

# THE BIBLICAL EDUCATOR

*"To know wisdom and instruction; to perceive the words of understanding" Proverbs 1:2*

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## RIGHTLY DIVIDING THE WORD OF TRUTH

by Debra M. Miani

Each Christian teacher has a high calling to teach children the law of God as a way of life (Deut. 6:5-7). How can we best fulfill this **within our respective academic disciplines?** Are token scripture verses or a daily hour of Bible class adequate? I believe we must educate the whole child, his mind and behavior, in light of God's word. To this end, I offer some practical advice, applicable to any subject or grade level.

### Teach children the fear of God

This is the starting place for every teacher and class. A typical secondary school is departmentalized, and the math, social studies, science, or English teachers tend to leave discussions of the Bible to the Bible teacher. However, Proverbs 1:7 reminds us that "the fear of the Lord is the beginning of knowledge." Whether or not you teach Bible classes, your first priority is to teach the fear, or reverence, of the Lord.

Much of what children learn is by example. They will learn to respect and revere the Lord through your example of godliness and consistency. You will teach children to be God-fearing by your own God-fearing attitude and behavior. More importantly, they will learn the fear of the Lord by learning to respect your God-ordained authority over them. Anyone who has spent one day in a classroom is aware of the need for discipline. Proverbs 22:15 gives us the reason: "Foolishness is bound in the heart of a child"; and the solution: "the rod of correction shall drive it far from him." Ephesians 6:1 states: "Children, obey your parents in the Lord; for this is right. Honour thy father and mother . . . that it may be well with thee and thou mayest live long on the earth." As surrogate parents, we share the responsibility of discipline, and are entitled to equal respect. We, in turn, must balance our discipline with love, and are warned to "provoke not your children to wrath." (Eph. 6:4) Loving, firm, and consistent discipline is essential to educate children in the fear of the Lord.

With regard to subject matter, we must instill a belief that all knowledge begins with the knowledge of God. Academic disciplines further our knowledge of God since math, science, history, and language are studies of His creation. (Rom. 1:20). This concept is discussed in depth in the collection *Foundations of Christian Scholarship* (Ross House, 1976).

### Teach children to discern truth from error

In John 17, Jesus prayed to the Father: "Sanctify them in truth. Thy word is truth." Using the Word, we can teach all subjects in a biblical, truthful way. I have seen a critical need for this in Social Studies. For example, sit down with a child and have him read from

a history text, or some other narrative. When he finishes, ask him if what he just read is true. He will probably tell you "I don't know" or "yes" or just give you a puzzled look. He probably never heard this question before. Most children accept anything in print as the truth; it never occurs to them that it could possibly be otherwise. Likewise, they accept everything on T.V. and in the media as truth. They are constantly bombarded with lies, blatant or subtle, and by age 13 their heads are filled with them. Most children are untrained to recognize and reject the lies which penetrate their minds. We must teach them to discern truth from error: to judge everything they see or hear in light of God's word.

Colossians 2:8 warns all Christians to "Beware lest any man spoil you through philosophy and vain deceit." In 2 Cor. 10:5 we are commanded to be continually "bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ." Finally, 2 Tim. 2:15 commands us to "Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth." For teachers, this begins with the textbook. Explain the first day of school that the book was written by a man, and his own beliefs are in it. What he says may be fact; it may be opinion. Point out the author's bias wherever it appears, and force students to use the Word of God in the classroom to test the word of the author. This can be followed up at home, if the students are permitted to watch television. I gave my 7th graders the following assignment: they were to watch a television show and write out the message of the show. They were required to analyze each character, and decide whether the character projected godly or ungodly attitudes and behavior. They were to look for any violations of the word of God, and anything they felt was questionable. Some of them immediately **saw problems; they way the women and men dressed and acted;** language; constant sarcasm. It was more difficult for them to recognize the underlying, pervasive message of many of the shows: that God doesn't exist, so I can do whatever I please. For many of those 7th graders, this was a turning point in their attitude toward television viewing; they realized the power of the TV to influence and deceive them. I have repeated this exercise, using similar questions, to train them to analyze their textbooks and entertainment in light of Scripture.

