

THE BIBLICAL EDUCATOR

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

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TEACHING HIGH SCHOOL ECONOMICS

By Jim West

The most important economic truth that can be inculcated into the very core of the high school student is the Biblical lawfulness and desirability of the free-enterprise system. A thorough exegesis of the 8th Commandment should be the 'pen of a diamond' used to engrave this upon the heart.

Negatively, the teacher should show how various "exceptions" to the free-enterprise system threaten to undo it (e.g., "I believe in free-enterprise, but..." argumentation). Some of the most prominent of the "I-buts" arguments should be candidly stated and logically battered down. (An excellent book wherein these arguments are catalogued and evaluated is *Cliches of Socialism* which is published by the Foundation for Economic Education, Irvington, NY, 1965). Students should be made to understand that the destruction of private property is not an eschatological event that will take place when and if the Russian Bear devours the earth, but the 'realized eschatology' wrought by our current Washington "exception-makers." Therefore, in evaluating various candidates on the economic issues, students need to understand that the lean as well as the *of bureaucracy needs to be expunged.*

ositively, the $MMW = HE + NR \times T$ formula has proven an invaluable aid. Most of the students this teacher has instructed have been enchanted with this formula. The theorem deserves explanation. Translated it would read: MMW (Man's material welfare) equals HE (Human energy) plus NR (Natural Resources) times T (tools).

1. MMW.

Man's Material Welfare is thinkable only in terms relational to God. "Seek ye *first* the kingdom of God and his righteousness and all these things will be added to you." (Matthew 6:33). The foundation of such welfare is not a humanistic capitalism where "all is fair in love and war." The simple example of prostitution is certainly a profit-making venture, but it does not promote man's material welfare. I recommend a reading of the Book of Deuteronomy where the unitive aspects of the spiritual and physical are vividly linked.

2. HE.

Human energy is usually divided into the *mental* and the *physical*. Rows of Chinese lifting rocks with primitive shovels is a witness to physical energy as well as the mental bankruptcy of the bamboo planners. In our own country the man who can hit a five-hundred foot home-run into the upper deck is usually lauded as an example of adroit excellence while the business man who provides valuable goods and services is often seen as making "obscene profits." Of course, since the Greek word for "energy" is often synonymous with "work," human energy in its two-fold aspect cannot be intelligibly discussed without a Christian philosophy of work.

3. NR.

atural resources alone do not make a great country (as the LDC's are finding out). Man must possess the technological savvy in order to utilize such resources. But the resources *are* needed; and if they are not excavated, they should be imported.

4. T.

Tools (or more specifically *the ownership of tools*) are the most crucial element in the equation. If the individuals own the tools, then men will be motivated to invest their time and their private capital in profit-making ventures. If the state owns the tools, most incentive to develop the natural resources will be aborted.

Each one of these letters must be illustrated and explained according to the teacher's reading and knowledge. I am convinced that the formula is a "must" for high school students.

The Practicality of Economics

When the teacher strives to lay a foundation for the study of economics a certain amount of *flak* may result. Students are naturally more interested as to the *fact* that $2 + 2 = 4$ than the "why" of such a truth. This is to be expected since the young do not understand the inseparable connection between presuppositions and actual economic practice. Yet, it is crucially important to lay a Biblical foundation even if economics continues to be called "the dismal science."

Because we have a consumption-oriented society the students may be more anxious to do things that relate more to their *immediate benefit* instead of sailing the high seas of epistemology. Therefore, much emphasis should be placed upon the importance of *savings*, which is the key to personal economic advancement. Along this line this writer remembers how as a young boy I took the quarter collection given me by my father (all of the coins were rare standing liberty quarters which commanded a premium even in 1957) and spent them for hamburgers at a local restaurant. (The quarters were just sitting there not doing anyone any good!) Such irresponsible behavior is a part of the Fall (the tree of the knowledge of good and evil was just sitting there doing no one any good, so why not partake of its forbidden fruit!). The Parable of the Prodigal Son has sundry economic implications.

