the law]; I've not come to annul them but the exact opposite: to confirm, validate, and ratify them.**

The word "or" in Christ's words "the law or the prophets" is treated as mere stylistic variation by Bahnsen, who believes it means the same as "the law and the prophets," and here is where Cunningham discovered that Bahnsen's citation of H.A.W. Meyer in support of this claim was dead wrong.<sup>13</sup> Cunningham is probably correct that the "or" introduces a distinction that should be treated as important, a distinction that Bahnsen fails to consider.

But the bigger issue Cunningham has with Bahnsen's treatment of verse 17 is in respect to the final three Greek words: *kataleusai alla pleroosai* (destroy but fulfill). Bahnsen takes *alla* to require an antonym behind it (a word precisely opposite in meaning from the word

just before *alla*) and therefore looks through the range of possible meanings of *pleroosai* to find one opposite in meaning to annul/abolish/destroy (*kataleusai*). Because Bahnsen insists that the ethical requirements of God's law are intended by the phrase "law or the prophets," his word hunt is dictated by this pre-restricted meaning, and so he settles on "confirm/validate/ratify" as the right translation of *pleroosai* in this case. He cites several authorities in favor of this view.<sup>14</sup>

But Cunningham painstakingly dismantles Bahnsen's approach word by word. He shows that *alla* does not always require exact opposites,<sup>15</sup> and that Bahnsen's citation to make that point is selective and thus misleading. Even more deadly to Bahnsen's thesis is how Cunningham discredits *pleroosai* as meaning "confirm" or "ratify,"<sup>16</sup> showing that the major Greek lexicon Bahnsen relies on doesn't officially sanction that alternate meaning for *pleroosai* but includes it only in a gloss where scholarly disputes are recorded.<sup>17</sup> Other authorities that Bahnsen cites in his favor are discounted for being mere preachers, not professional lexicographers, by which tactic Cunningham<sup>18</sup> has shrewdly shifted the burden of proof (although he advances his alternative view without cognizance of Warfield's position, moving, as Bahnsen would say, too quickly to the argumentative kill).

### The Interpretation of Matthew 5:18

Cunningham's critique of how Bahnsen handles the final phrase of Matt. 5:18 is well-founded, but his alternative to Bahnsen's final translation of the entire verse is itself open to serious challenge. Let's look at what Cunningham got right before examining where his handling goes astray.

The word "until" appears twice in this verse, and Bahnsen taught that both

phrases that begin with this word are essentially identical in meaning. In other words, "until heaven and earth pass away" is identical in meaning to "until all comes to pass," as the phrases are treated as simple parallels, and the word "all" (*panta*) is taken to literally mean "all things" in an absolute sense. We can paraphrase Bahnsen as taking the verse in this way:

**Verily I say unto you, until heaven and earth pass away, one jot or one tittle shall not pass from the law until everything in the world has taken place.**

Cunningham paraphrases his own position on the teaching of this verse<sup>19</sup> quite clearly:

**Until the end of the church age not one stipulation of the law will lose its authority until the covenantal shift takes place.**

Mind you, Cunningham arrives at this interpretation through an extended process that he believes justifies the final result, and I've omitted the intervening steps (but will discuss the reasoning process behind them below).

The final words, "until all is accomplished" or "until all is fulfilled,"<sup>20</sup> are taken in very different ways by Bahnsen and Cunningham. Cunningham correctly sees that this last clause speaks about an event that occurs before the world ends, while Bahnsen sees it as being synonymous with the end of the world. Cunningham misidentifies the event in question, but his critique of Bahnsen's denial of such an event prior to world's end is a legitimate one. The substance of this rejection of equating the two "until" clauses as Bahnsen does was put forth in the nineteenth century in Meyer's critique of Fritzsche:

After the concrete and lively *until heaven and earth pass away*, this general and indefinite *until all is accomplished*

would be only a vague and lumbering addition.<sup>21</sup>

Meyer directly opposes Bahnsen's view in clear language concerning *until all things are accomplished*, noting that "this sentence is not co-ordinate to the first [phrase], but *subordinate*."<sup>22</sup> Meyer also draws another conclusion in opposition to Bahnsen about what the word "all" (*panta*) is intended to mean: "as correlative to [the *one* jot and the *one* tittle], *panta* can only mean all *portions of the law*."<sup>23</sup>

Writing in 1915, several decades after Meyer, Warfield adopted a take-no-prisoners exegetical approach to Matt. 5:18, which we turn to next. We will learn that although Meyer and Warfield go quite a distance along the same road as Cunningham commends to us, they don't reach Cunningham's destination: they end up light years away from it. The reason for this is profound beyond measure.

### The Prophecy Embedded in Matthew 5:18

Warfield, like Cunningham, sees a manifold richness in the terms employed by our Lord in Matt. 5:17–18, and expounds them all without the narrowing of intent that marks Bahnsen's approach. His development of the key verse is worth citing at length, and I pray you will muster the patience to work through this powerful exposition by Warfield:

"I came not," says Jesus, "to destroy but to fulfill, — *for* ..." And, then, with this "for," He immediately grounds His assertion in the further one that the whole law in all its details, down to the smallest minutiae, remains permanently in force and shall be obeyed. "For, verily I say unto you, until heaven and earth pass away, not one jot or one tittle shall pass away from the law until all [of them] be accomplished." [brackets in original—MGS]

On the one hand it is asserted with an emphasis which could not easily be made stronger, that the law in its smallest details remains in undiminished authority so long as the world lasts. Jesus has not come to abrogate the law—on the contrary the law will never be abrogated, not even in the slightest of its particulars—the dotting of an "i" or the crossing of a "t"—so long as the world endured.

But Jesus does not content Himself with this "canonization of the letter," as H. J. Holtzmann calls it, certainly without exaggeration. The law, remaining in all its details in undiminished authority, is, on the other hand, to be perfectly observed. Jesus declares that while the world lasts no jot or tittle of the law shall pass away—until they all, all the law's merest jots and tittles, shall be accomplished.

He means to say not merely that they should be accomplished, but that they shall be accomplished. The words are very emphatic. The "all," standing in correlation with the "one" of the "one jot" and "one tittle," declares that all the jots and all the tittles of the law shall be accomplished. Not one shall fail. The expression itself is equivalent to a declaration that a time shall come when in this detailed perfection, the law shall be observed.

This amounts to a promise that the day shall surely come for which we pray when, in accordance with Jesus' instruction we ask, "Thy Kingdom come, Thy will be done as in heaven so on earth."<sup>24</sup>

Warfield's subsequent discussion (on verses 19–20) rejoins Cunningham in asserting that this passage directly relates to the question of Christian character in those who are Christ's disciples (an emphasis Cunningham cannot discern in Bahnsen's treatment of the text, perhaps for good reason).

But Cunningham places the event that terminates the law somewhere between the crucifixion of Christ and the

fall of Jerusalem in A. D. 70 (depending on the line of argumentation he employs at any given point), while Warfield extends the law's duration so far that today's walk-by-sight Christians can only think, "This is a hard saying; who can hear it?" (John 6:60).<sup>25</sup> A divine prediction that the law of God would one day be universally kept, starting with the greatest commandment to love God with all the heart, presupposes a stupendous victory of the gospel, a tremendous outpouring of the Spirit upon all flesh. And as the nations encourage one another to learn of the Lord's ways and paths from His law, they beat their swords into plowshares and spears into pruning hooks, so that the sword disappears from the world and the nations don't even learn war *ever again* (Isa. 2:2–4).

It should be pointed out that Cunningham's emphasis is actually misplaced: Matt. 5:18 doesn't focus on the prerequisite for the law passing away so much as it focuses on *the prerequisite for the heavens and earth to pass away!* The world ends only after the law of God enjoys universal observance (the same law that now suffers near-universal violation), in harmony with Luke 16:17 and with St. Paul's teaching that Christ returns only after death, the last enemy, is destroyed (1 Cor. 15:24–28), all other enemies of Christ having long since passed away that the meek might inherit the earth.

H.A.W. Meyer acknowledged this interpretation of Matt. 5:18 to be the literally precise one<sup>26</sup> but tried to tone down the extraordinary conclusion out of dogmatic considerations,<sup>27</sup> considerations he jettisoned when writing his commentaries on John<sup>28</sup> and Romans.<sup>29</sup> Warfield follows where the text goes in all particulars, never setting foot on the landmines Cunningham has laid out for Bahnsen.<sup>30</sup>

### A Modest Proposal

By now the reader has grasped that a convoluted dispute over how to render the term “fulfill” at the end of Matthew 5:17 has raged over the centuries. Cunningham provides good lexical reasons for questioning Bahnsen’s rendering (*ratify* or *confirm*). For his own part, Cunningham is comfortable treating the word as meaning (in effect) to “transcend,”<sup>31</sup> which achieves abolition of the law without quite abolishing it in so many words. Nonetheless, Cunningham does admit that the term’s “basic meaning in classical Greek was ‘filling’ something or someone,”<sup>32</sup> and further notes that this meaning (which he himself doesn’t adopt) is the first listed meaning sanctioned by his preferred lexicon.<sup>33</sup>

But in both the immediate and broader Biblical contexts, there certainly exists a basis for the idea that Jesus came to fill the law, insofar as Israel’s leaders had emptied the law (rendered it void—empty—by their traditions and circumlocutions).

“It is time for thee, O Lord, to work, for they have made void Thy law” (Psalm 119:126). This Scripture, while commonly viewed as an appeal to God to respond to transgressors, may point to something else entirely. Verses 126, 127, and 128 of Psalm 119 form a unit,<sup>34</sup> one whose final meaning may rely on the literal sense of the final member of the triad:

**Therefore all precepts of all I make straight. Every path of falsehood I hate.**<sup>35</sup>

The Hebrew of the first clause above is a challenge to translate unless you choose to see it as embodying a prophecy concerning Christ (Isa. 42:16) and His forerunner (Isa. 40:3-4) who were indeed sent to make the crooked things straight. What an apparently excellent fit this makes for what Jesus actually does in Matt. 5:21ff, in which crooked

ethical instruction is straightened out and the laws, so long deprived by scribal legalisms of their force (Hebrew *pah-rar* and Greek *akuroosat/akurao*<sup>36</sup>) are finally filled with their total authority.

Is it possible then that the work that God is exhorted to do because the law had been made void (Psalm 119:126) is precisely to make all of His precepts straight? *It is time for thee, O Lord, to work, for they have made void Thy law... Therefore all precepts of all I make straight...* The thought dovetails with the admittedly messianic import of Psalm 40:7-8: “Then said I, Lo, I come: in the volume of the book it is written of me, I delight to do thy will, O my God: yea, thy law is within my heart.”

On this hypothesis, the voiding of God’s law proceeds from those appointed to teach it (compare Hosea 4:8 with Matt. 15:6). The loosening of the least of God’s commandments is likely a parallel thought (Matt. 5:19), and there is surely no more profound voiding of God’s law than to omit its weightier matters: justice, mercy, and faith (Matt. 23:23).

The point to be taken away from this digression is that there *are* ways to satisfy the lexical requirements that Cunningham claims Bahnsen failed to meet, *without* adopting Cunningham’s conclusion. And if our modest proposal doesn’t ultimately hold water, there is always the fortified haven of Warfield’s analysis to which we can safely retreat. Warfield provides a foundation for theonomy that is more than firm enough, quite apart from the validity of the hypothesis just advanced.

### Hidden Baggage and Begged Questions

Cunningham weaves an interesting web, slowly introducing cautiously-worded provisos in his assertions and gradually blending in restatements of his conclusions until by the end of the

book he is outright asserting his view to be coincident with Christ’s position. Unless the reader is trained in critical thinking and can detect the suspicious shaping<sup>37</sup> of the argument, he or she will be inclined to follow the book to its conclusion. The unwary reader will adopt all the subtle shifts of meaning imported by Cunningham by way of loaded terms (“Sinai Covenant,” “Zion Torah,” etc.) served up on often-unstated presuppositions.

