

# THE BIBLICAL EDUCATOR

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

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## EDUCATION AND POLITICAL ACTION

by Kevin Craig

Most Christians would agree that the United States was and perhaps still is the greatest nation on earth. In terms of material prosperity and personal character, America's history is rivaled only by Israel of old. Most Christians would also agree that economically our prosperity is dwindling, and morally our character is declining. The obvious questions are thus: "What made America strong," and "What can we do to stop America's downfall?" The two rival answers are found in our title: Education and Political Action.

All men fall somewhere on the scale between the Weak and the Strong; the Lazy and the Diligent; the Faithless and the Faithful. When a nation has more of the latter and less of the former, it will see the material blessings of God. Our Puritan forefathers were men of strong character, diligence, and Christian faith. The average Puritan farmer knew the Scriptures from end to end far better than most clergymen do today. As a result, businesses and families thrived. The Puritans understood well that God did not restrict His Word to the church, but addressed every area of life. They developed godly character and applied it in their walk. And as any economist worth even his weight in Federal Reserve Notes will tell you, it takes a disposition of *work and thrift* to produce wealth, or capital. And it takes capital to build schools, hospitals, orphanages, and other institutions of dominion. It takes capital to build tools, factories, and highways that enable a man to exercise his calling and a nation to prosper. In 1937, Roger Babson, in *If Inflation Comes*, wrote, "Only righteousness exalteth a nation today, as it did 3000 years ago. Hence, speaking strictly as a statistician, I say that the safest hedge against inflation is the development of character." And this character comes about by **understanding and applying the principles that govern home, business, and government, as found in God's holy Word, the Bible.**

The world around us, however, is increasingly hostile to the strength of character demanded by the Bible, and necessary if capitalization and prosperity are to occur. Whereas the Bible demands thrift, the foregoing of present pleasures to save for the next generation, modern advertising encourages us to spend it all *now*, on ourselves, telling us, "You deserve it today." Whereas the Bible puts a constant emphasis on work and sacrificial labor for the Kingdom of God, the television stands as a constant temptation for us to put our tools down and our feet up. Instead of studying and meditating on the Scriptures, we are daily advised by our Eliphaz friends not to work so hard, to take some time off for "amusement." (The word *amusement*, by the way, comes from two Greek words, *a*, meaning "not," and *muse*, meaning "think." America is presently plagued by a host of amusing people.) As Rushdoony notes, "Education, television, the press, and all other media foster relativism and humanism; They promote the *decapitalization of character*. We have seen the progressive decline of public and private morality. We who stand for Biblical Christianity thus face a steadily more hostile world. We are everything which socialism and inflation hate most" (Chalcedon Report, #19, p. 2 P.O. Box 158, Vallecito, CA 95251).

America's greatness was thus a result of Christian Character, and the application of God's Word to more than just "the religious." A sound economy, healthy businesses, and godly homes are a product of a Puritan mentality. America's decline is just as surely a product of the humanism that saturates our society. Men of decapitalized character cannot be expected to capitalize our culture. How do we defend ourselves, and how do we return to our former days of economic certainty?

As the 1980 elections come to their climax, many sincere but misguided Christians are putting their chips on Joe Candidate. "If only we can get a Republican Congress," they say. "Then we can get back on the road to health." But as Rushdoony notes, "Capitalization does not depend on winning elections, important as elections are. No election has yet really reversed decapitalization. The demand is for more welfare, more social security, more medicare, and the like. For the past generation, no office-holder has done more than to slow down this process very slightly. An election does not produce character, which is the foundation of capitalization" (*ibid.*).

Elections, legislation, court action, and political activism are *extremely important*. The humanists around us are doing all that they can to destroy us and our future, and it is important — vitally important — that we thwart those bills in Congress, or Revenue Measures in the IRS, or challenges in court, simply to stay alive. But in the broader picture, the role of these activities becomes clear: they are *strictly defensive measures*. They allow us to mark time; to defend ourselves without losing too much ground. But if we are to engage in nothing more than these defensive measures, the battle will end up in a stand-off. The church of Jesus Christ is to do more than merely tie the opposition. We are told to *attack* the fortresses of Hell (II Cor. 10:4-6), and we are told that *their* defensive measures will not prevail against us (Matt. 16:18)! (Matt. 16:18 is usually misinterpreted. Gates seldom attack. They usually defend. War buffs are invited to correct us on this one. See Chalcedon Report, #158 p. 2.) In this great war of values, character, and knowledge, we as Christians are to take captives. The wheat produces; the tares are uprooted (Matt. 13:24-30; Ps. 1:3-6). Victory is the Lord's.