An excellent textbook that provides all the fundamentals is John R. Richardson's *Christian Economics*. (St. Thomas Press, Box 35096, Houston, Texas, 1966). For some of the more advanced students various parts of Henry Hazlitt's *Economics in One Lesson* could be assigned.

Generally speaking, I have used the following procedure:

1. Lecture; have students take extensive notes on Richardson's book. This should last most of the first semester.
2. Lecture; have the students take notes as you speak about the *nature of money*. (The first part of Harry Browne's *How You Can Profit from the Coming Devaluation* is vivid and easy to understand).
3. You might wish to devote one day a week to a portion of Douglas Anderson Jr.'s *Owe No Man Anything* (Light and Salt, Hampshire, Tennessee, 1980). This is a very practical book which covers everything from real estate to life insurance, etc. What is more, it is Biblically sound.
4. There will be time for special lectures on important subjects. For example, I spend time every year dealing with the economic and political implications of the *16th Amendment* which, as time passes by, I am convinced has been instrumental in the destruction of the U. S. Constitution.

Practical Assignments

1. *How to make a profit*. Have the students voluntarily collect aluminum cans and turn them in either to you or to a recycling center.

Starting with *nothing* (except both kinds of HE) and using aluminum cans as their exclusive investment capital, the students should be encouraged to double, triple, etc., their profits. They might wish to buy other items with their "can money" and sell such items for profit. For example, two of my students took some of their money and purchased soft drinks and chocolate to sell at a faculty-student softball game. They nearly doubled their money. Each student should keep a chart of the amount of cans found, the money earned, and the investments of his money. If you begin such a project at the beginning of the year, you might succeed in making many of them hundred-dollaraires. Of course, there will be losses, too, but this is also a part of their economic education.

2. *How to make a loss.* Have each student hypothetically invest in the stock market or keep his profits in a pass-book account in the Bank of America.

3. Have the students cultivate their own garden and sell the produce to a prospective buyer.

4. Have each student research and write a paper on the following:

- a. How to buy a car.
- b. How to buy a house.
- c. How to buy good furniture.

5. Students should be thoroughly instructed as to the nature of good money. Again and again it needs to be reinforced that the fiat currency of the Federal Reserve System "is going broke."

AN EDUCATIONAL COMMENTARY ON THE BIBLE

By Rodney N. Kirby

#13 "The Flood"

Content

There has been much work done on the subject of the Noachian flood in recent years. That Christian teacher would be very unwise who does not read some of the material on this subject. We can do no more here than give some general guidelines and hints at how a Christian teacher would deal with the flood.

First, we must again deal with the question of the "two-model" approach to this subject. Much of the work of the Institute for Creation Research (ICR) is very valuable. However, it misses the mark when it seeks to develop a teaching methodology like this: "There are two hypotheses available to explain the facts we see (fossils, rock strata; etc.). One is uniformitarianism or evolution, which explains all geological findings as having come about through the slow process of evolution. The other hypothesis is creationism or catastrophism, which explains the same data in light of a creation by a supernatural being, and a worldwide catastrophe such as a flood. The teacher must present both of these as options (since neither can be proved), and allow the students to make up their own minds as to which one best explains the data."

The ICR is endorsing this approach for public schools, as a way to get equal time for creationism alongside evolution. ICR correctly sees that the teaching of evolution is based on a certain religious faith; they desire to prevent the public schools from presenting only one religion. Dr. Henry Morris, in a recent "Acts & Facts" newsletter (a publication of ICR), stated,

ICR does *not* want Genesis, or religion, taught in the public schools. ICR scientists are certainly Bible-believing Christians, and believe Biblical creationism should be taught in private Christian schools, and much of ICR's activity is directed to that end. In the public schools, however, only scientific creationism is proposed, and many of our books are prepared without any Biblical or religious material for that purpose.