The author explains that he is not merely mounting a critique of Bahnsen’s view (wrongly identified as the sole support for theonomy) but also setting forth an alternative, and it is to the latter that we must now turn. We cannot do justice to every detail<sup>38</sup> as this is not a book-length rebuttal by any stretch, so we must be selective and focus on only a few key points.

### Which Author is Proving Too Much?

Cunningham holds that Bahnsen’s rendering of “one jot and one tittle shall not pass from the law” proves too much,<sup>39</sup> for Bahnsen can’t have his cake and eat it too. Either the jots and tittles remain unchanged or they do indeed change. Cunningham leaves the laws unchanged until the “covenant shift,” while Bahnsen argues for modification after that shift (meaning the law is unchanged yet changed—hence the cake metaphor).

Jesus dealt with this issue when He healed on the Sabbath: the command of Moses had to be set aside to satisfy the command of Moses, and Christ shows the hypocrisy of His critics in this respect. When the Old Testament self-modifies its own content, we need to “live by *every* word that proceeds out of the mouth of God,” not just cherry-pick a few laws in blinkered isolation to make points in a debate while ignoring the vast context in which those laws are

set (in which the Messiah terminates sacrifice and oblations at Daniel 9:27, jettisons the ark of the covenant as a non-issue at Jeremiah 3:16, where altars outside Israel are expressly sanctioned and blessed by God at Isaiah 19:18f., etc.).

This challenge against Bahnsen is nothing new. John W. Robbins mounted the same challenge in the 1980s, to which I wrote an extended rebuttal elaborating on these Old Testament passages and much more, showing that pitting Scripture against Scripture is quite different from appealing to the whole counsel of God.<sup>40</sup>

In actual fact, it appears that Cunningham's position is the one that proves too much. If one accepts his proposal that the validity of the Mosaic civil laws depends on a given nation's situation (in respect to time, space, and circumstance), then the Westminster Divines' ruling on those laws would only be valid for Great Britain in the seventeenth century. Their conclusion<sup>41</sup> would have no specific authority for us today, for an ethical theory mounted on this view of general equity would entail each nation continually reinventing its civil law for itself as circumstances dictate.

Whether the precepts of Mosaic civil law are right and just for modern America is, therefore, not something the Westminster Confession of Faith could legitimately assert, so appealing to that document within Cunningham's paradigm is actually self-defeating. After all, it might have been right for the Divines to reject Mosaic law for themselves, but wrong for us to reject it. We're not even considering the insurmountable problem of achieving consensus on that question in a society where this view (*vox populi, vox Dei*—the voice of the people is the voice of God), in effect if not intent, prevails.

## How "Just" Are God's Laws for Today?

Hebrews 2:2 informs us that under God's law, "every transgression received a just recompense of reward." Cunningham never deals with this defining text, feeling free to ask "the question of whether or not a particular Mosaic law was just in itself."<sup>42</sup> Cunningham argues in effect that while God may not be a respecter of persons, He surely is a respecter of political boundary lines and calendar days. This approach treats Matthew 5:17–18 as setting forth an interim ethic,<sup>43</sup> not an eternal one.

The legal structure of a nation then depends on time and place: while ethics are to be "informed" by the Decalogue (the Ten Commandments),<sup>44</sup> they are ultimately situational in this model because "the general equity of those laws is not the same when applied in the post-Sinai context."<sup>45</sup> Calvin and the Westminster Divines "reckoned the law to be abolished as a system, leaving only laws that are just by reason of general equity applicable today."<sup>46</sup> Cunningham repeats the point: "They limited our obligation to instating only those Mosaic civil stipulations whose equity is such that those stipulations will remain just despite the change in covenantal circumstances."<sup>47</sup>

There are several apparently undesirable consequences of Cunningham's position. Consider the pivotal "litmus test" Scripture, Isaiah 8:20:

**To the law and the testimony: if they do not speak according to these, it is because there is no light in them.**

If Cunningham is right, we'd actually be much safer in our time to read the verse this way:

To the law and the testimony: if they do speak according to these, it is because there is no light in them until we prove otherwise.

We truly arrive at the concept of "the Word of God Emeritus" where modern man, using an internal moral compass of supposedly binding divine authority, is actually required to sit in judgment on the laws of God.

In other words, Isaiah 42:4 has it quite wrong in stating that "the isles shall wait for His law" because there really is nothing to wait for. Whatever law is needed by the isles is asserted to already reside in human hearts by dint of creation. God's Old Testament case laws serve at best as a non-binding advisory board to man. The real power resides in man's application of his innate endowments (contra Isa. 2:22, Jer. 17:5, and 17:9).

We respectfully disagree.

## A Question of Inconceivable Importance

Cunningham observes that "almost the entire American evangelical movement will find their views challenged, if not transformed, if the Reconstructionist ethical perspective is proven to be biblical."<sup>48</sup> He sees the far-reaching consequences of differing approaches to the law of God. He recognizes this to be an important question that has yet to be adequately answered, and so he stood in the gap to attempt a better answer than hitherto developed by others.

While true that his attempt failed of its stated intention, Cunningham must be credited with drawing attention to very real weaknesses in Bahnsen's interpretation of an important text of Scripture. While I have never personally adopted Bahnsen's view of Matthew 5:18, I have often appealed to his construction of verse 17 as a legitimate option standing alongside the exegesis of Meyer and Warfield. Barring further light on the matter, I will certainly qualify future appeals to Bahnsen on that text. To be teachable in a polemical exchange is, however, a two-way street.

A weakness in Bahnsen's exegesis does *not* translate into a weakness in the theonomic perspective. Because the literal meaning of Matt. 5:17–18 (per Meyer and Warfield) stands, the bulk of Bahnsen's monumental work, *Theonomy in Christian Ethics*, remains not only valid but urgently needed in a world where so many "esteem the great things of God's law as a strange thing" (Hos. 8:12). While his book is by no means perfect, and can no longer be so uncritically acclaimed as providing the exegetical support for R. J. Rushdoony's three-volume *Institutes of Biblical Law*, Bahnsen's ultimate legacy will not suffer significantly. Like so many Christians, he arrived at correct conclusions despite mistaken premises, for God uses our weaknesses and inconsistencies despite ourselves.

### **How Firm a Foundation?**

The title of Cunningham's book poses an important question about theonomy, the view that the law of God is to be embraced by Christians and applied as a key part of the faith for all of life. That question, while intended rhetorically, calls for a principled response: the proper foundation for Bahnsen's views are not to be sought in Bahnsen but in a foundation laid a century before the justly-famed debater<sup>49</sup> came on the scene.

How firm, then, is the actual foundation of God's law for ourselves, for our families, and for the nations of the world today?

Firmer than the world itself (Luke 16:17). 🏰

1. Timothy R. Cunningham, *How Firm a Foundation? An Exegetical and Historical Critique of the "Ethical Perspective of [Christian] Reconstructionism" Presented in Theonomy in Christian Ethics* (Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock, 2012).
2. Cunningham holds that the Ten Commandments remain valid and should be

used to test the civil laws of today with respect to specific cultural situations. Christians must use discernment in determining how the "general equity" of the Ten Commandments applies, because Cunningham believes the civil laws in Scripture may not necessarily be just for nations outside ancient Israel.

3. Greg L. Bahnsen, *Theonomy in Christian Ethics* (Nacogdoches, TX: Covenant Media Press, [1977] 2002).
4. Cunningham, 89–90.
5. William Hendriksen, *New Testament Commentary: Exposition of 1 and II Thesalonians* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, [1955] 1979), 173.
6. Benjamin Breckenridge Warfield, *Biblical Doctrines* (New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 1929), 293–299, from "Jesus' Mission, According To His Own Testimony," Reprinted from *The Princeton Theological Review* v. xiii, 1915, 513–586.
7. Martin Selbrede, "Reconstructing Post-millennialism," *Journal of Christian Reconstruction*, Vol. 15 (Vallecito, CA: Chalcedon Foundation, 1998), 186.
8. Fred G. Zaspel, *The Theology of B. B. Warfield: A Systematic Summary* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2010).
9. As has been well said of Warfield, the only way to deal with so formidable a protagonist is to ignore him.
10. Cunningham asserts, "Good exegesis will examine all relevant possibilities in each case ..." (pp. 43–44), but he appears to have faltered in realizing this ideal.
11. Cunningham, 35–36.
12. Depicting Warfield as "unconfessional" would be ironic, given that during his tenure at Princeton he was the most highly-regarded conservative Presbyterian scholar in the world (and a major published authority on the Westminster Assembly and its work).
13. Cunningham, 49.
14. Bahnsen failed to cite Adolf Harnack in his favor, who like Bahnsen "lays all the stress on the single element of legislation" (Warfield, p. 296), perhaps because while Harnack agreed that "the exact opposite of *kataleusai* is to 'establish,' to 'ratify'" as does Bahnsen, he also showed that Jesus went

much farther than this (*ibid.*). Harnack then anticipates, an entire century in advance (1912 versus 2012), Cunningham's lexical argument about word choice concerning "fulfill" versus "establish" and dismantles it.

15. Cunningham, 60f. Cunningham errs in his use of Matt. 10:34 (p. 61) as Jesus is specifying what He is going to fling or cast upon the earth (a sword rather than instant peace). "He 'came,' was 'sent' (v. 40) to 'cast a sword.'" Cf. Warfield, 284–285.
16. Cunningham, 62–89.
17. Cunningham, 82.
18. Cunningham, 62f.
19. Cunningham, 128. Italicized for ease in comparing to Bahnsen's rendering.
20. Bahnsen notes that *genetai* (accomplished) in verse 18 is not the same word as *pleroosai* (fulfilled) in verse 17 and thus should not be translated as fulfilled. Cunningham rejects Bahnsen's view, appealing among other things to the King James translators' work as favoring his translation.
21. Heinrich August Wilhelm Meyer, *Commentary on the New Testament* (Winona Lake, IN: Alpha Publications, 1979) vol. 1, 129. Ten volumes originally published by T. & T. Clark in 1883.
22. *Ibid.*, 128.
23. *Ibid.*, 129.
24. Warfield 297–298. Paragraph breaks introduced to facilitate easier reading—MGS. In one of many typographic errors in his book, Cunningham cites this passage as Matt. 6:44 rather than Matt. 6:10 (p. 31).
25. In the face of this literal exposition of the text, Cunningham is manifestly in error when he writes that "these laws will only remain in force to the end of the church age if the last clause of Matt. 5:18 refers to the same event as the second clause" (p. 115).
26. Cunningham perhaps seeks to evade the force of such uncompromised exegesis by asserting that in these very statements Jesus "may intend to deliberately obscure his message" (pp. 38–39). Pay no attention to the man behind the curtain!
27. Meyer, 123. At the time he believed the parable of the wheat and tares and supposed imminence of Christ's return militated against taking Matt. 5:18 literally. For dis-

cussion of these points, see Selbrede, *op. cit.* 28. Meyer, 3:376. The sense of John 12:32 is taken literally. Meyer then points to Romans 11:25–26 as providing specific details on how “the great goal will be reached, when all will be drawn to the Son, and form *one* flock under *one* shepherd (x. 16). In this sense *pantas* is to be left without any arbitrary limitation.”

29. Meyer, 5:447–448 on Romans 11:25–26. The restrictions and modifications imposed on Paul’s text are shown to be evasions “against which the simple and clear words do not cease to offer resistance.” He adds that the Reformers “were induced to depart from the literal sense out of dogmatic considerations.”