Our most potent weapon is, of course, Christian Education. It took generations to build up the capital that made America great. It took generations for the humanists to take over that which the Christians shamefully abandoned — the universities, the libraries, the hospitals, government, and business. And it will again take generations for Christians to take it all back and begin to build once again. And all of this will take men and women of strong character, willing to sacrifice in the present to see the future glorification of God, and having the faith to believe that the Church will be victorious. All of these attributes come only with education of the young, and growth into maturity. It does not come in a day, or in an election. It takes sacrifice on the part of the generation now living to plan and work for the future. Only a grass-roots Christian School movement, consistent to the Scriptures, and dedicated to the future, can bring spiritual and material prosperity back to America. We need the sword of political action. But we'll never see the New Jerusalem without the trowel of Christian Schools.

## BOOK REVIEW

by David H. Chilton

*George Whitefield: The Life and Times of the Great Evangelist of the Eighteenth-Century Revival*, by Arnold A. Dallimore (Cornerstone Books, 1980). Two volumes, \$19.95 each.

Early in the eighteenth century, a high-society lady once joked that Parliament was "preparing a bill to have 'not' taken out of the *Commandments* and inserted into the *Creed*." It was not far from the truth. By all descriptions of the period, it was characterized by rampant ungodliness and almost complete disregard for Christian standards in any area of life. J.C. Ryle wrote that "Christianity seemed to lie as one dead...There was...a gross, thick, religious and moral darkness" pervading England. The government and the courts were corrupt: open bribery was a continual practice, and the poor were flagrantly oppressed — which is not to say that the poor were any better. Crime was abundant, and the attempt of the authorities to suppress it (by making 160 offenses punishable by death) was to no avail. Whole districts were sunk in abject heathenism, ignorant of the most basic principles of the gospel. And what were the churches doing? Says Ryle: "They existed, but they could hardly be said to have lived. They did nothing; they were sound asleep." In short, England was well down the road which, for a nation just across the Channel, climaxed in the orgy of horror known as the French Revolution.

Yet within a few years, the situation for England had entirely changed. Thousands were converted to vital Christianity; the slave trade was abolished (in a matter vastly different from the Unitarian-inspired Abolitionist movement of America); widows, orphans and poor were cared for; hospitals were established; missionary and tract societies flourished. What made the difference? To a great extent the change can be traced to the labors of one of the most unworthily-neglected men in history — George Whitefield. While Whitefield's associates in the revival (John and Charles Wesley, Jonathan Edwards and others) have received much attention through the years, Whitefield has been thrust into the background — largely due to his reluctance to promote himself — and historians have tended to treat him as one of Wesley's lieutenants. In fact, Whitefield was *the* evangelist of the revival, a fact undisputed by his contemporaries. He was the founder of Methodism (and even, indirectly, of the Presbyterian Church of Virginia). The extent of his ministry is staggering: he evangelized England, Scotland, Wales and the American colonies, preaching about 40,000 sermons in a thirty-year period. With the publication of the long-awaited second volume of his biography by Arnold Dallimore, the record has at last been set straight. Dallimore's treatment is both sympathetic and discriminating (although the work still falls into the typical Banner-of-Truth biographical style; i.e., there is a relative disregard of Biblical standards in law, economics and social relationships).

The story of Whitefield's conversion bears a strong resemblance to that of Martin Luther. Like the Reformer, Whitefield went through an extended time of trying desperately to be justified by works, and he almost killed himself through severe punishment of his body. At last he discovered justification by faith; he wrote later in his *Journals* of the "joy unspeakable" that filled his soul "when the weight of sin went off, and an abiding sense of the pardoning love of God, and a full assurance of faith, broke in upon my disconsolate soul!" He began preaching, and the crowds soon became so huge that he initiated the practice of preaching in open fields — a practice which soon became the trademark of the early Methodist movement, as John Wesley and others became convinced of its propriety and effectiveness (Wesley, in his own words, had "thought the saving of souls almost a sin if it had not been done in a church").