If we are consistent, our students will eventually learn to apply the Word of God to all areas of life. They will, as Hebrews 5:14 indicates, "have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil." Our faithfulness will also yield blessings for our students and ourselves as the Lord has promised: "That thou mightest fear the Lord thy God, to keep all his statutes and his commandments, which I command thee, thou, and thy son, and thy son's son, all the days of thy life; and that thy days may be prolonged." (Deut. 6:2)

## EPISTEMOLOGICAL SELF-CONSCIOUSNESS: When Push Comes to Shove

by Terrill I. Elniff

The heart of Christian education is the principle of taking the propositional Word of God as a presupposition in the approach to all study and learning. It is that principle which makes Christian education unique and significant. Being aware of that principle and implementing it in every part of the educational process is known as epistemological self-consciousness. The Christian school must be self-consciously, consistently, and aggressively Christian in every way.

There is also a negative side to epistemological self-consciousness: being aware that Christian education is engaged in a uncompromising struggle with secular humanism and being able to recognize its influence wherever it appears. Without such awareness, latent secularism, misunderstood purpose, and erosive compromises all take their toll.

The test of one's epistemological understanding comes when he is called upon to choose between alternatives, especially when the right and consistent alternative is unattractive. At that point epistemological self-consciousness is not so much knowing what is right, but doing it. Christian education faces this test on the issue of finances.

The problem is survival. Christian schools generally operate on thin financial margins and survive only because of tax exemption, underpaid staff, and no-frill programs and facilities. Consequently, they face the temptation to compromise their purpose and to accommodate the state in order to gain certain financial and material benefits.

The use of government financing is seldom evaluated from the standpoint of epistemological self-consciousness. Instead it is evaluated from the standpoint of entanglement in government regulation. The justifications for acceptance of government aid are outworn but accepted with ease and slipperiness: "We're paying for it so we might as well get our share." Or, "Government aid is all right as long as it doesn't lead to compromise or to control." Or, "We might as well take advantage of it because if the government sets out to control us, they'll do it whether we take aid or not."

These clichés are not unanswerable; they are just unanswered. For instance, the argument that we're paying for it so we might as well get our share is just flat out not true; the tax exempt schools are not paying any taxes at all, but they are asking for the benefits. More precisely, they are serving as a conduit for the transfer of money from some taxpayers to others.

The argument that aid is all right as long as it doesn't lead to compromise or to control ignores the fact that government aid always leads to controls of some kind; the government cannot dispense public funds without regulation. But the initiative in regulation is left to the government, and controls that are acceptable today may soon give rise to controls that are unacceptable. The temptation to accommodate will be greater when a dependence on aid has been established. This technique is used increasingly as a way of whipping states, localities, corporations, universities, and other institutions into line on various issues. The usual result is not withdrawal, but surrender. And some very sophisticated rationalizations to cover over the philosophical gap. The argument that if the government sets out to control the

Christian schools, it will do so whether the schools take aid or not is just plain foolish. If we are likely to be hanged, we ought at least not to lengthen the rope. That is best done by giving as few opportunities as possible for the government to increase its regulatory powers.

But these answers to the conventional wisdom still do not address the philosophical problem, which is not *how* or *under what circumstances* schools can receive aid, but *whether* aid can be accepted in *any* form without compromising Christian education. As long as we evaluate the problem as one of avoiding control, we will miss the point. Government aid is not wrong because it leads to compromise or control; it is wrong because it is what Frederic Bastiat (1801-1850) called "legal plunder": the use of government power to redistribute wealth from one group of citizens to another.

Is plunder an intrinsic contradiction to the philosophy of Christian education? If a Christian school participates in it, is it in contradiction to its epistemological principle?

It is impossible to quote a Biblical proof-text that condemns redistributive schemes directly. Whatever case is to be made must be made indirectly, by inference from the commandments, laws, and other principles of human action laid down in Scripture. The Bible, for instance, consistently presents man as an individual who is personally responsible for his actions. A system of legal plunder, redistributing resources according to command or political influence, negates the concept of free choice and responsibility. Christian education, on the other hand, rests on those very concepts. It seems inconsistent for the Christian schools to demand freedom of choice in education and then to use legal force to exercise their freedom. Moreover, it seems inconsistent to argue that Christian parents are responsible to God for their children and then to argue that the government is actually responsible to provide the wherewithal.