30. It is likely, of course, that Cunningham would agree with Bahnsen that a more pessimistic outlook on eschatology should completely dictate the meaning of Matthew 5:18, thereby blocking the passage from kicking over our prophetic rice bowls. See Selbrede, *op. cit.*

31. Cunningham, 96.

32. Cunningham, 95. Its meaning in Koine Greek would be more pertinent, but we’ll let his argument stand.

33. Cunningham, 65. Bahnsen’s meaning is not among the numbered meanings but only appears in a gloss, as Cunningham correctly notes.

34. Alexander Maclaren in *The Expositor’s Bible* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, [1903]1983), 3:300, asserts that “verses 126–128 are closely linked” both contextually and due to the repeated word therefore.

35. *Ellicott’s Commentary on the Whole Bible* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, n.d.) 4:266. The literal rendering from Hebrew into English is by Rev. Archdeacon Aglen.

36. Joseph Henry Thayer, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, [1901]1977), 24: “To render void, deprive of force and authority, (opp. to *kuraoo*, to confirm, make valid).

37. The number of times I had to jot down “p.p.” (for *petitio principii*, i.e., begging the question) in the book’s margins in the course of reading its every word was quite a surprise. Bahnsen would have had a field

day analyzing it (though Cunningham correctly showed that Bahnsen was guilty of the same thing at many key points).

38. E.g., we sharply disagree that Christ implicitly worked a reference to Antiochus Epiphanes into the Sermon on the Mount, a notion which Cunningham (p. 47, etc.) treats as proven by work’s end in harmony with his view that Jesus officially transferred the function of “light” from the law to the disciples. His view that only the Ten Commandments are still binding flies in the face of Mark 10:19 (see my online position paper at chalcedon.edu on *Taxation, Liberty and the Bible* concerning the technical term *aposteresis*, “to defraud,” that Jesus used). The traditional but arbitrary division of the law into three parts (moral, judicial, ceremonial) has long been opened to direct challenge, with better alternatives available in, e.g., Christopher J. H. Wright, *An Eye for an Eye: The Place of Old Testament Ethics Today* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1983), 151f. Circumcision, dietary law, and the Hebrew calendar are asserted to be “Sinai covenant” elements now rolled back in light of Hebrews 7:12. This broad claim is open to serious direct challenge (circumcision is part of the Abrahamic covenant, cf. John 7:22; dietary law, as Vos noted, goes back to Genesis 7 (see also Zech. 9:7 regarding the Philistine diet); and even Cunningham admits the Sabbath to be a creation ordinance). Cunningham’s appeal to Hebrews 7:12 (pp. 58–59, etc.) ignores the entire context which shows how the Pentateuch treats the Levitical priesthood as subordinate and secondary (thus entailing a “change” in only one commandment involving the reassertion of the primary priesthood). His tendentious treatment of Genesis 49:10, Matt. 11:13, and John 1:17 are particularly egregious examples of bald proof-texting without in-depth exposition. These examples will need to suffice for now.

39. Cunningham, 112, etc.

40. Note R. J. Rushdoony’s citation of Curtis Ewing: “According to Exodus 12:3, 5, 6, 24 and Leviticus 23:15, the 10th, 14th and 16th of Abib could never be Sabbaths because they were work days of specific command . . . We know those dates would fall on Saturday once every seven years and

if Saturday were the Sabbath there would be a conflict of commands. There would be three dates in which Israel is commanded to work falling every seventh year on days in which Israel was commanded not to work. We know that never happened, because God is not the author of confusion.” R. J. Rushdoony, *The Institutes of Biblical Law* (Phillipsburg, NJ: Presbyterian & Reformed, 1973), 135.

41. “Rushdoony did not notice that the Divines adduced Gen. 49:10 and 1 Pet. 2:13, 14 to buttress [their] point” (Cunningham p. 147, n. 37). Rushdoony rather noted that the Divines failed to provide confirmation from Scripture for their view, not that they failed to adduce texts in an attempt to cobble together such a confirmation.

42. Cunningham, 165.

43. Cunningham, 130.

44. For Cunningham, *all* men are informed by the Decalogue since they allegedly have the law written on their hearts (which is a serious misreading of Romans 2:8, which teaches rather that “the *work* of the law is written on their hearts,” a very different thing). Such a faulty position opens up appeals to natural law against revelational law. Cunningham consequently appeals to “God’s natural revelation of righteousness” (p. 32) and reposes ultimate authority there.

45. Cunningham, 14.

46. Cunningham, 23.

47. Cunningham, 24.

48. Cunningham, 3.

49. Bahnsen’s formidable thoroughness calls to mind John Crandon’s judgment of his fellow Puritan, Richard Baxter: “Who can abstain from laughter, to see so great a Nimrod as Mr Baxter, hunting, with no lesse weapon then Hercules his Club, a nest of wrens to death?” [*all spellings sic*]. Cf. Ernest F. Kevan, *The Grace of Law: A Study of Puritan Theology* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 1976), 33, n. 111.

# The Call from Sinai

Miles R. Jones, Ph.D.

This is the third of three installments in the “Evidence of the Exodus” series, based on the book *The Writing of God*.



In the previous installment we summarized the evidence that, at Sinai, believers received *the alphabetic principle* of the writing of God

as surely as they received the *moral principle* of the word of God. They were commanded to become a literate people. The Lord’s direct commands to the Hebrews that they read, write, and teach, made it clear they were being prepared to take the word and the writing of God to all nations of the world (Ex. 19:5). Learning and teaching the word and the writing of God was the central purpose of the covenant for believers, their children, and their children’s children unto all generations. Sinai was a literacy covenant. Believers were called to take responsibility for their children’s education and to “*teach them diligently*” (Deut. 6:7).

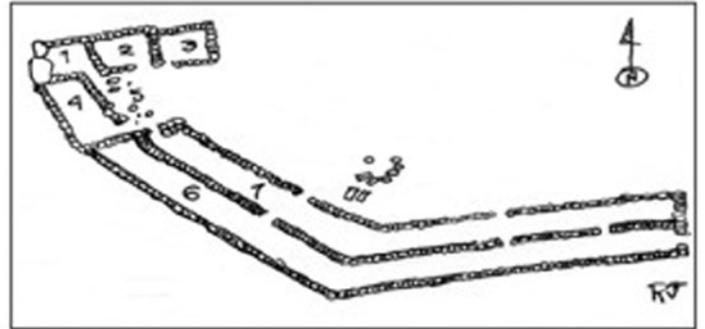
At the Midian site are found inscriptions in the oldest known alphabet of letters, Thamudic—the father script—which bear testimony to events of the Exodus. These inscriptions are written in ancient Hebrew and mention scriptural events which happened at Sinai. The “*writing of God*” (Ex. 32:16) has been interpreted by Biblical historians as nothing more than a synonym for the message written upon the stone, in short a meaningless redundancy. In light of these discoveries, this interpretation can no longer stand. Believers and theologians alike must look at the evidence for the writing of God as carefully as possible.

Scripturally, the writing of God is not presented as a synonym for the

word of God but is distinguished as a separate, highly significant purpose of the Sinai Covenant. This was the only written record ever received by mankind directly from God’s hand! Both the message

and the medium are supremely important. The evidence at Jabal al-Lawz in Midian, the real Mount Sinai, shows the writing of God was the first alphabet of letters, as do commands of Scripture which direct believers to read and write. The twin goals of the Sinai Covenant were not only to give a system of law to a lawless nation but also to give a system of literacy to an illiterate nation.

The Saudis soon became concerned over all the publicity about the real Mount Sinai being located in their territory. The last thing they want is the hot potato of being guardian of the oldest shrine of both Judaism and Christianity. They quickly sent a team of archaeologists to disprove the notion Jabal al-Lawz was Mount Sinai. This ill-conceived study, entitled *Al-Bid History and Archaeology*, published in 2002, was to have unforeseen consequences. Before the Saudi survey, the film and photos gotten out of the Midian site by Jim and Penny Caldwell would be considered *unprovenanced* data, which is to say, *not authenticated* by discovery through an accepted academic process. Thanks to the academic professionals who did the *Al-Bid* survey, key parts of



Sketch of the sacrificial altar at the base of Jabal al Lawz from the *Al-Bid* survey p. 63 which calls it a “stonewall foundation.”

the Exodus documentation have now been provenanced by the publication of discoveries that are the same as those in the Caldwells’ archives. This makes the evidence of the location of Sinai and the writing of God harder to ignore. The possibility of mistake or fraud is mostly eliminated since key documentation is replicated in the *Al-Bid* survey. The Saudi survey also included pictures and descriptions not previously available which confirm many of the historical and archaeological claims made in my book, *The Writing of God*, and in the works of other Exodus documenters. For example, we had photos of only five inscriptions. The *Al-Bid* survey established there are 155 Thamudic inscriptions around Jabal al-Lawz. The Saudi survey is well worth examining in some detail.

## What the Saudis Found

The *Al-Bid* survey begins with the history of the region. “*On ... the Mountain of Moses, God spoke to Moses and he returned with the Ten Commandments and found that his nation returned to worship idols ... The Israelites ... made a gold ox to worship*” (p.10). Muslims do not

accept Jabel al-Lawz as the Mountain of Moses, according to the authors of the report. “The location of the Mountain of Moses has always been debated in biblical and other theologian literatures, but generally it is accepted that it is located in Sinai, Egypt” (p. 83). The Saudis accept the perspective that the forty years of wandering took place in the Sinai Peninsula. They scratch their heads over the fact that if the Israelites were in the Sinai Peninsula they could not have survived in such close proximity to Egyptian forces. “Surprisingly, the Egyptians did not think to follow Moses and his followers who spent forty years in the desert of Sinai” (p.10). Of course, the Egyptians did follow the Israelites—to their doom in the Red Sea. Most interesting is the logic of the language of the tablets.

What was the language ... which [the] Prophet Moses used to communicate? Was it the language of [the] Midianites? May be it was so; but what was the language [in] which came the Ten Commandments? Certainly it was the language of [the] Midianites. Were the Israelites speak[ing] Hebrew at that time? We do not know, nor [does] the text provide any evidence in this regard. (*Al-Bid History and Archaeology*, p. 10)

You may have noticed that even though denying that Mount Sinai is in Midian, the Saudis are claiming the Ten Commandments were written in Midianite. Designating the language of the Ten Commandments as *Midianite* would make it Proto-Arabic rather than Proto-Hebraic. This is patently false as the Israelites came from Egypt, not Midian, and spoke Hebrew not Arabic.

Thamudic ... inscriptions were found in addition to ... foot prints. In one ... composition of cattle and human figures located at al-Bid' (Jabal al-Lawz), one can see a couple of human figures depicted in an attitude of performing rituals around an ox. (*Al-Bid History and Archaeology*, pp. 47–49)



The photo at left is from the Sinai site in Midian, found at the altar to the golden calf. The Egyptian *Apis* bull ritual (left) was the model for the *bull dancers of Crete* (right), adopted into Iberian Spanish culture as the *bull fight*, and imported to the Americas where it developed into the *rodeo bull ride*. Photos reprinted by permission of Jim & Penny Caldwell and the Split Rock Research Foundation.

The Saudi survey states there are numerous “footprints” traced upon stones as well as many Thamudic inscriptions at the mountain. Their examination of the altar sites is critical as is the description of cattle worship.

What the Saudis called “stonewall foundations” we have described as the altar at the base of the mountain which Moses built to offer burnt sacrifices to the Lord. The *Al-Bid* survey did some cursory “trial diggings” in the chamber at the end of the enclosure. The digging found “a layer of ash, charcoal and bones found mixed with other organic materials ... and animal waste” (p. 65). This is exactly what one would expect to find at an altar for burnt offerings. “Attached to this room is a 35 m. long corridor. This corridor is divided in the middle into two sections” (p. 65). Note these “rooms” and “corridors” are spaces about three to four feet across. “The floor consisted of a well beaten compact soil.” These spaces are useless for habitation but perfect for corralling animals about to be sacrificed. The angle prevented animals from panicking while other animals are slaughtered and burned.