While at first they worked together, a serious split occurred between Whitefield and the Wesleys. It began as a doctrinal dispute: as Whitefield became more committed to the doctrines of Calvinism, Wesley firmly adhered to the Arminianism of his Anglican upbringing. Whitefield constantly worked for peace (perhaps more than he should have), but Wesley was adamant and offensive in his handling of their

differences, indulging in relentless personal attacks. In what is perhaps the single most shocking revelation in Dallimore's work, he demonstrates irrefutably Wesley's treachery in taking over the organization of the Methodist movement. Whitefield sought simply to preach the gospel of Christ; Wesley schemed to build a structure around himself. He followed Whitefield around, denouncing him and trying to draw away his congregations. Whitefield established a school for children; when he returned from a trip, he found that Wesley had quite literally stolen it from him. These dishonest tactics were repeated again and again, with Whitefield never once publicly making any statement against Wesley or bringing charges against him. The result has been a massive misrepresentation of the facts in the controversy, to Whitefield's damage and Wesley's immense profit. Yet throughout his life, Whitefield continued, for the sake of his concept of "unity," to support and aid Wesley in every way possible — often under extreme abuse from the very one he was helping.

This fact illustrates a continuing problem in the last two and one-half centuries of evangelicalism: the combination of neoplatonism and antinomianism. I can think of no outstanding 18th-century leader who was not deeply infected with these two errors. There is no doubt in my mind that God greatly used Whitefield and his associates for the extension of His kingdom; with me, at least, that is not the point at issue. But the presuppositions of their age were not called into question by these men — and one result has been that their followers, whether Wesleyan or Calvinist, have regarded their serious errors as evangelical orthodoxy. Their working definition of "spirituality" — i.e., that salvation is fundamentally individualistic, internal, and immaterial — comes straight from the Apostle Plato. One example of this is Whitefield's amusing, and very sad, experience of courtship and marriage (see esp. vol. 1, pp. 468-472; vol. 2, pp. 101-113). He couldn't bring himself to admit he actually *loved* the girl of his dreams — that would be too "carnal" — and his businesslike proposal (which she rejected) had a human tenderness matched only by that of frozen fish. When he finally did marry, he became quickly disappointed, and in less than two months he was longing "for that blessed time when we shall neither marry nor be given in marriage, but be as the angels of God!" Marriage, you see, was a hindrance to his ability to serve the Lord. As he phrased it: "What room can there be for God, when a rival hath taken possession of the heart?"

We may laugh (or cry) at this, but let us be careful that our ideas of God, man and salvation are not just as distorted. We need to keep men like Whitefield in the Biblical perspective: neither attaching ourselves to his unbiblical worldviews just because God used him, nor rejecting the validity of much of what he did simply because his views were repulsive. He did preach the gospel, and he preached it with a greater degree of purity than most of his contemporaries. One of my favorite passages in the book comes from the diary of an unlettered American farmer, converted through hearing Whitefield preach on justification:

...he looked as if he was Clothed with authority from ye great god and a sweet solemnity sat upon his brow and my hearing him preach gave me a heart wound & by gods blessing my old foundation was broken up & i see my righteousness would not save me.

Thus, Whitefield's preaching did often have the good effect of leading people to flee from their own filthy rags to the perfect righteousness of Jesus Christ. Nevertheless, Whitefield's neoplatonism was never fully rooted out. Neoplatonism is essentially an attempt to deny one's creaturehood and humanity, the vain wish to be pure spirit and flee earthly cares and human relationships. Christian spirituality becomes defined in terms of transcending our creaturely limitations, rather than serving God in every sphere of life. We see the same thing today: someone wants to "serve the Lord," to enter "full-time Christian service," and so he abandons his trade and becomes a full-time preacher or missionary. Now, there is nothing necessarily wrong with that, but why do we feel that a preacher is more consecrated or spiritual than a salesman or electrician? It is simply because the preacher's work seems less tied to earth and creaturely activity. The laborer, who spends most of his time working with material reality, cannot be as spiritual as the preacher, who deals with immaterial things — "the things of the Lord" — a higher

level of reality. But the Bible says that *all things are the Lord's*. Unfortunately, what someone once observed of philosophy could also be said of modern theology and Christian activity: "a series of footnotes to Plato."

