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

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AN EDUCATIONAL COMMENTARY ON THE BIBLE

By Rodney N. Kirby

#5 - "Education for Dominion"

"And God said, Let us make man in our image, after our likeness: and let them have dominion... And God blessed them, and God said unto them, Be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth, and subdue it..." (Gen. 1:26, 28).

Last month, we pointed out that the essence of man's being created "in the image of God" (vs. 26ff.) was his being given dominion over the earth. Man is God's authoritative representative on the earth. In this way, man is "like" God—man is a king over the earth, in a way analogous to God's kingship.

What, then, is involved in man's dominion? Again, we must do some exegetical work. The two words used in Hebrew here (*radah*—"have dominion," vs. 26 and 28; *kavash*—"subdue," vs. 28) have similar meanings—that of a military-type conquest and rule. See the use of *radah* in Lev. 26:17; Neh. 9:28; Isa. 14:6; I Kings 4:24; and *kavash* in II Sam.

11. *Kavash* has the additional meaning of "to enslave"—see Jer. 34:11; Chron. 28:10; and Neh. 5:5.

Most significantly, *kavash* is used of Israel's "subduing" the land of Canaan after the exodus from Egypt—see Num. 32:29 and Josh. 18:1. Also, note the same usage of David's conquest of the land in I Chron. 22:18.

Of course, before the fall, Adam had nothing hostile to subdue, as did the Israelites entering Canaan. However, the basic thrust is still the same—Adam was to make the lower creation do his bidding. The sub-human creation was, in a sense, Adam's *slave*. He was to do with it as he pleased. To be sure, he was to do this as God's viceregent, and so under God's Law; Adam was not free to destroy the creation, but was to make wise use of it under God. Still, however, man was not created to be *part* of creation, but to be a *ruler over* it.

Before the Fall, Adam was not given dominion over other men who would later come along. However, after the fall, godly dominion is extended to include sinful men. Men in rebellion against God are slaves to sin (Jn. 8:34); therefore the righteous exercise dominion over these slaves (Ps. 49:14).

And so, to sum-up, man, as the image of God, has been given authority over the sub-human creation, and over those in rebellion against God, as their lord. They are his slaves—he is to make them do his bidding (under God).

Content

How does this apply to the content we teach? First, most obviously, in our science or social studies courses, we do not present the commonly accepted notion of "ecology," that man is continuous with creation, and must seek peaceful co-existence with nature. Man has been given nature to use as he pleases, under God's Law. Nature serves man's purpose, not *vice versa*. We do not despise something merely because man has done something to it. Much of the health food culture falls into this syndrome—just because man has done something to the food, it is *a priori* bad. Now, much of what man does with food is degenerative; but we

cannot assume that *all* that he does is so. Man's task is to make nature do what he wants it to do—including finding ways to preserve it, etc.

Our curriculum must be geared to enabling students to exercise dominion. Thus, we must teach "practical" courses—those which will be most beneficial in a student's career. Remember, too, that in elementary and secondary school we are laying a broad foundation—one upon which a student can build, no matter which field he may specialize in. Thus, it would seem that too much time is spent in high school on such subjects as chemistry, calculus, and physics. (The writer selects these subjects, which he enjoyed immensely, so that he cannot be accused of dropping his least favorite subjects!) These can just as well be covered *briefly* in high school, with more time being given to them when the student has determined his vocation. It is recognized, of course, that often these courses are required in a college-preparatory program. However, more time should be given to such courses as economics, ethics, and business mathematics, which all students will need, no matter what field they enter.

Let us teach the subjects we do have so as to enable godly dominion. In our Bible classes, if we are content with presenting Bible facts, we are not being faithful to the Word. God's Word is profitable for equipping the man of God for good works (II Tim. 3:17). Let us press for application of Scripture in all areas of life—enabling the student to exercise his dominion in the light of God's Word. In our history classes, we must not teach mere facts in the past—these in themselves have no relevance for the students. Rather, we take a *covenantal* view of history. We see men in the past as being either obedient or disobedient to God, and reaping the consequences in their action—whether blessing or cursing (cf. Deut. 28). Thus, we see from their examples how we ought to live. We learn from history that "the Lord knoweth how to deliver the godly out of temptation, and to reserve the unjust unto the day of judgment to be punished" (II Pet. 2:9).