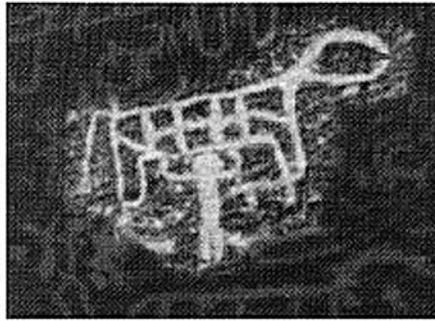
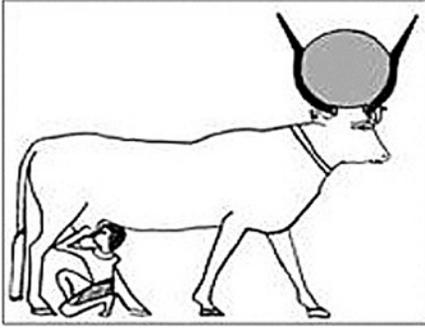
The site of the altar to the golden calf is easily recognizable by the plentiful images of cattle worship. These petroglyphs are key to authentication of the Midian site of Mount Sinai, since they

are some of the only surviving archeological evidence.

There is no correlation between the cattle figures located on and near Jabal al-Lawz and those worshipped in Egypt during Prophet Moses’ time ... The figures of cattle located on Jabal al-Lawz and in the Tabuk area have absolutely no similarity to the *Apis* and *Hathor* bulls which were worshipped in Egypt during the Pharaonic period. (*Al-Bid History & Archaeology*, p. 78)

The Saudis’ denial of any similarity to *Apis* and *Hathor* imagery is simply not credible. Years ago I conducted a study tracing the origin of bull ritual motifs, which included the opportunity to do field research of original sources in Egypt and also in Yemen in the Arabian Peninsula.

The catalyst for this study was the captivating mosaics of Crete that depicted the bull dance. The mosaics pictured the bull dancers nimbly leaping over the enormous bull in an incredible feat of athleticism and courage. Young men and women of many races were trained to dance with the bulls. The ritual of the bull dance in the public arena was a fascinating spectacle. By constant training, the bull dancers learned the death-defying feat of being thrown by the bull’s horns into the air to vault over the bull’s body. Unlike the bloody spectacle of gladiators, the point



Horus, one of the principal gods of the Egyptian pantheon, was suckled by the cow goddess Hathor who later became his wife. On the left we have an image of Hathor suckling Horus taken from an Egyptian temple. At right is a photo of the same icon taken from the altar to the golden calf at the Sinai site in Midian. Photos reprinted by permission of Jim & Penny Caldwell and the Split Rock Research Foundation.

was not to kill either the dancers or the bull. Nonetheless, it is certain many young bull dancers died in the dangerous dance. An example of how the bull ritual passed from culture to culture was found at Tiryns in Greece. Schliemann, the discoverer of Troy, also excavated at the Greek palace in Tiryns. He uncovered a beautiful fresco depicting a ritual formerly known only in Crete (see illustration on previous page).

One of these frescoes was exceptionally striking. Upon a blue ground it showed a powerful red-spotted bull in mid-career, with an upraised whiplash tail, and a perfectly circular eye suggesting his ferocity. Upon this bull a man was poised in a dancer's leap, one hand clutching the bull's horn. (Ceram, 1994: p. 59)

It was relatively easy to trace the later development of the ritual by examining the bull rituals of other seagoing tribes of the era which came into contact with the bull dancers of Crete or Egypt. The Iberian Punic cultures of Spain and Portugal turned the ritual into the bullfight in which the acrobatics are gone but the grace and daring are as riveting as ever. In Spain the bull was killed unless the bull killed the matador first. In Portugal the bull was not killed at the end of the bullfight yet the Portuguese version is still a dance with death for the bullfighter. Like the Cretan bull

dance, however, it concentrated more on the courage and beauty of the act rather than the blood sacrifice. The bull ritual passed via Spanish colonialism to the Americas. The rodeo bull ride is a dynamic re-enactment of a bull ritual that stretches all the way back to the bull dancers of Crete and the Apis bull rituals of Egypt.

It took years before the origin of the bull dance became clear to me. My studies of Egyptian rituals did not yield a clear answer. Then I spent time in the Emirates and Yemen, and one day university business took me to Cairo and I had the opportunity to visit the Serapeum at Memphis, the center of the Apis bull cult. As soon as I entered the tomb I saw on the wall, beautifully carved in *bas relief*, a depiction of the ritual of subduing the bull. In this ritual, the bull was restrained by hand for sacrifice when a pharaoh died. The ritual called for the bull to be subdued without the use of weapons. According to Egyptian magical tradition, the display of bravery in subduing the bull without weapons permitted the courage of the bull, and the bull dancers, to be transferred to the deceased pharaoh. The bull's heart, which symbolized its strength and courage, was put in a canopic jar to impart courage to the pharaoh for his journey into the afterlife. The bull dancers of the pharaoh would dance with death

to subdue the bull by hand for sacrifice. No doubt many were killed in the process. It is from this Apis bull ritual that the Cretan bull dance originated. The images from the altar of the golden calf at Mount Sinai in Midian clearly identify it as the Apis bull ritual. The engraving is of a man taking the bull by the horns and being thrown into the air while another dancer has just landed on the bull's back. Compare this with the picture of the Cretan bull dance.

These drawings are quite similar to those of the Apis bull ritual at the Serapeum of Memphis. There is also a depiction of the Hathor myth at the Midian site. According to Egyptian myth, the child god Horus, son of Isis and Osiris, was nurtured by suckling the cow goddess Hathor. In the illustrations, you see a small figure beneath a cow with the youth's hands and face touching her underbelly. This is an often used glyph in Egyptian iconography. The authors of the *Al-Bid* survey confirm these petroglyphs represent cattle worship. The *Al-Bid* survey describes "human figures depicted in an attitude of performing rituals around an ox." The Saudis simply claim the glyphs are not Egyptian and "have absolutely no similarity to the Apis and Hathor bulls which were worshipped in Egypt." Their denial of these Apis and Hathor images is intentionally deceptive.

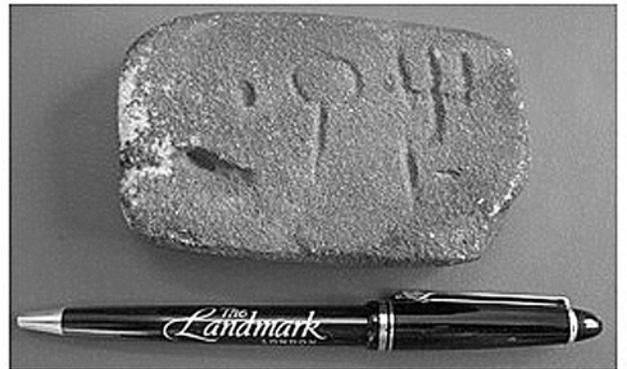
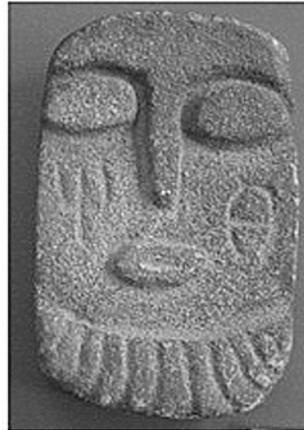
The conclusion of the *Al-Bid* survey was that the mountain served as a marble quarry around 100 B.C. during the Nabatean period. The only evidence offered to support this date consisted of "minute" shards of clay pottery found by digging four small holes at the site of the L-shaped altar. The "preliminary analysis" of the "minute" shards of pottery gave no detail to substantiate that claim. The whole exercise exhibited a pronounced superficiality.

*"The cattle figures in al-Bid area*

either belong to the Nabataean or to the Neolithic period” (p. 78). Dating the site in this way is a handy conclusion since it places the archaeological finds millennia away from the time of the Exodus. The Neolithic period is at the end of the Stone Age around 9,000 B.C. The Nabatean period did not begin until 1,600 years after the Exodus about A.D. 100. The Saudis offer these widely disparate dates even while claiming that “no archaeological material that may help to date the stone structures at Jabal al-Lawz was found” (p. 81).

That statement is demonstrably false, given there are Thamudic inscriptions adjacent to the archaeological remains, some of the earliest alphabetic writings in existence, *circa* fifteenth century B.C. These inscriptions were made at the same time and place Scripture says the Israelites made the Exodus to Mount Sinai in Midian. By including them in the *Al-Bid* survey, the Saudis inadvertently provenance the existence and validity of the Thamudic inscriptions found at Jabal al-Lawz and give the lie to their own dating of the site.

Finding the name of God on artifacts of the period in the Midian region equates to finding a “smoking gun” in the case for the Exodus. When photos of the artifacts brought out of Arabia by Dr. Sung Hak Kim were forwarded to me, I studied one of them with profound excitement. The letters YHWH were carved onto the votive stone alongside a



**Above - A votive figurine (circa 14th century BC) of Moses with the word Yahweh written front & back in ancient Thamudic, given to Dr. Sung Hak Kim from the Saudi royal collection.**

figure of Moses. This votive stone came from the collection of the Saudi National Museum. For almost twenty years Dr. Kim was physician to the royal family of the governor of Mecca, who gave these artifacts and allowed him to take them out of the country. No one knew the meaning of the YHWH inscription until I translated it. The Yahweh stone, or Moses stone, would never have been allowed to leave Saudi Arabia if the translation had been known. Some of the other votive stones and artifacts obtained by Dr. Kim were also inscribed with the short form of Yahweh, “Yah” (written YH— used forty-nine times in the Bible). The Yahweh stone was written in south Semitic Thamudic, *circa* fourteenth century B.C. This artifact bears the oldest inscription of the sacred name of Yahweh that will probably ever be found.

The engraver probably first carved the figure of the face on the side of the stone, then began the inscription on the back where there was more room. He made the most common error of beginning writers; he did not plan his space. He wrote across the stone YH from left to right where it allowed him the most space to write. Then he turned the stone over and had to write across the vertical axis of the other side on the cheeks of the Moses figure because that was the only place left to put the other letters. He seemed to want to write in a circle rotating around the votive stone but the change of direction was evidently confusing and he ended up writing the letters WH from right to left on the front of the stone. This is a votive stone, a small figurine or inscription left as a devotional offering at a sacred place, most likely buried in the ground so it would not be stolen. The name inscribed would be that of a deity. The letters on the back of the stone are the short form of the Hebrew name of God YH (Yah). These two letters all by themselves mean “Yahweh.” The fact the other two letters of YHWH are on the other side of the stone makes it a foregone conclusion. The only reason critics would choose a nonsense translation over one that makes sense is to disavow the name of God.



**Dr. Kim and Dr. Jones study inscriptions on ancient artifacts from Kim’s collection. Photos reprinted by permission by Dr. Sung Hak Kim and Tim Muhoney**

The Yahweh stone is on display at the newly opened History of Christianity Museum in Seoul, Korea. It was given to the Prince of Mecca by Bedouin tribesmen from Tabuk near the region of Jabal al-Lawz, close enough to be on the pilgrimage path to the Mountain of God in Midian. One should always carefully consider authenticity, but having done so, the possibility this artifact is fake is almost nil.

## Who Originated the Alphabet?

Joseph Naveh, the most prominent expert on the origin of the alphabet, stated that “*in inscriptions of the tenth century [B.C.], Phoenician, Hebrew and Aramaic scripts are indistinguishable*” (1982: p. 89). In short, the alphabet used across Canaan was identical until after 900 B.C. During the early stage of the alphabet (1400–1100 B.C.), we had a relatively simple linguistic situation. There was one alphabet in Canaan. It was used by Hebrews, Canaanites, Arameans, Moabites, Edomites, and others—but there was only one alphabet. Nevertheless, scholars seem intent on specifying scripts during this early period as the Aramaic alphabet, the Moabite alphabet, the Edomite alphabet and even the Phoenician alphabet although Phoenicia did not yet exist. This manipulation of the data muddies the waters. The only relevant question is who originated the alphabet.