When we look at the lives of the Revivalists, we can see the needless suffering they endured because of their unbiblical concepts of reality. John Wesley had a very unhappy marriage: his wife constantly opposed him in his work, physically assaulted him on occasion, and finally left him. She is usually condemned (or dismissed as insane) by his biographers, but we should approach this matter with care. Here was a woman who was often left alone while her husband was out evangelizing and organizing, doing "the Lord's work." But notice what the Bible demands of a church officer: *he must be a godly husband and father*, governing his home faithfully, loving his wife sacrificially, as Christ loved the church. The Old Testament required that a newly married man "shall not go out to war, neither shall he be charged with any business: but *he shall be free at home one year, and shall cheer up his wife which he hath taken*" (Deut. 24:5). Surely this reveals God's major concern for the home and family. The wife is a helper, and marriage is an asset, not a liability. But the revivalists often considered marriage a hindrance, and they accorded to soul-saving a priority over the clear demands of Scripture. In examining Wesley's troubles, therefore, we must ask: Who deserted whom? We cannot excuse Wesley on the mere grounds that many were converted under his ministry. God used him, as He has used many who disobeyed Him. God's sovereignty is no excuse for man's irresponsibility. Wesley's ministry was lawless: soul-saving does not take priority over a man's duty to his wife.

Whitefield's marriage was certainly not the stormy ordeal that was Wesley's, but he held the same distorted view of its proper place. Elizabeth Whitefield was apparently able to cope with the loneliness that had broken Mrs. Wesley. Still, she came to see herself as "nothing but a load and burden to him." He was engaged in spiritual work, and made no attempt to hide the fact that he "looked back longingly on the days when there had been no husbandly responsibilities to hinder his service for the Lord."

Again, these men often felt it was their duty to live as close to poverty as possible, and much of their activity was spent in trying to take care of the debts they incurred. Their sermons and writings flow incessantly with longings to leave earth and go to heaven — a common theme in evangelical hymns since their time. The fact that the Bible tells us little about heaven, and a great deal about our duties on earth, seems not to have occurred to them.

As I noted, Whitefield was better than most. His meetings never approached the irrational fervor (e.g., spasms, fainting fits and glos-salalia) that were common under the ministry of many of his contemporaries. His humility and willingness to be corrected were exemplary, and guarded him from the errors into which many of his colleagues fell. But in the course of bringing revival, he and the other preachers took the reigning philosophical ideas and presented them as Christian orthodoxy. Christianity became a mystical experience of the spirit, rather than the whole man submitting all his thought and activity to the covenantal demands of Jesus Christ.

This false spirituality has tainted virtually everything in the last two centuries of evangelicalism. Consider two ways in which it has affected Christian schools. First, in contradiction to Scripture, teachers are often paid the lowest wages possible. Why? Because, like preachers, they are doing "the Lord's work"; it is a *ministry*, and they should therefore be satisfied with their heavenly reward. The laborer is worthy of his hire, unless he's in "full-time Christian service." (Incidentally, when Paul said elders should be paid "double honor," he meant *double wages*. I'm not sure how much "double wages" are, but I'll bet my Social Security it's more than minimum wage.)

Secondly, Christian schools are often seen as centers for evangelism: instruction and preparation of the children for godly dominion in every sphere of life takes second place. We want the kids to get saved, but we don't bother much with things such as economics, law, labor principles, training in useful trades, preparing for family life, and so on. This is not a practice derived from Scripture. It derives from our view that man's purpose on earth is to get saved. Period. (A variation might be that man's purpose is to get saved, and then to

get everybody else saved, but that's about the extent of it.) But *man's purpose is godly dominion* — salvation is necessary in restoring fallen man to the place where he can again serve God as ruler over the earth. This central Biblical teaching was neglected in the revivals, and that crucial omission was the death-blow for Christian dominion in the following generations. True, the face of England was remarkably changed — evidence that the revival was genuine — but the nation as a whole was not captured. Eventually, the good fruit of the movement was taken over by the humanists — and there, I think, is a lesson. Many in our day are praying for another Whitefield-type revival. But if it is not accompanied by Scriptural reformation and Christian reconstruction, it will fail.

## AN EDUCATIONAL COMMENTARY ON THE BIBLE

by Rodney N. Kirby

### #9 — "Genesis and Ancient History," (Genesis 4)

As Christians, we presuppose the complete truthfulness of scripture as God's Word. We know that the Bible, because it is the Word of God, Who cannot lie (Titus 1:2; Heb. 6:18), cannot be false at *any* point. Therefore, when we find a conflict between a particular Scripture and the opinions of men, we must hold to the truth of Scripture. "Let God be true, though every man be false" (Rom. 3:4). This does not only have reference to "religious" matters; the Psalmist said, "I esteem *all* Thy precepts concerning *all* things to be right" (Ps. 119:128).