Do these inconsistencies constitute an intrinsic and manifest contradiction to the philosophy of Christian education? The answer to that question lies precisely in the principle of epistemological self-consciousness. The purpose of the Christian school is to apply the content of the Word of God to every area of life. In so doing, the Christian school comes into stark contrast with the philosophy of secular humanism, roughly embodied in the educational establishment of the state. In this struggle it is not the mere purpose of the Christian school to survive, but to survive in effective epistemological form, able to speak to the bankruptcy of secular humanism without at the same time drinking at its wells. The answer of the Christian schools to the state must be the same as that given to Nebuchadnezzar: "The God whom we serve is able to save us... but whether He does or not, be it known to you, O King, we will not serve your gods, or worship the image which you have set up" (Daniel 3:17-18).

We do not know whether Christian schools will survive without government aid. What is certain is that when push comes to shove and Satan touches the financially-strapped Christian school in its pocketbook, the school without epistemological self-consciousness will make whatever concessions are necessary to gain the funds it needs. And such schools will survive, but ineffectually.

The epistemologically self-conscious schools, on the other hand, will make it known that the idols of secular humanism will not be served at any cost. And having made that point, they just may, by the grace and providence of God, survive to fight again another day.

## FOREIGN LANGUAGES IN THE CHRISTIAN SCHOOLS

by James B. Jordan

What languages to teach, if any, and when — this is the question before us. Traditionally, the first language learned apart from English has been Latin. This was predicated on three assumptions: first, that a study of Latin structure and vocabulary would greatly increase the pupil's ability to work with English; second, that Western Civilization was based on two sources — the Bible and the Greco-Roman classics — and thus Latin was a key to one aspect of the "Great Tradition;" third, Latin was the language of scholarship.

The second language normally learned was German, largely because it was the language of scholarship. (The fascination of Americans for German scholarship is an interesting historical topic. German is not really any more a language of scholarship than is French, but for about a century Americans have been greatly impressed by the German university system and by German scholarship.)

It is questionable whether Christian schools should be *primarily* given over to training pupils for a life of intellectual scholarship. The large majority of students will never use Latin or German for such purposes, and don't really need to be bothered with learning them. Their time would be better spent learning more practical tools of dominion: religion, economics, history. German and Latin are for the *few* who will be called into intellectual labor, and these few need economics etc. just as much as the rest.

On the other hand, I should like to suggest that Hebrew and Greek are good, proper, and very helpful tools of dominion and faith, and that every Christian child should be taught them. There is no reason why they should not be taught, and many reasons why they should. Imagine the state the Church would be in if every elder knew Hebrew and Greek! A generation trained in these tongues would be in a position to make a quantum leap forward in the faith.

Assuming that the value of Hebrew and Greek is self-evident, which should be given primacy? I should like to suggest Hebrew. Even the New Testament is written in Hebrew, in the sense that the Greek of the New Testament is *Hebraized* Greek. Hebrew thought forms and linguistic constructions underlie the New Testament as much as they do the Old. Moreover, Hebrew is harder for adults to learn than Greek, because it is a non-Indo-European language; it is much more dissimilar to English than is Greek. Thus, it would be best to begin training in Hebrew at an early age. Additionally, Hebrew is mostly vocabulary, and young children find memory work much easier and more pleasant than do adults. Finally, curriculum materials are available for Hebrew, beginning in the first grade. (For a catalogue of Hebrew textbooks, send \$1.00 to KTAV Publishers, 75 Varick St., New York, NY 10013.) If you desire more help, please write to us at the newsletter address.

Hebrew is taught at many colleges and universities in America. Thus, whoever teaches Hebrew in your school should be able to learn it at a nearby college. If not, your pastor probably studied Hebrew once upon a time, and he could teach it. It would do him good, since he is probably very rusty. If all else fails, the University of Wisconsin has a correspondence programme in Hebrew. (Write University of Wisconsin—Extension, 209 Extension Building, 432 North Lake St., Madison, Wisconsin 53706.)

How about Greek? We could delay Greek until the 6th or 8th grade, but I'd like to suggest teaching it from the first grade on as

well. The alphabet and vocabulary can be mastered easily by children, as can the paradigms. Unfortunately, to my knowledge there is no curriculum in Greek for lower grades. You'll have to make up your own, but that will not be too difficult.