The desire to teach creation in the public schools is a commendable one, but we must disagree with this means. ICR (which does not espouse a presuppositional apologetic method) believes that there are some things man can know truly with his unaided reason—in this case, the truth about cosmogony. (Note the distinction above between *Biblical*

creationism—that which is based on the Bible—and *scientific* creationism—that which is based on supposedly autonomous "science.") In the public schools, we must not bring in God's Word written; it is not needed, anyway. The students can figure out the truth for themselves, if they are just given an unbiased presentation of both sides of the issue.

Remember the serpent-inspired approach Eve took to the forbidden fruit. She did not unreservedly accept God's Word as true; neither did she unreservedly accept Satan's word. Rather, she placed both interpretations ("hypotheses") on an equal level, and set herself up as the judge of which was right and which was wrong. Notice Gen. 3:6—the woman looked at the tree, and saw for herself that it was good, beautiful, and desirable.

This, unfortunately, is just the approach the "two-model" advocates present. Place God's Word (without even calling it God's Word at that!) and man's word on an equal footing, and see which one is most reasonable. This is just Humanism (man as the final judge of reality), albeit a *more subtle form than evolution*. Let us not try to sneak Biblical thought into the public schools under the guise of "scientific creationism." Let us rather boldly call for public schools, as well as private schools, to acknowledge the Lordship of Christ. We must present the Biblical view (of creation, of the flood, etc.) as absolutely *true*, and any denials of it as *false*.

As we deal with the flood, let us not fall into the trap of compromising our position. Scripture does not allow for a local flood, as some Christians try to do. Notice the all-inclusive language used in 6:17; 7:4, 21-23. One might still say, "Well, men had not spread all over the earth. A local flood would have killed all men, and perhaps even all animals." Remember, though, that water seeks its own level. If there were only a local flood, all the high mountains in that area were covered (6:19-20). The water prevailed 150 days (6:24). How could the water be so deep in one place, without spreading out over the earth? The water *must* have been the same height all over the earth. Thus, this could not have been a local flood, but was worldwide.

Some general thoughts on the subject of flood geology may be mentioned. Notice in 7:11-12 that three sources for the water are mentioned—subterranean waters ("the fountains of the great deep"), celestial waters ("the windows of heaven"), and rain. The massive outpouring of subterranean water would involve a massive change in the structure of the earth's surface. This could have caused the mountain uplifts, as well as triggering volcanic activity.

The celestial waters are mentioned in Gen. 1:7 (the "waters which were above the firmament"). This water canopy would have had a tremendous influence on the earth. First would have been a "greenhouse effect," moderating the climate all over the earth. This would explain the evidences found of a tropical climate under the ice in Siberia and Antarctica. When this collapsed, it would have marked the onset of seasonal changes (note 8:22). It could also have begun the "ice ages." Second, the water canopy would have shielded the earth from much radiation from space. This fact could explain the longer life-spans before the flood, and the drastically shorter lives after the flood—such radiation has a negative influence on living beings. (For more detail along the lines of flood geology, see John Whitcomb and Henry Morris, *The Genesis Flood*, and John Whitcomb, *The World that Perished*, both published by Baker.)

Discipline

For an insight into our discipline of the students, we must look at I Pet. 3:20. Here, Peter tells us that Noah and his family were saved by the water. Weren't they saved by the *ark*? That's not what Peter says. This points out an important point for our understanding of salvation, with implications for discipline.

We cannot separate the salvation of the righteous from the condemnation of the wicked. We cannot have one without the other. The means God uses to save His people are the very same means He uses to condemn the reprobate. God saved Noah by destroying the wicked. God saved the Israelites by drowning the Egyptians. And the death that saved us was the same death that "condemned sin in the flesh" (Rom. 8:3),

and sealed the doom of the unrepentant Jews. God does not save His people without condemning sin at the same time.