In the Christian school, therefore, teachers must take as the starting-point of their instruction the revealed truth of Scripture. Whatever is written in the Bible must be taken as true; whatever is learned from other sources must be fit into the framework provided by Scripture. We do not accommodate scripture to "science" but rather accommodate science (or history, geology, economics, etc.) to the Bible. An excellent example of this kind of reconstruction is Donovan Courville's *The Exodus Problem and its Ramifications* (Loma Linda, CA; Challenge Books, 1971). These two volumes are a reconstruction of ancient history, particularly Egyptian history, on the basis of the accuracy of Scripture.

Our text for this month has application to the subject of ancient history. There are very few extra-Biblical sources for this period of history. (This is not difficult to understand, on Biblical assumptions. Given the kind of flood described in Gen. 7-8, we would expect virtually all records of pre-flood civilization, except those carried through Noah, to have been destroyed.) This forces us to rely almost exclusively on Scripture as our primary source. What few other sources there are (ancient legends, etc.) must be used purely as supplements to the Biblical record.

In chapter 4, we gain some insights which go contrary to an evolutionary concept of ancient history. We are often told that primitive man originally was a forager and a hunter. Only much later did he learn to domesticate animals and cultivate crops. In vs. 2, however, we see that these abilities were present in man almost immediately after the fall. Early man was no dunce; he soon developed the art of music (vs. 21), and of metallurgy (vs. 22).

Economically and sociologically speaking, early man was not a loner, who tried to be self-sufficient, and who much later learned to live in communities. Verse 2 shows us that Cain and Abel understood the concept of *the division of labor* — each man developing his own particular talents to the fullest and concentrating his efforts, resulting in greater overall productivity. This division of labor is also evidenced in verses 20-22.

Also man was not a nomad, as we are often led to believe; Cain built a city soon after his murder of Abel (vs. 17). Earlier than this, the existence of agriculture (vs. 2) pretty much excludes nomadism,

as does the division of labor concept — they would have to live near each other in order to utilize each other's products. Apparently, Adam and Eve settled with their children very near the garden of Eden (cf. vs. 16).

This matter of nomadism brings up an interesting point in regard to our present society. We live in a basically nomadic society; people are constantly "on the move"—from one job to another, from one town to another, etc. It is becoming more and more rare for a person to live in the same city where his parents and grandparents grew up. Children frequently go to college far away from home. Pastors take a position in a small church merely as a "stepping stone" to bigger and better things (a First church in a large city). Businesses move employees to different cities on a regular basis.

Rather than settling down in one place to subdue the earth (Gen. 1:28) and causing it to bring forth produce (Gen. 2:15), modern man prefers to wander over the land, looking for whatever produce he can find for the taking. Men no longer work hard to develop their talents and build up their businesses, but rather flit around from one job to another to try and find just a little more money, or less work. (This is greatly facilitated by modern unemployment compensation and welfare practices.) Besides this desire of men to wander, the Scripture speaks of wandering as a curse upon disobedience. This is seen here in our text, in the curse of God upon

Cain (vs. 12), and later in the curse upon Israel for refusing to enter the Promised Land (Num. 14). Several times the prophets pronounce a curse on Israel by saying that they will wander (Lam. 4:15; Hos. 9:17). In contrast, the righteous are "firmly Planted" (Ps. 1:3) and are secure in the land (Mic. 4:4). The blessings of the covenant include this rootedness in the land — not incessant wandering. Nomadism, rather than being an early stage of man's development, is a sign of cultural degeneracy. While it may not be a sin for an individual to move far from his family (cf. Abraham), yet it is a sign of a degenerate culture — notice the forced migrations in Cambodia today.

In our schools, we must take this into account. When we study a society which exhibits such a nomadic life, we are looking at a culture which has turned away from God's Word of dominion. We also must counsel students in high school to try to break this nomadic mindset. They should look forward to settling permanently in a locale, to develop their God-given gifts to the fullest. Constantly packing up and moving everything one owns is a tremendous waste of time, energy, and money.

Christian history teachers must get to work *now* reconstructing ancient history to conform to Scripture. It will be long work, requiring a more detailed knowledge of history than I have. However, Courville's work shows us that it can be done, if we work with diligence.

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