What about Latin? Well, Latin is no longer the language of scholarship, and as consistent Christians we are not interested in the pagan classics as a source of civilization. Nonetheless, a study of Latin is of great help in understanding the structure of English and in developing English vocabulary. Thus, I should like to suggest that every pupil be put through a strong course of Latin in the eighth grade, taught in the classical manner with a stress on the structure of the language, and much vocabulary work. One good intensive year is enough for the purposes of general education, though it might work out better to make two years mandatory and make the course less intensive.

Modern foreign languages should be reserved for high school, since by that time students will begin to have some idea whether they are called to attend university or not. German and French are of equal importance here, and the intellectually inclined student should be encouraged to study both.

Spanish is of little value for scholarship, but schools located in Texas or in other places having a sizable Spanish populace might want to include it. Since the point is to teach practical, conversational Spanish, it would be best again to teach it beginning in the first grade.

If you are teaching Hebrew, Greek, and Spanish in the first grade, it would probably be easiest to divide the year into three parts and teach them one at a time. Keep up this tripartite division right through grammar school, and by the time they enter high school your students should be well versed in three languages. If you are not teaching Spanish, divide the year in half.

Hopefully the day will come when we will have a Christian curriculum for Hebrew and Greek which will go through the grammar school grades. At present we do not, of course. The teacher will have to be careful when using the Jewish Hebrew curriculum, but if we don't start now the time will never come when we have our own Christian curriculum. As more and more schools get involved in teaching Hebrew and Greek, the demand for a Christian curriculum will grow, and eventually we will have one.

Finally, a note on why foreign languages are learned. In some circles it is assumed that modern foreign languages should be learned in order to facilitate international relations, and to aid us when we travel abroad. Let's face it, few of us will ever travel abroad, particularly with our economy collapsing around us. The purpose of learning foreign languages is to introduce us to the scholarship and culture found in these tongues. For that reason, it is the *literary* aspect of modern languages that ought to be stressed. Our students will want to read Pascal and Luther, not know how to ask for a hamburger in French and German! Keep this in mind when you select textbooks. (Ask your local state schools if they have old language textbooks stored away somewhere. They probably don't teach Latin anymore, so you should be able to purchase their old textbooks. There are probably some old German and French textbooks around as well. Try to pick those which stress literary aspects of the language.)

The only language, besides Spanish, which may prove useful to us in terms of international relations is Russian. If God gives us into the hands of the Soviets, we will have to be good Daniels, and an acquaintance with the conqueror's tongue will come in handy.

## BOOK REVIEW

by James Kevin Craig

*Biology: A Search for Order in Complexity*, ed. by John N. Moore and Harold S. Slusher, Zondervan Publishing House, 1970.

*The Battle for Creation*, (Acts/Facts/Impacts Volume 2) by Henry M. Morris and Duane T. Gish, Creation-Life Publishers 1976.

*Science Textbooks Controversies and the Politics of Equal Time*, Dorothy Nelkin, The MIT Press, 1977.

The presence of these books reveals one of the sadder situations in the battle for Christian schools. It indicates that great numbers of truly gifted Christians and needed financial support are being diverted from the battle front. Isolated bands of Christian soldiers are dying from wounds inflicted by government troops and the supplies that could save them are not only not reaching the front lines, but they are being given to the enemy. These books reveal a coordinated effort to save the temples of Moloch from destruction.

Even if Christian schools had all the fine textbooks, qualified teachers, and financial support they needed, the work of the Creation Research Society, the Creation Science Research Center, and other organizations would still be treason against Christ the King. These organizations are compromising the faith once delivered.

True Christians everywhere, of course, thank the Lord daily for His grace in raising up men like Henry M. Morris; men who are diligent to defend the inerrancy of the Scriptures, including the Genesis account of Creation. These men, as they look toward God's handiwork to think God's thoughts after Him, honor the Lord by demonstrating that evolutionists everywhere have been suppressing the knowledge of God given them through the creation (Ps. 1:1-4; Rom. 1:18-20). Undoubtedly many people, this writer included, have gained a certain and saving knowledge of Jesus Christ through their writings. As scientists they are models for our students. As educators they are hindering the cause of Christ; they are compromising Christ's total Lordship over education.