Methods and Discipline

We should give the students their own areas of dominion, making them responsible for certain things. This leads to a feeling of "self-fulfillment," in that they are created, as image-bearers, to exercise dominion. We should give students, even in Kindergarten, duties for which they are responsible (collecting money, cleaning rooms, etc.). As a Kindergarten teacher, I know the kind of excuses children bring for not doing homework—usually shifting blame to their parents. I tell them it is *their* homework, not their parents', and *they* are to remember to do it, and to return it. This emphasis has resulted in a nearly 100% homework return rate from 5-year-olds! They are given dominion and expected to exercise it properly, and they do so gladly. Every parent knows how much their small children want to help Mommy or Daddy; this is their drive for dominion expressing itself. When we give children work to do, we are not "slave-drivers," but are encouraging and training them to exercise godly dominion. We must do the same thing in the school; the kids love it!

The Motive Goal & Standard in Education

The Van Til Prospective

By James B. Jordan

Although on the surface of his consciousness every man living under the Rebellion thinks otherwise, in fact his central and all-compelling motivation in life is the destruction of his awareness of the presence of God. In

order for man to become god, the true God must be eliminated. Since God is the only Source of life, the primary motivation of fallen man is the love of death (Prov. 8:36). The importance of this for education can hardly be over-estimated.

Romans Chapter One tells us that all men are aware of the reality and presence of God (1:21), of the impending wrath of God (1:18), and of the law of God extending even to the penal particulars (1:32). This awareness of God is due to three factors. *First*, since the impress of God is upon the creation, man cannot function in the created universe without constant confrontation with God. Just as the music of Beethoven reflects to a degree Beethoven's personality, and the music of the Beatles reflects to a degree their personalities, although only to a limited degree; in the same way the creation reflects the personality of God, but to an unlimited degree since, unlike Beethoven, God did not make use of already existing materials when He created the universe out of nothing. The universe's only Source is God, and thus God's personality is fully imprinted upon every atom of it (1:20).

Second, since man is made in the image of God, self-consciousness is inevitably also God-consciousness (1:19a, and cf. Calvin: *Institutes* 1:1:1). *Third*, since God is omnipresent, He is unavoidable in and of Himself (1:19b).

The suppression of the presence of God is thus an impossibility, but it is an attempted impossibility, and it may proceed apace. Man hates God. He wants to destroy God. He wants to destroy all that reminds him of God, so he wants to destroy the creation, and he wants to destroy other people. Since he himself reminds himself of God, he wants to destroy himself. Every non-Christian is therefore suicidal and destructive (Prov. 8:36). Since self-consciousness is correlative with God-consciousness, the suppression of self-consciousness is integral to the plan of man. This suppression of self-consciousness is acquired through a variety of what are self-deceptively called "consciousness expanding" activities: alcohol, narcotics, absorptive pantheistic meditation, glossolalia, orgiastic sexual-ity, furious driving and speeding, and so forth. It is of supreme importance that these consciousness-suppressing activities are called "consciousness-raising."

This is but one illustration of man's capacity for self-deception. Modern economics, for instance, is ostensibly designed to promote the good life for man, but in reality modern economics has promoted nothing but destruction. This is true of other academic disciplines as well. Thus, both the educational *environment* and the academic *discipline* of fallen man is orientated toward the promotion of death. It remains only to note that his recreation is similarly misdirected. The presence of death is unmistakable in modern entertainment with its orientation toward the occult, murder, and the victory of evil over good. Moreover the very submergence of man into an alternate world of fiction is anti-life and an attempt to escape from the creation of God. Additionally the thrill of death is prominent in much modern sport, and the enjoyment of death pervades such activities as bullfighting and boxing. Two men attempting to beat each other into unconsciousness cannot be squared with the notion that man is created in the image of God.

Notice how pervasive these matters have become in modern educational curricula. Physical education courses do not focus on teaching children how to work or how to make war, but rather on how to play games: escapism. Courses in literature focus on fiction, which for the most part is an escapist genre of writing, rather than upon essay writing, for instance. If true education is implication into God's interpretation, it surely is also education for the real world that God has created. It is the motivation of fallen man to educate away from this reality.

We may note that fallen man is unable to carry his designs to their ultimate conclusion. This is for three reasons. *First*, man only thinks he rules himself. Actually he cannot do all that he dreams of. *Second*, man cannot escape God without decreating himself, which it is not in his power to do. *Third*, man must use (abuse) the created universe in order to suppress the presence of God. Thus, in order to suppress some aspects of God, he must admit others. Fallen men differ in respect to what aspects they suppress and admit, and this creates the diversity among their views. It also means that where they admit to reality, they may have correct

apprehensions of reality. This is the reason why fallen men can know some truth. As Van Til has noted: "Of course arithmetic and for that matter everything else, including religion and Christianity, is teachable if by being teachable you mean nothing more than making susceptible to a temporary pragmatic manipulation by unbelievers." (*Essays on Christian Education*, Presbyterian and Reformed, 1974, p.205.)