The mainstream theory states that it was invented by the Phoenicians, who adapted it from the Proto-Semitic pictographs. The first monuments did appear in Phoenicia much later, but the earliest alphabetic inscriptions (of letter symbols not pictographs) appeared in Midian, Sheba and Israel. The Israelites, who had a scriptural injunction against writing on monumental stone (Ex. 20:25, Lev. 26:1), did nonetheless produce the earliest alphabetic inscriptions in Canaan; the Lachish ewer and

Negev ostraka (both thirteenth century B.C.), the Beth-Shemesh bowl, Izbet-Sartah abecedary, and the al-Khader arrowheads (all twelfth century B.C.), the Khirbet Queiyafa ostraka (eleventh century B.C.), Gezer calendar (tenth century B.C.), and the Tell Dan inscription which cites “*the king of Israel...king of the House of David*” (ninth century B.C.). Nonetheless, historians do not want to credit the Hebrews for these inscriptions and few researchers are honest enough to admit anti-religious bias or anti-Semitic prejudice. “*Bernal exposed the anti-Semitism that pervaded Orientalism at least until the mid twentieth century. It is shocking to find it operative forty years later...*” (Daniels & Bright, 1996: p. 27). However, scholars are now backing away from the Phoenician origin of the alphabet. There is no longer a consensus among experts. The new evidence just does not fit the old theory.

The Hebrew alphabet was adapted to cuneiform by the scholars of Ugarit in the fourteenth century B.C., shortly after it is recorded in Scripture that Joshua brought the writing of God into the promised land (Jos. 8:32 and 24:26). Much of what we know of the first phonetic alphabet is from the cuneiform of north Canaan. Because the north Canaan city-states were already a well-established literate culture, evidence of their recently adapted cuneiform alphabet was much more prevalent during that era than the writing of the unsophisticated Hebrews still emerging from their quasi-literate kindergarten period. Clay tablets last indefinitely whereas much of the media of alphabetic script, parchment or papyrus, degrade rapidly. The Israelites entered into Canaan about 1400 B.C., at the very beginning of the fourteenth century. The cuneiform alphabet is proof the alphabet of letters was already formed and functioning by the fourteenth century B.C.

It is well accepted by experts that the cuneiform alphabet was copied from the Semitic alphabet. The shapes of several of the cuneiform letters were clearly copied from the letters of the Semitic alphabet. The order of the cuneiform alphabet was also the same as that of Hebrew.

The scholarly class of the northern Canaan city-states continued to prefer writing in alphabetic cuneiform rather than alphabetic script. This may account for the complete lack of literature written in the Phoenician alphabet. However, over one thousand tablets have been discovered written in Ugaritic (alphabetic) cuneiform. They are not only administrative and commercial records but also religious and literary texts. The stories bear striking resemblance to parts of the Old Testament, so much so that many claim the Hebrews took their stories from the Phoenicians. Our evidence indicates the opposite. The Hebrews introduced the alphabet to Canaan along with their rich history. We think of the Torah exclusively as the history of the Hebrews but it is, in fact, the history of the eastern Mediterranean. The word and the writing of God spread outward from Canaan.

Scripture points out a surprising clue to the spread of the alphabet from Canaan to Greece. Greek legend tells us the letters of the alphabet were brought to Greece by Kadmos (or Cadmus) of Tyre, near Sidon in northern Canaan, and his clan of Kadmonites about 1300 B.C. In Genesis 15:18–19, God prophesied the Kadmonites were among the inhabitants of Canaan who are to be driven out, “*Unto thy seed have I given this land...[of] the Kadmonites.*” This scriptural connection, between the Kadmonites of the Bible and the legendary tribe of Kadmos who brought the alphabet to Greece, is critically important. Because the writing of God

has been ignored, this connection too has never been cited in the literature of Biblical analysis. Both Greek legend and Scripture cite the Kadmonites as living in Canaan during the fourteenth century B.C. The ancient Greek teller of tales, Herodotus, relates in *The Histories* the Kadmonites departed Canaan passing from island to island on their return to Greece where Kadmos founded the city of Thebes. According to Herodotus, Kadmos took the alphabet with him to Greece. The facts are that the names of the Greek letters are the same as the names of the Hebrew letters and the order of the Greek alphabet is the same as the Hebrew alphabet

Eventually, the Israelites lost their literate tradition but only after bequeathing their alphabet to the region. During the ninth century B.C., the Aramaic and Phoenician scripts began to differentiate from Hebrew. Aramaic would soon rise to the level of an international standard, as the official alphabet in turn of the Assyrian, Babylonian and Persian empires. The Phoenician alphabet disappeared entirely by the second or third century B.C., sent on its way by the Romans who destroyed their colonies. In the fifth century B.C. the Israelites returned from captivity in Babylonia speaking the Aramaic language and using the Aramaic script. By the time of Christ, many Israelites probably spoke Aramaic as well as Hebrew, two closely related Semitic dialects. The Aramaic script was adapted into the square cursive Hebrew alphabet, the ancestor of the script used today in Israel

### The Rise of Literacy

Although the alphabet originated with the Hebrews, they never achieved a broadly literate culture until much later. It was in Greece where the alphabet first sparked a literate society which catalyzed Greek thought, creating the Western model of civilization and sci-

ence. Alphabetic literacy changed the mentality of mankind so profoundly I refer to it as the “*great divide in human thought*.” Experts such as Robert Logan, Eric Havelock, Marshall McLuhan, and Leonard Shlain have analyzed the effect of alphabetic writing and literacy on the course of civilization. To ancient peoples who had primarily a subjective right-brain type of thinking in pictures (mythological thinking), now would be added a left-brain ability to examine objectively, reason analytically, and categorize logically—the basis of scientific thinking.

*“The magic of the phonetic alphabet is that it is more than a writing system; it is also a system for organizing information of all mankind’s inventions”* (Logan, 1986:17). Alphabetical and numerical order are still the mainstays of organizing information. Alphabetic writing provided a rudimentary numbering system as well as a conceptual framework for analytical thought. It restructured our perceptions of reality and acted as a springboard for new ideas. One could capture ideas on paper and return to them to refine and expand one’s thinking, then pass them on to other thinkers to build upon, even though they may be far distant in place and time. *“Using the alphabet . . . entails the ability to code and decode phonetically, convert auditory signals or sounds into visual symbols, think deductively, classify information, and order words through the process of alphabetization”* (Logan, 1986:21). Each seemed a small step in itself but led mankind irrevocably to major mileposts of accomplishment. Alphabetic literacy shaped an all-important group of conceptual innovations, including monotheism, rule of law, formal logic, theoretical science, individual expression, democratic idealism, and mathematics.

Roman numerals are a survival from ancient times when letters were

used as numbers. The Hebrew letters were the first to be used as numbers. These numerals provided mankind with the initial framework needed for mathematical thinking and calculation. Numerical thinking is the core of science and, along with literacy, provided the structure of thought for the modern mind. There can be no science without measurement. Measurement and calculation are the domain of numbers. The book of Numbers was a crash course in counting, calculation and measurement. Numbers describes how the Israelites took their first steps on the road to literacy and numeracy.

Literacy requires the use of deductive and inductive logic. To read, one must use deductive reasoning—from the specific to the general, decoding the specific letters and their sounds, putting them together into words, and grasping the meaning of those individual words and the concepts expressed by the discourse as a whole. It is hard to imagine a better exercise to develop deductive reasoning. Much the same can be said of the process of writing, except that it develops inductive reasoning—from the general to the particular. We can all remember laboring over a term paper, trying to mentally generate and capture concepts, then putting them through the gristmill of language and onto the page in letters, words, and phrases that hopefully made sense. This is an ideal process for developing inductive reasoning. Literacy necessitates developing deductive and inductive reasoning—the cornerstones of logical thinking.

It is hard to overemphasize the effect formal logic had on Western thought. It marked the beginning of scientific method—proving a hypothesis through reason and objective observation. Most scholars agree that Greek analysis of the fields of human knowledge initiated the

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# How the Last Become First

By Bojidar Marinov

“I am reading *Unconditional Surrender* now.”

“*Liberating Planet Earth*.”

“Luther’s *Commentary on Galatians*.”

I interrupt the testimonies with a question, “What about *The Institutes of Biblical Law*?”



A short few seconds of silence. The pastor then says, “It’s a big one. We are still learning to read big books. Some of us here learned to read not full three years ago. Not a single one of our parents learned to read and write. They had to sign documents with prints of their fingers covered with ink.”

He pauses for a few more seconds. “Little by little. One step after another. We are still learning.”

I am sitting in a small improvised cafe in the open, in the central square of the Gypsy quarter of Sliven, a city in southeast Bulgaria. Right next to me is Boris Andonov, the pastor of a growing Gypsy church. About a dozen young men—ages 25 to 35—are with us. We are discussing Christian Reconstruction and the change it can produce for the Gypsy community in Sliven and Bulgaria as a whole.

Two of the young men around the table came to our annual Worldview Conference in Bulgaria this year. This is when I learned that there is a whole Gypsy church of about 300 members that has been influenced by the books I have been translating into Bulgarian. When asked about whom the influence was that led them to my translations, they pointed to Nikolai (Niki) Valchev, an old friend of mine, and a professor at a local Presbyterian seminary started and supported by Korean Presbyterian

churches. The seminary is specifically focused on training Gypsy pastors. Niki, himself a follower of Christian Reconstruction, used his position to teach his students that faith applies to all of life, not only to their personal life and their going to heaven. His patience and faithfulness was the key in converting them from fundamentalism and dispensationalism to postmillennialism and theonomy.

And they are now working to change their community. Or, at least, starting to work.

At the conference, while listening to their testimonies, I suggested that they should focus on training their children. “Start your own kindergarten of sorts,” I said, “or something to help parents break the curse of generations of illiteracy, ignorance, and lack of intellectual discipline.”

“Mr. Marinov,” they said, “we are already doing it. And we will show you our school when you come visit us.”

## Where to Begin

Indeed, the school was the first stop of my visit to their community. An old grocery store, right in the central square of the Gypsy quarter, the place where the open market is, where everyone goes to meet friends, have a cup of coffee, or just hang around and play backgammon or cards—the last activity very common these days, with unemployment on the rise and Gypsy unemployment approaching seventy percent. The

door was open so that we could hear the children reciting after the teacher whatever he was teaching them. When I entered, I had to exercise a great deal of self-control to stop myself from crying: one-hundred-plus children, ages six through thirteen, sitting calmly and repeating after the teacher the names of the continents, the letters of the Cyrillic alphabet, events from the history of Bulgaria, and others. Instruction was done the old way: oral repetition and memorizing. Not that the children couldn’t read; all of them could, but the community didn’t have the resources to buy textbooks for all of them. The teachers told me they had to scavenge the local government schools to get old visual aids like maps, alphabet and math tables, etc.

Then, at the end, they had catechism instruction. The class was split into two teams of fifty-plus children each. The two oldest boys were appointed captains of their teams. One captain read a question; his team repeated the question. Then the other captain read an answer; his team repeated the answer. They did about twenty-five questions and answers that way, before the class ended.

As amazing as this is, in a community where the generation of these kids’ grandparents still has about a seventy percent illiteracy rate, what was even more amazing was that all these children remained in their seats for more than half hour without moving, and that

without any visible sign of forced discipline or class management—and that at the end of the day, having had three hours of school prior to my arrival. And they all participated eagerly, raising their hands at every question by the teachers, competing to be picked to answer. An American public school psychologist would be hard pressed to find a single child in that room who could be diagnosed with ADHD.