Although God rules the family, the school, the government, and the church, and has given His laws for each of these areas, they are all independent of one another. The church does not run the government; the government does not run the school. The separation of these various "spheres" is integral to God's law. Public schools, therefore, are morally, Biblically, *wrong*. It's not that they are inefficient, plagued by vandalism, or lack the proper science curriculum. Control of schools and education by the civil magistrate is against God's Law. Period. *Biology: A Search for Order in Complexity*, and other books like it, represent a great effort to design a textbook acceptable to public schools. Perhaps greater effort is being and has been expended to persuade public school administrators and teachers to use these books. Christians, in books like *The Battle for Creation*, are urged to work with their local public school to get creationism into the classrooms. Such activity sanctions the existence of public education. It grants that the state has a right to be the educator of the family's child *at all*—regardless of what it chooses to teach. This is compromise.

These books list the following examples of treason:

1. *Christ is only 50% Lord*. According to these creationists, science classes should only spend 50% of the time learning about God's work of creation. The other 50% should be given to the teaching of evolution! Nelkin observes: "Unlike 19th century fundamentalists, most modern-day creationists are willing to compromise by balancing the 'pernicious influence' of modern science with a presentation of alternative theories. 'Let the students take their choice'" (p. 130). "Creationists argue that since the Biblical theory

of origins is scientifically valid, it deserves 'equal time.' When there are two 'equally valid hypotheses' it is only 'fair' that students be exposed to both theories and be allowed to choose for themselves" (p. 134). As Henry Morris himself put it, "Let us present as many theories as possible and give the child the right to choose the one that seems most logical to him. We are working to have students receive a fair shake" (ibid., p. 134). But Christ says *every* thought must be brought captive to Him (II Cor. 10:5. We cannot merely give Him "equal time." Creationism is the *only valid position!* We sin against the Lord if, with Nell Segreaves, we are "not asking for our position to be the only position. We're asking for 50 percent . . ." (*Christianity Today*, Dec. 22, 1972, p. 35). Christ is 100% or nothing. We see from the above quote by Morris that these creationists

2. *Deny Christ's Lordship over science*. There are not two "equally valid hypotheses." There is God's Word and there is rebellion, and never the twain shall meet. True science is only creationist science. True science is thinking God's thoughts after him; classifying the creation according to His Word (Gen. 2:19-20). True science is exercising dominion over the creation *under God*. Evolutionists have no claim to the title of scientist and therefore no claim to a single second of our students' time. In order to appeal to the public schools, Dr. Morris and his associates must play the evolutionists' game of "neutrality," and hypothetical scientific "objectivity." As a result,

3. *Creationist textbooks are completely unacceptable in Christian Schools*. In *Biology*, the allegedly neutral "scientific method" is foundational, not God's scientific mandate in Gen 1:26-28. All the facts of creation are said to be neutral until the scientist makes sense out of them. Louis Agassiz and "other thoughtful persons" are quoted with approval as saying, "Facts are stupid things until brought in line with underlying principles" (p. 4). Facts are *not* "stupid." *Evolutionists* are stupid! Facts are *God-created!!* (See Rom 1:22)

Many creationists who are active in the public schools admit that "whenever possible, one should . . . enroll in a Christian school." But they continue to work on the public schools because "unfortunately this solution is often impossible or impracticable" (*Battle*, p. 84). If the unceasing efforts and large sums of money expended on the public schools were given to struggling independent Christian schools, Christian education would make a tremendous leap forward. The money used to help public schools could send thousands of poor children to existing Christian schools, or help establish new ones. The legal expenses involved in challenging public school curricula could help keep hundreds of pastors, teachers and parents out of jail. Praise God for the work Henry Morris and other creationists are doing as scientists. Shame on them for their retreat as educators.

God's plans are tough, but obedience will lead to victory:

(1) Explicitly Christian schools to replace the State's failures;  
(2) Explicit condemnation of evolution and its adherents at *every* turn;  
(3) Education of our students in *true* science. True science has nothing to do with evolution or the broadly-applied "scientific method." True science is Christian dominion. We cannot be obedient to Christ and give public funding of evolutionary, anti-education a *single inch*. "We have resources of principle such as no other commonwealth of education has. More than that. We not only claim our rightful place among the commonwealths of education, but we have a definitely imperialistic program. No mere Monroe doctrine will suffice. We are out to destroy — albeit with spiritual weapons only and always — all our competitors. We do not recognize them as equals, but as usurpers. Carthage must be destroyed." (Cornelius Van Til, *Essays in Christian Education*, p. 169.)