Withal, however, enough has been noted to indicate that any educational association between fallen and redeemed men is impossible. The redeemed man is motivated by love for God. He seeks to cultivate the presence of God. He wants to learn to see God in himself, in others, and in the world. He loves Life, and wants to see life promoted in all the world. His education is thus quintessentially this-worldly. Escapism is sin. The love of and fascination with death is sin. Consciousness-suppression is sin. There can be no reconciliation between these two views.

Goal in Education

The goal of fallen man is to glorify himself and enjoy himself as much as possible. Man's goal is to be as god. As he looks around him at the world, man sees an impersonal mechanistic universe going its own way. In order to play god, man must assert his control over this universe. Man thinks that he is free to the extent that he can either control or escape his environment. Fallen man sees freedom as the right and ability to play god by ruling over his own environment. Some men try to assume control over the real world, while others create their own world to live in. The most visible representatives of the former are the dictators, and of the latter the inhabitants of mental hospitals (so-called). The Christian defines freedom as obedience to God. One way or another, the goal of education is the development of human character and freedom.

The goal of the redeemed man is to glorify God and enjoy Him. The glory of God is achieved through the upbuilding of the kingdom of God. This was the goal God set before man in the beginning. Man "was created in the image of God and he was to become more fully expressive of that image." (p. 79). Man was to learn more and more what it meant that God was God and man was man. He was to mature in epistemological self-consciousness. When he rejected Satan's temptation, he self-consciously affirmed that since God was God, there was no question of considering any alternatives to the Word of God. God was the only unquestionable authority. Each day Adam and Eve would pass by the Tree of Knowledge, and each day the siren song of Satan would be repeated, but each day it would become clearer and clearer that Satan was a fool. Man would grow and become strong until the purpose of the test was no longer needed. Like the grain of sand which provokes the oyster to make a pearl, the Tree of Knowledge would promote the maturation of humanity.

Moreover, not only would man grow in his knowledge of God, via interaction with the Tree of Knowledge, but he would also grow in "the self-conscious manipulation of the facts of the universe to the glory of God." (p. 79f). He would grow in dominion. The first stage of dominion was verbal. No dominion is possible without linguistic classification. Adam named the animals, not "Joe" and "Spot", but "bull" and "giraffe." He also named the woman, not "Eve" at this point, but "woman" (Gen. 2:23). Understanding was the first stage of dominion. In other words, education was the first stage of dominion.

Finally, man's goal was to grow in himself. Both the interaction with the Tree of Knowledge and his work of dominion would increase man's obedience to God in three ways. "Man's obedience to God had to be still more spontaneous, still more stable, and still more active than it already was at the beginning of creation." (p. 152)

One of the ways in which this was to be accomplished, we may hold, was by getting ever larger areas of man's sub-conscious life above the threshold of his consciousness. This in turn would react upon the remaining subconscious aspect of man's life by making it, too, more responsive to the will of God. (p.152)

If man became increasingly selfconscious in his reaction to the will of God for him, he would become more like God, in whom there is no difference between potentiality and

actuality. (p.153)

In this way spontaneous obedience would become a *habit* with man. (p.152f.)

Not only spontaneity would increase, but stability as well. "Man should become increasingly *selfdeterminate*." (p.153). He must develop backbone for his will. And as regards activity:

Finally we must note that as man's spontaneity and selfdeterminateness would increase, the *momentum* of his personality would also increase. As a child walks ever more readily and ever more firmly and therefore is able to carry larger loads as time goes on, so also the personality of man increasing in the spontaneity and stability of its obedience of God would greatly increase in its capacity and power for the realization of God's Kingdom on earth. (p.154f.)

All of this growth was, however, sidetracked by the Rebellion of man. The goals of man were, however, not removed, but were restored on the foundation of redemption. Man's original goal may be summarized as the extension of Eden to all the world and the transformation of the world into the City of God (Jerusalem). Salvation restores man to Eden, and puts him back on the original goals God set for him. Thus the Christian man may distinguish between restorational and consummational goals. *Restorational* goals involve the salvation of persons, the healing of the sick, care for the poor, vengeance upon the wicked, and so forth. *Consummational* goals involve the beautification of the environment and understanding and development of the environment: scientific and aesthetic tasks. All these secondary goals, however, tend toward the upbuilding of the Kingdom of God, and the glory of God.

We have seen that the goal of fallen man's education is totalitarianism or insanity. The goal of redeemed education is fellowship with God and dominion over creation. We have seen that education in the precise use of language is integral to maturation in grace and dominion. The study of the manipulative social sciences will have little place in Christian curriculum. Since a true understanding of the life of business and finance is integral for dominion, these should have much more place in curricula than is usually the case. Finally, theology must be central in the curriculum.