Boris Andonov, himself a Gypsy, told me after school, “These children have a better education than any of our parents had. But even better, the local government school principals compete to have our kids enrolled in their schools.”

“But my goal,” he added, “is not to rely on the government. We have relied on the government for too long, and our minority has remained the lowest and most despised minority in Bulgaria. This school is only the beginning. My dream is to see a generation of educated, self-motivated parents, who will homeschool their children and will produce a generation of even better educated and self-motivated children. And these children you saw today will be that generation.”

He admitted that as a temporary measure he would have to use the government schools: the average income in the Gypsy community is \$1,000 per year, and very few of the parents can read. But at least the children can be given good momentum, in motivation and discipline. “Only we, as their parents, can provide such motivation. The government’s agenda is to keep us uneducated, for then we as a community can be manipulated to vote for corrupt politicians.”

### **Freedom on the Horizon**

Boris then told me, “I know it very well: We won’t be free until we have fathers and mothers who can and would take responsibility for their own

children. And I have a plan how to get there. And my plan has to do with less government and more self-discipline and taking responsibility. Within a generation, this ghetto,” he pointed around us, “will be completely different. And that without any government help.”

For those readers who are wondering why this is touching and why it would make me cry, let me give some background:

Gypsies are the lowest, most despised and outcast group in any nation of the Balkans, and, as a matter of fact, in Europe. It has nothing to do with their genes; it has to do with their culture. It is arguably the oldest surviving pagan culture in Europe; and when I say “pagan,” I mean pagan in all the possible meanings of this term. There is no vice nor sin that is not present in the very fabric of their culture. They self-consciously live off the backs of the surrounding population; the popular saying among the Gypsies in the Balkans is you know if the economic situation is tough, if there’s nothing to steal.

Girls are taught from an early age to pickpocket. Their communities are drowned in all kinds of sexual immorality and Gypsy girls are often sold by their fathers to pimps; they make up a large portion of the prostitutes in Europe. Babies are deliberately disabled after being born to grow with twisted limbs and be sent to beg on the streets. The average lifespan for a Gypsy in the Balkans is 45–50 years, due to the wide abuse of alcohol and narcotics among them, to say nothing of the frequent murders in the feuds and the vendettas between the Gypsy clans. When they settle, they usually simply occupy private lands as squatters and force the victim to put up with them on his land; when they live a nomadic life, a village or a town that has the bad luck to have a Gypsy caravan passing through town will often see pri-

vate and public property vandalized, and tons of garbage left to rot everywhere. In some European nations, like the Czech Republic, local authorities still designate areas for Gypsy ghettos, and even build walls around them and institute curfew for the Gypsy population.

Individual Gypsies, of course, break out of that life of sin, dependency, and poverty, and become civilized; some of them even prosper in highly qualified occupations like doctors and engineers. But for the majority of them, breaking out of their community is not easy. The Gypsies, being of Indo-European descent, still keep the old system of clan organization traditional for the Celts, the Persians, and the other Indo-European peoples: one can say Gypsies may well be the oldest surviving pagan culture in Europe. Not the family, not the individual, but the clan in the person of its “prince” is the center of the communal activity among Gypsies. They have their own tribal law, as old as the world, unwritten but known by everyone, and the central part played in the justice system of the clan is the “prince.”

Economically, the “prince” of the clan has the right to all economic proceeds—from pickpocketing, beggary, stealing people’s crops, witchcraft, etc.—and then he distributes them as he sees fit. As a result, it is not uncommon to see the “prince” living in a huge brick house and having Mercedes-Benzes for him, his wife, and his immediate family, while the rest of the clan live in houses of mud and use old horse or donkey carts for transportation. The hold of the clan on the minds of its members is very strong; and only in the very rarest of the circumstances can a missionary achieve a breakthrough and snatch a few individuals out of the clan and convert them to Christ. The good news is that in the modern society, clans are not able to compete successfully against

the larger world out there, or against the disintegration caused by their own wickedness and sin. When a clan disintegrates, the individual members are left helpless in a world where their Gypsy culture is viewed with disgust and hate. A determined pastor or a missionary can achieve significant success among these individual members.

Normally, though, it is quite dangerous to work among Gypsies, for a clan head may decide that the church presents a competing authority. And when a pastor is determined to change the very culture, this is now a clear danger to the traditional Gypsy way of life.

Boris's way of dealing with clan culture is the way of individual and family productivity. He wants to teach all his young people to become entrepreneurial, independent both spiritually and economically, and future-oriented. He says he learned that from the books and articles of Christian Reconstruction translated into Bulgarian.

When I told him that his job is much tougher than mine, having to work in a culture that is as remote from any Christian cultural influence as possible, he protested, "If it wasn't for your ministry and the books you've translated and the articles you've written, our job would have been impossible."

### **Changing Our Habits**

He is blessed to not be alone in this job. His brother is helping him as a second pastor. More than a dozen young men, all reading and learning from Rushdoony, North, and Bahnsen, not to mention Calvin and the Puritans, are determined to change the culture of their community. More than any other concept, "changing our habits" was the often-repeated combination of words. "We have to change our habits, our relations, our view of law and justice, and our view of work and the future," Boris says.

At the conference I delivered a lecture on the Biblical value of work. The two young men from Boris's church who attended the conference said during my visit to their town, "Our community is especially guilty of that pagan hostility to work. Our church needs to hear that message more than any other message." One of the young men who were having a coffee with us told me he was planning to enroll in the university to study medicine; his whole attitude to time and life has changed, he said, and helping men have healthier lives now suddenly had value in his eyes.

"Boris," I said at the end of my visit, "if you continue down that road, you know what is going to happen. You will put many other pastors to shame, and especially the Bulgarian ethnic majority."

"I have no intention to put anyone to shame," Boris retorted. "I only want to take my people closer to Christ and His Kingdom. We have been given the wrong message all these years. We now see hope, for our community and for our children. I want Reformation and Reconstruction for this community here, for the glory of God. I'll leave it to God to exalt or to put to shame, as He pleases."

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"Why is the Protestant religion gaining so much ground among the Gypsies?" asked my friend Kalin later that week.

Kalin is a well-known journalist who made a name working for Radio Free Europe in the 1990s. We became good friends ten years ago when we worked on starting the first libertarian organization in Bulgaria. I shared with him the story of my new Gypsy friends, right before my interview for Bulgaria On Air, a national TV station where Kalin presently leads a political commentary show.

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**IT IS IN HIS  
SERVICE THAT WE  
UNDERSTAND  
OUR CALLING  
TO CHARITY**

R. J. RUSHDOONY

**IN HIS  
SERVICE**  
THE CHRISTIAN CALLING TO CHARITY

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# Loyal Opposition

By Andrea Schwartz

For when for the time ye ought to be teachers, ye have need that one teach you again which be the first principles of the oracles of God; and are become such as have need of milk, and not of strong meat. (Hebrews 5:12)



The author of Hebrews reproves his listeners whom he thought should have progressed beyond the “milk” of the word. In our day, many debate which aspects of the faith constitute “milk” and “meat.” Some consider the doctrines of election, predestination, or matters of eschatology to be the “meat of the word.” However, I submit that these are actually the “milk” of the word, because they are concepts that, if not grasped, make for a lame and disabled theology. The “meat” has much more to do with skillfully applying the law of God to the complex issues of covenantal life. Without a knowledge and understanding of God’s law, it is impossible to navigate through difficult situations, including those between a husband and a wife.

If there ever was a topic that needs sound clarification and exposition, the submission of a wife to her husband certainly qualifies. Too much of the teaching from pulpits and expositors is not grounded on the law of God, and fails to take certain Biblical accounts at face value. As in every era, many of the attitudes and conclusions are a reaction to something prevalent in the culture rather than a true application of what the Scripture states. And, as Bojidar Marinov points out, many of the prevailing attitudes have more to do with margin notes and/or headings from publishers rather than the actual Biblical passages understood from a covenantal perspective.<sup>1</sup>

Dealing with the subject of submis-

sion is very much like walking on a minefield. It is easy to misstep and end up blown to bits. The solution is not to avoid the topic, but to approach it with fear and trembling (much as we are to work out our salvation), to better comprehend the mind of God and put His law into practice.

Ian Hodge, in a blog piece of April 27, 2013, entitled “Marriage, Submission, and the Helper Who Opposes,” offers another perspective of the meaning of the word “helpmeet,” sometimes also translated as “helper.”

Submission, as it is generally understood, means a person hands over his/her will to the will of another. He/She is to align his/her will with the will of another in perfect union. Thus, in the illustration of St. Paul, there is mutual submission of husbands and wives. But as he explains this in detail he describes the husband’s submission as love for his wife as Christ loves his church. A wife, on the other hand, is to submit to her husband in the same way the church is to submit to Christ. (Eph. 5:21ff.)

However, it is possible to read too much into these texts if they are abstracted from everything else Scripture teaches you about man-woman relationships. And the Bible starts in Genesis 2:18 with a recognition that although God created everything “good”, it was not good for man to be alone. So God made him a *helper*. The word in the older English translations is *helpmeet*. But neither “helper” nor “helpmeet” capture the not-so-subtle connotation of the Hebrew, *‘ezer kenegdo* (עֵזֶר כְּנֶגְדּוֹ). This literally means “help against,” or “the help that opposes,” and has also been translated “the helpmate opposite him.”

You can immediately see why “helpmeet” and “helper” are really inadequate translations, neither of which capture the “opposition” contained in the word *kenegdo* which means *against*, or *oppose*.<sup>2</sup>

It would be easy to dismiss Hodge’s observation because it is contrary to the customary understanding that a wife’s duty is to submit to her husband’s wishes without complaint or disagreement. This may be in part because of the negative connotation of the word “opposition” which unfortunately is often reduced to meaning defiance or rebellion. But *Webster’s 1828 Dictionary* gives ten definitions for this word:

OPPOSITION, n. [L. oppositio.]

1. Situation so as to front something else; a standing over against; *as the opposition of two mountains or buildings.*
2. The act of opposing; attempt to check, restrain or defeat. *He makes opposition to the measure; the bill passed without opposition. Will any opposition be made to the suit, to the claim or demand?*
3. Obstacle. *The river meets with no opposition in its course to the ocean.*
4. Resistance; *as the opposition of enemies. Virtue will break through all opposition.*
5. Contrariety; repugnance in principle; *as the opposition of the heart to the laws of God.*
6. Contrariety of interests, measures or designs. *The two parties are in opposition to each other.*
7. Contrariety or diversity of mean-

ing; as one term used in opposition to another.

8. Contradiction; inconsistency.

9. The collective body of opposers; in England, the party in Parliament which opposed the ministry; in America, the party that opposed the existing administration.

10. In astronomy, the situation of two heavenly bodies, when distant from each other 180 degrees.

Hodge makes the claim that part and parcel of the design of a suitable partner for Adam was someone who could serve in the capacity of nine out of ten of Webster's definitions, excepting the last one dealing with astronomy. The declaration by God that it was not good for Adam to be without a partner/helper was precisely because Adam was not complete without his counterpart.

It is wrong to reduce the idea of a woman as a counterpart merely to the physical, sexual function that Eve would serve for Adam. Her importance involves much more, as Rushdoony points out.

The woman is called his "help meet," his mirror; and even as he mirrors God, she mirrors him. He understands his responsibility by looking to God, and he can see how he is fulfilling his responsibilities and proving his obedience in relationship to his wife as she mirrors his nature and responsibility.<sup>3</sup>

This is hardly a description of the wife serving as a rubber stamp to her husband's every mandate. Rather, it presupposes that as the husband's trusted advisor, she not only has the best interests of their family in mind, but of his specifically. Thus she should oppose him when she deems it necessary to honor God and keep His commandments.

Hodge continues,

Now you can also see why so many husbands get opposition from their wives. They were designed by God to oppose

him. But their opposition is to be when he strays from the Word of God and begins to falter in carrying out the God-mandated activities in his life. "Have dominion," said God. "And here's your helper to oppose you every time you steer away from this."<sup>4</sup>

### A Handful of Examples

There are three excellent examples in Scripture of wives moving in opposition to their husbands and being vindicated because of their actions. In Genesis 21:12, Abraham had listened to his wife to have a son with her maid servant. Years later Sarah recognized the seeds of conflict between Ishmael and Isaac. She told Abraham to send Hagar and her son away. Abraham was not willing to do so. Yet, God sided with Sarah,

**And God said unto Abraham, Let it not be grievous in thy sight because of the lad, and because of thy bondwoman; in all that Sarah hath said unto thee, hearken unto her voice; for in Isaac shall thy seed be called.**

In another case, Abigail (1 Samuel 25), recognizing her husband's stubbornness and wickedness, overruled her husband's refusal to supply David and his men with provision. She thereby saved her entire household. Based on some of the prevalent writings about female submission, she would be designated as a rebellious wife. Yet after God removed her foolish husband, she became a member of David's household. Clearly, God (and David) recognized her as godly and righteous.

In each of these cases, one of a God-fearing man and the other of a fool, the role of the wife is crucial to God's plan and order.

### The Virtue of Rebekah's Opposition

A vivid example of this appears in Genesis 27. Rushdoony points out that

this chapter of Scripture is a sad one.

But it is also a very misunderstood one, placing a "bad rap" on Rebekah for deceiving her husband as she instructed Jacob to impersonate his brother so that God's blessing reserved for Jacob would not wrongly be given to her rebellious son.<sup>5</sup> Upon hearing that Isaac was about to overrule God by substituting Esau, Rebekah acted.

Determined to prevent her husband from sinning by trying to replace God's choice with his, she ordered Jacob to bring in two kids. She knew how to prepare them so as to fool Isaac, so that the blessing would go to Jacob (vv. 5–10).

Jacob doubted whether such a deception would succeed. Esau was a hairy man, Jacob smoother of skin (v. 11). The blind Isaac, in placing a hand on Jacob, would know the difference, and he would then curse Jacob as a deceiver (v. 12).

Rebekah's answer was "Upon me be thy curse, my son: only obey my voice, and go fetch me them" (v. 13).

At this point, it is important to understand what Rebekah meant when she said, "Upon me be thy curse." Curses and blessings are *covenant* facts, blessings for covenant faithfulness, and curses for disobedience. An oath is a personal invocation of blessings and curses for obedience or disobedience. We can only understand Rebekah and Jacob in terms of a knowledge of the meaning of blessings and curses.

Rebekah did *not* expect to be cursed; she sought to prevent Isaac from bringing down a curse on his own head. Loving Isaac, she wanted to prevent him from coming under God's curse. Loving Jacob, she encouraged him to be bold because he was ordained by God to be blessed. Rebekah feared God and His possible judgment on Isaac, and also on Jacob.<sup>6</sup>

When this account is normally explicated, it is presented with a bias

that teaches that Rebekah was a deviant woman who did not submit to her husband, and who did not trust God. If it is viewed from a covenantal perspective she, instead, should be viewed as a faithful wife who stood in *opposition* to her husband who was about to disobey the living God.

Rebekah's purposes included, *first*, preventing Isaac from bringing God's curse on himself. The fact that Isaac was now concerned about Jacob's safety is a sure indication of a change in his stance. *Second*, Rebekah had enabled Jacob to make a stand, not only to get a blessing already ordained by God for him, but against his ruthless brother. *Third*, Rebekah wanted a Godly wife for Jacob. She was not aware of the religious decline of her family, but its daughters were better than local girls.

What Rebekah did was to stand unequivocally for the covenant and its integrity. She feared God's judgment on Isaac and Jacob.

To apply present day perspectives to the events of this chapter is commonplace, but for Rebekah God's covenantal promise was paramount, and she acted accordingly. It will not do to say that her favoritism to Jacob was the reason; her concern was covenantal, and God's promise concerning Jacob was no doubt basic to her partiality to Jacob.<sup>7</sup>

Never does the Bible indicate that a wife is at liberty to violate the covenant in order to be considered a submitted spouse. As joint-heirs, husband and wife must act in unison, each bringing their commitment to God's Word as the starting point to any discussion or decision. In the same chapter of 1 Peter where wives are instructed to submit to their husbands, husbands are told:

**Likewise, ye husbands, dwell with them according to knowledge, giving honour unto the wife, as unto the weaker vessel, and as being heirs together of the grace of life;**

**that your prayers be not hindered. (1 Peter 3:7)**

Surely Rebekah would have told her husband of God's revelation to her about their sons, and the selling of the birthright from Esau to Jacob was most likely a known fact. Moreover, Esau had demonstrated covenant unfaithfulness by taking two wives from the Hittites, and the Scripture calls it a grief to both Isaac and Rebekah. (Gen. 26:34–35) Most definitely their prayers were hindered as Isaac was disregarding his wife's counsel, thereby treating her with dishonor and failing to allow her to act as his mirror.

Proverbs 18:22 states, "*Whoso findeth a wife findeth a good thing, and obtaineth favour of the LORD.*" When Eliezer (Gen. 24) was chosen to find a wife for Isaac, he prayed that God would send to him the woman God had chosen for Isaac. God's providential care in bringing Rebekah to Eliezer is evidence that God had selected Rebekah to be the wife of the patriarch—a selection that served Isaac in good stead.

### What About Eve?

Some will argue that part of God's rebuke to Adam after the Fall was *because* he listened to the counsel of his wife. (Gen. 3:16ff.). Hodge explains:

The problem was that Eve misunderstood her role. She was to keep her man on target to obey God in all things, not derail him into disobedience against God. Yet this is what she did ... Similarly, Adam was supposed to listen to his wife – but not when she was mistaken. And on the issue of the forbidden fruit, she was very mistaken.<sup>8</sup>

Hodge makes the case that Satan approached Eve first *because* of the role God assigned to her. Much the same way that lobbyists will approach (to convince or bribe) a staff member of a legislator to pave the way toward

procuring a favorable vote for a particular issue, Satan went to Adam's trusted counselor. He knew that if he could get Eve to accept his propositions, then Adam would have no one to oppose him when he was tempted.<sup>9</sup>

### Striking the Balance

The book of Ephesians instructs both husband and wife to understand their relationship as a picture or reflection of Christ's relationship to His church. Each has a particular calling in the marriage: "The submission requirement does not mean she gives up her opposition rights. What it means, is that a wife must learn to oppose the right issues in the right manner."<sup>10</sup>

Here is where we get to the "meat" of the Word. For exercising opposition rights must reflect, by way of analogy, how the church is to submit to Christ. While it is clear that the church does not have the liberty to disobey God's commands, we, as God's creatures, don't always understand or agree with His stated or secret will and we are *encouraged* to petition Him with fervor. (Recall the parables dealing with prayer: The unjust judge *and* the neighbor knocking on his neighbor's door at night are examples to show the people of God how to relate to the Lord in their petitions.) So, too, a wife should carefully choose her opposition for those matters she considers essential to covenantal faithfulness. Her desire to maintain covenantal faithfulness should be exercised with care without destroying the structure of the family. Likewise, her husband should not ignore the petitions of his wife, since God does not ignore the petitions of His church.

In almost four decades of marriage, I have failed in this endeavor more times than I care to enumerate. While my issues had merit, I often overrated the content of my argument and downplayed the way I conveyed it. St. Peter

admonishes women,

Likewise, ye wives, be in subjection to your own husbands; that, if any obey not the word, they also may without the word be won by the conversation of the wives; While they behold your chaste conversation coupled with fear. (1 Peter 3:1-2)

By failing to make “chaste conversation coupled with fear” a top priority, I often sabotaged my own efforts to resolve certain important issues because I failed to hold my tongue or use it wisely. Whether or not I considered that my husband was “fighting fairly,” my responsibility was to fear God and keep His commandments. (Ecc. 12:13) Peter’s instruction is to foster conflict resolution, not to have disagreements buried.

Hodge comments on the “battle of the sexes” in marriage:

Men do not want to obey God’s commandments fully. Wives do not wish to oppose their husbands on these issues, but are more than happy to oppose them on a host of trivial issues. Men now want to rule over their wives, rather than form a formidable team that is a reflection of the relationship between Christ and the church. With the result that too often men are too busy giving orders to take the time to listen to their *‘ezer kenegdo*.

There is a challenge, then, for both husbands and wives. Do men fulfill their duty to obey God’s commandments? Does a wife see her husband as God sees him, help him identify his true calling under God, and support him in it, opposing him when he strays from the path God has ordained for him? If not, it’s time for some changes.<sup>11</sup>

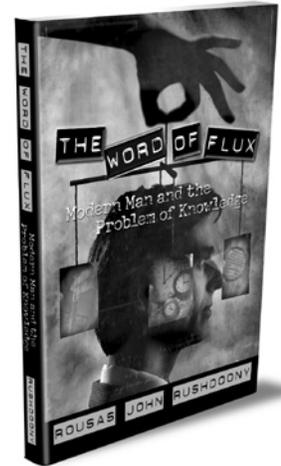
Learning how to be the virtuous, powerful woman of Proverbs 31 takes humility, maturity, and commitment. Knowing the law-word of God sufficiently and practically is essential for a

woman who is to look well to the ways of her household. In the end, a man and woman in the partnership of marriage are the building blocks of a godly society, and only when they are willing to sharpen and challenge each other to faithfulness will their efforts bring about a bountiful harvest. 🌾

Andrea Schwartz is the Chalcedon Foundation’s active proponent of Christian education and matters relating to the family. She’s the author of five books dealing with homeschooling and the family. Her latest book is *Woman of the House*. She oversees the Chalcedon Teacher Training Institute ([www.ctti.org](http://www.ctti.org)) and continues to mentor, lecture, and teach. Visit her website [www.WordsFromAndrea.com](http://www.WordsFromAndrea.com). She lives in San Jose with her husband of 37 years. She can be reached by email at [lessons.learned@yahoo.com](mailto:lessons.learned@yahoo.com).

1. Bojidar Marinov, sermon, “Restoring Jacob’s Reputation,” delivered at Church of the King, Mc Allen, TX. See [churchofthekingmcallen.org/wp-content/uploads/2012/02/20120205.mp3](http://churchofthekingmcallen.org/wp-content/uploads/2012/02/20120205.mp3)
2. Ian Hodge, blog, Biblical Landmarks, entry of April 27, 2013 “Marriage, Submission and the Helper Who Opposes.” See <http://biblicallandmarks.com/wpl/marriage-submission-and-the-helper-who-opposes/>
3. Elizabeth Fellersen, ed., *Toward a Christian Marriage*, R.J. Rushdoony, “The Doctrine of Marriage” (Vallecito, CA: Ross House Books, 1972), 14.
4. Hodge, blog.
5. In the aforementioned sermon by Bojidar Marinov, he extensively exegetes this portion of Scripture with a covenantal perspective vindicating both Jacob and Rebekah from many commentators’ and publishers’ negative assessments.
6. R. J. Rushdoony, *Genesis* (Vallecito, CA: Ross House Books, 2002), 193.
7. *Ibid.*, 194–95.
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9. *Ibid.*
10. *Ibid.*
11. *Ibid.*

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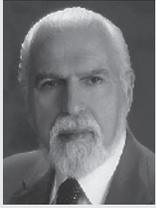
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# OLD-LINE AMERICANS

By R. J. Rushdoony

(Reprinted from *A Word in Season, Vol. 4* [Vallecito, CA: Ross House Books, 2012], 1–3.)



Our experiences as a child often color our thinking as adults.