Standard in Education

Fallen man sees himself as the source of all his own laws and norms. Kant taught that there were no norms in the universe, only in the mind of man. Man imposes his norms over the world as an ice-cube grid is imposed over water in the ice-cube tray. John Maynard Keynes taught that there were no laws of economics save those made by man, and Franklin D. Roosevelt once commented that the only economic laws were the ones he had signed. The fact that anything is permissible in modern morality needs no comment.

The Christian standard is the Law of God. The Christian knows that the universe is ruled by God's Law, and thus that education is designed to adjust men to that Law, so that they may use it properly. This is true of all Law, moral and "natural."

Because fallen man recognizes no authority save himself, he cannot teach with authority. He knows there is no reason why his pupils should receive what he says. Not so the Christian teacher. For him,

Authority is nothing but the placing of the absolute personality of God before the finite personality of man. It follows then that if nothing can be taught unless it be taught in relation to God nothing can be taught unless it be taught with authority. (p. 209)

Only the Christian can teach with authority, and the Christian must teach with authority.

The Bible as standard will have three kinds of impact upon the Christian educational foundation. *First*, the Law of God will structure the ethical and legal *environment* of the school. Christian day schools which have instituted restitution for damaged property, for instance, repeatedly testify

to the great benefits of the structuring principles of Divine Law. If the environment of the school be structured according to the God's Law, to that extent Eden is restored, and in that setting education will inevitably proceed at a much more rapid and exciting pace than in a sin-riddled environment.

Second, the Christian concept of Law will affect the *content* of courses in economics, history, civics, and other liberal arts studies. To the humanistic observer, this stress on law and consequences will give the school a conservative, right wing complexion; but a Christian school will in reality differ quite a bit from mere conservatism.

Third, by placing *emphasis* where Scripture places it, the *curriculum* of the school will be altered. There are no sports, athletics, or games in the Bible. Scripture puts a premium on work, not on play. Moreover, the Bible places a great emphasis on music and singing. The cultivation of this art should have a large place in the curriculum.

This examination of education in terms of goal, motive, and standard has revealed three things. *First*, education is of central importance to life. *Second*, because of the radical and all pervasive differences between Christian and non-Christian views of education, no cooperation is possible between them. *Third*, the curricula of Christian educational institutions are in need of revision to purge out the residuum of paganism and to be effective for the glory of God.

BOOK REVIEW

By David H. Chilton

The Journal of Christian Reconstruction: volumes on Puritanism.

Vol. V, No. 2: *Puritanism and Law* \$4.00

Vol. VI, No. 1: *Puritanism and Progress* \$4.00

Vol. VI, No. 2: *Puritanism and Society* \$4.00

The three-volume set is priced at \$10.00.

Orders may be placed with either the Chalcedon Foundation, P.O. Box 158, Vallecito, CA 95251, or Fairfax Christian Bookstore, 11121 Pope's Head Road, Fairfax, VA 22030.

The recent publications of both secular and Christian scholars on the subject of Puritanism have greatly aided our understanding of one of the most important movements in history. Not surprisingly, the two camps are alienated from (and often ignorant of) each other. What is striking, however, is the curious fact that these two groups are, in the main, unified on one point: that the reconstructionist program of Puritanism, based on Biblical law and seeking Christian dominion in terms of a post-millennial hope, is neither desirable nor practicable. We might expect such an attitude from secularists. The trouble is that many neo-Puritan Christians have bought the secular line, have turned away from genuine Puritanism, and, restricting their area of concern to ecclesiastical matters alone, have resigned the rest of the world to the devil.

These three issues of the *Journal* represent Chalcedon's attempt to reverse that trend. Here the Puritans are seen in all their glory (and some shame as well). The objective has been an honest, Biblical appraisal of the motives, standards, policies and goals of Puritanism, and a call to perpetuate both their theological root and sociological fruit. Those convinced by these studies will find abundant material here from which to build a Christian culture; and as for the rest (such as the semi-literate young man who "rebuttals" us in the second volume), we at least have this hope: the sheer bulk of material gathered here should keep them so busy trying to dig out from under it, that they will keep out of our way—so that we can get the job done.