I lived as a child in California. My immigrant parents, refugees from Armenia and the Turkish massacres, moved to California from New York a few weeks after my birth in 1916. We lived on a farm near Kingsburg, a Swedish town. Even when I was in high school, Kingsburg's mayor, a Swede, spoke a heavily accented English. Besides the Swedes, there were Armenians, Danes, Portuguese, Japanese, Mexicans, and a few others. When I started kindergarten, my English, like that of the other children, was limited. In the first grade, I met my first "real American," an elderly woman teacher named Mrs. Pinkley. I have forgotten the names of others of my early teachers, but I remember hers, because we were all impressed by this "real American." Years later, I realized that a very few old-line Americans did live in the area, but none were near us.

In the early 1920s, when my father became pastor of an Armenian church in Detroit, we left by train for that city. As a youngster, it was for me a great adventure as well as a major dislocation. On board the train, I was immediately interested in the man who seemed to me to be the most important man running the train, and the strongest, the Pullman porter. He was also the first black man I had ever seen. I followed him around, to his tolerant amusement, and I began to ask questions. As a boy in Kingsburg, I knew that there all of us identified people in terms of their country of origin: "What country does your family come from?" Accordingly, I asked him the same question, and, "What language did they speak?" The answers were surprising: he came from Chicago, and his family from Alabama. His grandparents? Alabama. His great-grandparents, his great-great-grandparents? He was amused: "As far back as I know, Alabama," and all spoke English. I then knew that I had met my second "real American."

Looking back years later, I realized how right I was. Apart from the Indians, most of us are immigrant stock of relatively recent origin. Two groups have a long history here, the English and the Negroes, and both have English names and deep roots in the United States. These two groups best qualify as "old-line Americans" and "real Americans," because their lives, culture, and outlook are most formed by an American tradition. The United States is their country in a deeper sense.

The presidential candidacy of Jesse Jackson was a noteworthy step in American history, but it was not without some unhappy aspects. In particular, Jackson played the role of the black outsider demanding entrance. Valid reasons for this stance are by no means lacking, but the more important and positive fact that needs emphasis and development is that of the insider.

My perception as a child was right. Blacks are old-line Americans. As such, they have a major stake in American life in the protection and development of their country.

In Europe, there are growing hostilities against the large members of Middle Eastern minorities who came there after World War II to fill the needs for workers. In Africa, there are racial and intertribal hostilities of major character. In Asia, we find that India, Pakistan, and other countries have ancient and explosive racial conflicts.

The United States and the Americas are almost alone in working to relegate such tensions to past history. In that effort, blacks have a necessary role as old-line Americans working to strengthen and develop the American hope.

Jones ... Sinai cont. from page 17

model of Western civilization. That incredible flowering of Greek civilization was catalyzed by the alphabet. Consequently, the ability of the Greeks to record those advances in writing made it possible for the Western world to build upon them.

A revolution of literacy and logical thinking was brought about by the writing of God providing the reasoning requisite for the Word of God to take hold in the mind of man. Historically the Word and the writing of God appeared as a package, and paganism, idolatry and human sacrifice declined as they rose. All these advances were rooted in that brilliant innovation of the Hebrews, the alphabet—the writing of God. The Israelites began the journey of literacy and logic that would gain speed with the Greeks.

Evidence continues to surface indicating the writing of God was the original alphabet of letters. The acceptance of this crucial fact will require an in-depth reorientation of Biblical perspectives of the Exodus. In ancient times the word and writing of God guided believers to abandon the superstition of their pagan gods and take on the challenge of educating themselves in literacy, mathematics and abstract, analytical thinking—the search for truth. The Sinai Covenant was the opening salvo in an ideological struggle never before seen and which has never ceased. 🏹

Miles R. Jones (Ph.D. in Foreign Languages, UT Austin, 1985) is an internationally renowned expert in accelerated learning and linguistics who provides programs for homeschoolers. He was called from teaching CEOs and top executives in Europe, the Middle East, the U.S., and Mexico to teaching in inner-city schools for six years in Dallas, Texas, prior to becoming an education professor at Texas A & M. His previous work as a director of

university English programs in the United Arab Emirates (and as a U.S. government specialist in Yemen training military officers) allowed him to pursue his research on the alphabet in the field and its relationship to the Exodus. His work is the culmination of decades of professional research and expertise on the origin of the alphabet. Dr. Jones hosts an online talk show entitled “The Call from Sinai.” Broadcasts can be accessed at christianfreedomnetwork.com. For more information on his book *The Writing of God*, or to order, go to writingofgod.com. Dr. Jones can be contacted at jonesgeniuses.com.

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Marinov... How the Last cont. from page 20

“Because,” I said with a smile, “the Bible says that the last shall become first.”

“Well, I see,” he said, “but what is the immediate motivation for them?”

“For the first time in their lives, and in their history,” I answered, “they have hope.” 🏹

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

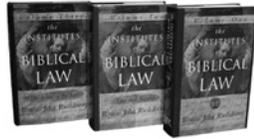
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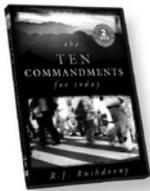
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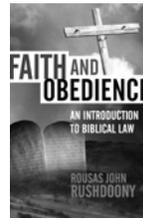
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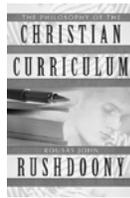
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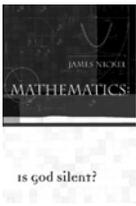
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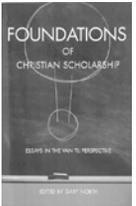
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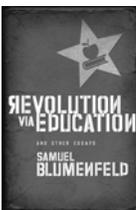
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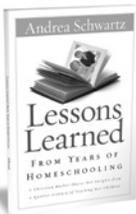
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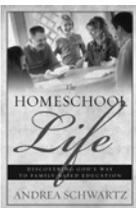
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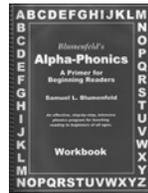
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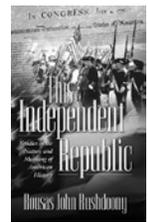


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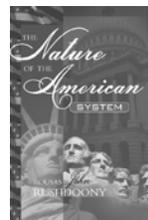
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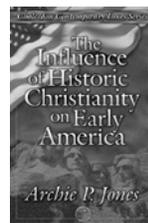
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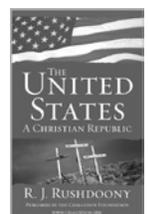
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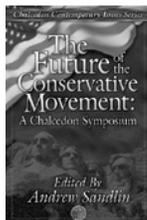


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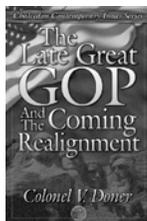
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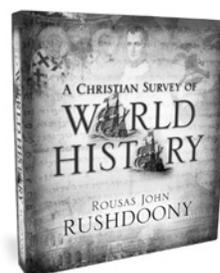


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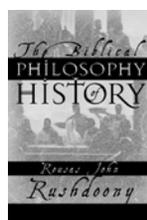
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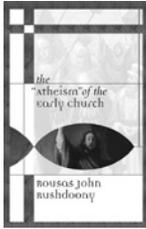


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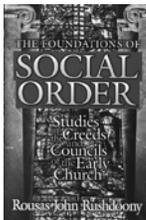
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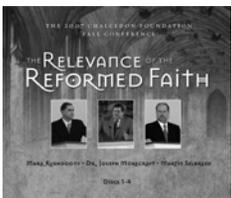


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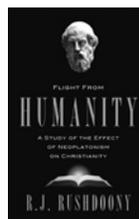


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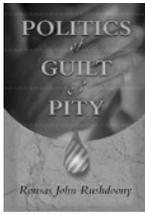
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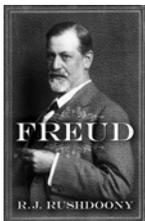


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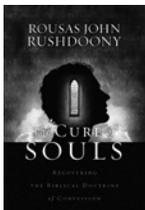


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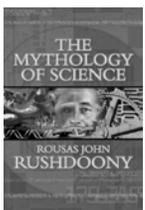
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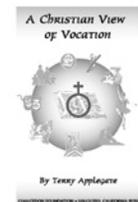
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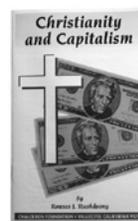
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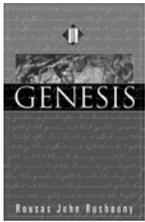
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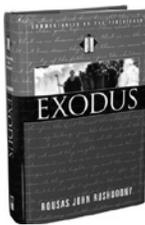


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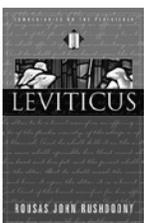
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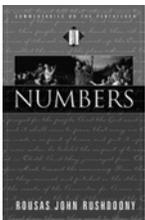
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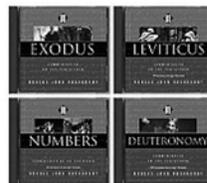
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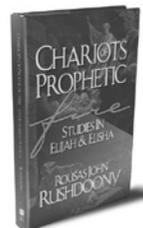
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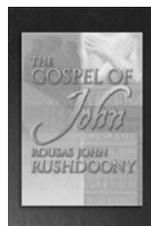
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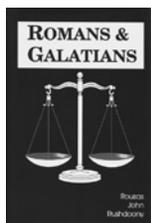


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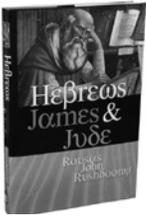
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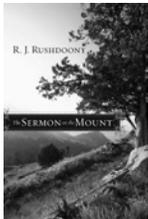
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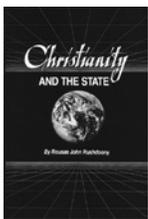
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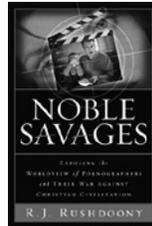
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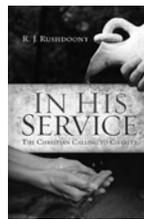
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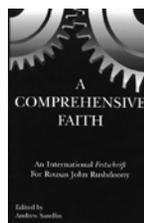
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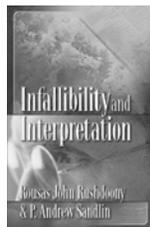
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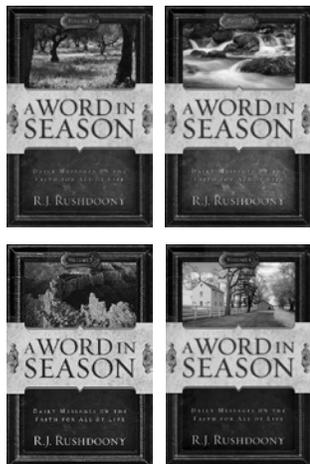
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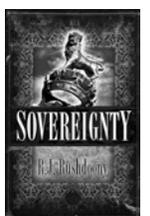
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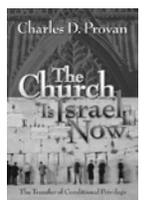
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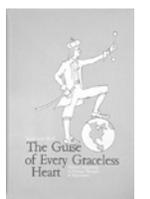
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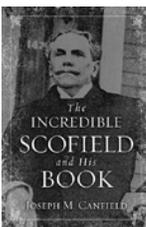
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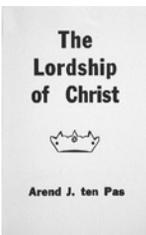
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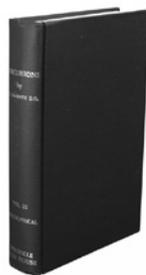


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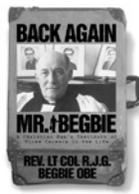
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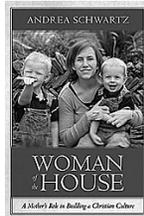


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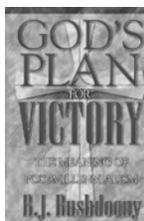
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