Puritanism and Law begins with a section from Martin Bucer's *De Regno Christi*, republished in part to refute the false notion that adherence to Biblical law was an exclusively Puritan phenomenon. In fact, all the 16th century Reformed thinkers held (with varying degrees of consistency) to theonomic principles. Writing to England's Edward VI, Bucer points out that "no one can describe an approach more equitable and

wholesome to the commonwealth than that which God describes in his law" (p. 11). Continuing this theme, James Jordan's essay traces historic Calvinism's attitude toward the Mosaic judicial laws, from Calvin through the 19th-century Southern Presbyterians, demonstrating that the theonomic (God's law) and theocratic (God's rule) position is an essential aspect of the Reformation tradition. The Puritan commitment to the law of God is then examined in articles studying Samuel Rutherford's political theories, the laws of the New England theocracy, the Salem witch trials, and the life and activity of John Knox. Terrill Elniff helps to set this in perspective with his discussion of a basic Puritan presupposition: "*the non-autonomy of human thought and temporal reality*" (p. 100). Every area of life was seen as under God's law. Puritans held that Christ has freed believers from the curse of the law and the dominion of sin, with the result that we are now *slaves of righteousness*. This requires that we live our lives and judge our society in terms of the specific stipulations of Biblical law. The "Puritan Dilemma" (the tensions and problems manifested in Puritan society) was not the outcome of their rigid orthodoxy, but came rather from their *departure* from that standard, their "mixed presuppositions" and failure to fully implement consistently their own theology.

The second volume, *Puritanism and Progress*, is an exposition of the Puritans' philosophy of history and the ways in which they applied it. In contrast to the cyclical worldviews of all pagan societies, the Puritans held that history was *linear*, with a beginning and an end. Progress is possible (and inevitable) by virtue of God's decree and promise. Moreover, His commandments require the growth and progress of godly dominion. This conviction was deepened, and expressed in vastly significant ways, by their doctrine of the priesthood of all believers, as R. J. Rushdoony's article documents: it was foundational for "the characteristic American initiative in education (especially now in the Christian school movement), in economics, science, inventiveness, farming and in other areas" (p. 25). Puritan progressivism gave impetus to scientific activity, and the astonishing rise of modern science that resulted is examined by Charles Dykes and Hebdon Taylor, following the lead of Robert K. Merton's seminal essay of 1938, "Science, Technology and Society in Seventeenth Century England." The Puritans' desire to glorify God in His world was encouraged by their Biblical view of the future, as Dykes affirms: postmillennialism "gave them an indomitable confidence that through the faithful proclamation and exposition of the Word and its application to the whole of life, the world would be conquered and transformed for Christ" (p. 44). This important fact is developed in James Payton's study of

Puritan eschatology and in Aletha Gilsdorf's article on its practical results in New England's first generation. Judy Ishkanian's biography of a most progressive Puritan, Oliver Cromwell, is a fitting conclusion to the subject.

Puritanism and Society, the last volume in the series, deals with the question of the cultural impact and social transformation which stemmed from Puritan theology. The Puritans had their problems, but impotence wasn't one of them (not, at least, as long as they remained *Puritan*). Allen Guelzo provides a fascinating introduction to the matter and manner of Puritan preaching. This is followed by my point-for-point refutation of the cavils and slanders advanced by Jon Zens against Cromwell and the theonomic-theocratic views of the Chalcedon school. (Greg Bahnsen's evaluation of M.G. Kline's attacks on Chalcedon appears at the end of the volume.) Specific social applications of the Puritan doctrines round out this collection. The subjects treated are the family, the authority of women, sex, music, and the Puritan concepts of death.

No presentation of American Puritanism would be complete without a detailed study of their economic theories and practices, and this is provided in Gary North's series on New England's economy, 1630-1720 (an installment appears in each volume). Unlike many of the other writers in these books, North chronicles a major *failure* of Puritanism. If there was one area where Puritans neglected to apply their own theology, it was economics. Beginning with an uncritical acceptance of medieval theories (e.g., the "just price"), they bypassed the particulars of Biblical law. Without the guidance of God's wisdom, they stumbled from statist interventionism through irrelevant pietism to final abdication of their leadership, making wholesale concessions to secularism. It is a sad story; but it shows, in a negative way, the necessity of implementing Biblical law, and the dismal consequences of relinquishing the social responsibilities of the gospel. If Christians, as the salt of the earth, lose their ability to transform culture, they will be discarded as worthless. We must learn from the Puritan example, from its failures as well as its successes. Christian reconstruction is not an option but a mandate. Our duty is awesome, but even more awesome are the promises and the power of God. The kingdoms shall become the kingdoms of our God, and of His Christ. John Calvin wrote:

"Whatever resistance we see offered today by almost all the world to the progress of the truth, we must not doubt that our Lord will finally break through all the undertakings of men and make a passage for His word. Let us hope boldly, then, even more than we can understand; He will surpass our thoughts and our hope."

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