For us as teachers this is true as well. When we punish the wrongdoers, we are thereby "saving" the righteous. One major problem with public schools today is the lack of discipline. The wicked are not punished, and the righteous are not able to learn. But when justice is meted out, the righteous are enabled to learn. Paul sees this same idea with regard to the state (1 Tim. 2:2ff). We must pray for kings (those who "execute wrath upon him that doeth evil," Rom. 13:4), in order that we may lead a godly life (vs. 2), and in order that men might be saved (vs. 4). Teachers (and administrators), do not be afraid to punish wrongdoers. By doing so, you will enable the godly student to exercise dominion more fully.

BOOK REVIEWS

Productive Christians in an Age of Guilt Manipulators, by David H. Chilton (Institute for Christian Economics, 1981), \$4.95. Order from Fairfax Christian Bookstore, 11121 Pope's Head Road, Fairfax, VA 22030.

Reviewed by Kevin Craig

Some will call it "negative," but this is a book you positively must buy. (1) It is a biblical refutation of one of the most dangerous men in Evangelicalism today. If this man (who has already sold more than 100,000 books) succeeds in his plans, faithful Christian churches and schools will be the first to be destroyed. (2) It may form the basis for a high school or college economics class. We have not seen a better Christian Economics text. (3) It will form the basis for some very important articles to come in *The Biblical Educator*.

The object of Chilton's sharpened sword is the Marxist social action group, "Evangelicals for Social Action," and particularly its head, Ronald Sider, whose book *Rich Christians in an Age of Hunger* is one of the most popular among Evangelicals today. If you have even heard of Ronald Sider you need Chilton's book. If your friends are chirping about the wonderful "relevance" of Sider's "biblical insights," then your friends are far afield, and this book will help steer a path to solid ground. You also need to see what's coming out of most Evangelical seminaries these days. If you have any students who plan to attend seminary of any kind, you had better be aware of what goes on in them. For some utterly inexplicable reason, seminaries want to be "accredited"—that is, approved, not "unto God" (2 Tim. 2:15), but unto Marxists and other Humanists. When parents come to open house, or when seminary officials engage in public relations, a seemingly biblical facade is raised. It comes down in the classes. With a thud. And the more "respectable" the seminary, the louder the thud. The importance of this book, given the widespread influence of Marxist and Humanist professors like Sider, cannot be overemphasized.

A truly biblical economics textbook, designed expressly for Christian schools or families, has not been written. This book is not a "textbook." But if you currently teach an economics class, the principles in this book must form an integral part of your economics curriculum. Most economics texts are filled with formulae, graphs, charts and statistics. They bear little resemblance to the real political-economic world "out there." This book skips the needless formulae and graphs, and destroys economic ignorance. If you have the slightest imagination that economics is dry and irrelevant to your life or the future of this country, no book will wake you up faster than Chilton's. Every teacher of politics, economics, American history, Bible, or any remotely related subject absolutely must have this book.

Some of the more directly economic and political subjects covered in the book are: the Third World; foreign aid (and the biblical alternatives); affluence; overpopulation; profits; production; advertising; envy; the Jubilee laws; equality; statism; price controls; minimum wage laws; and national food programs. You have never read a more direct and biblical analysis of these topics. You have never read a more readable explanation of these issues.

But what if you are not an economics teacher? What if you do not teach any political subject? The book is still a must. Of course, if you teach straight out of a prepared text, deviating not a whit, little creative thinking or outside reading is necessary. For the rest of you, this book will be of great benefit. In the months to come, *The Biblical Educator* is going to be applying some of these principles in very practical ways for the Christian school and home. In particular, two principles will be the foundation for some very important work that will be done in the field of Christian Education. Set forth with a plain, thoroughly Scriptural basis, these two principles are: The Validity of Biblical Law, and The Future Prosperity of the Gospel.

The first theme has already been the subject of two exhaustive works—*Theonomy in Christian Ethics*, by Greg Bahnsen, and *The Institutes of Biblical Law*, by R. J. Rushdoony. Many Christians have been misled into thinking that the Old Testament has no impact in the life of the Christian whatsoever. Very little study has been done in applying the Old Testament to contemporary problems. But it must be applied. It is the Word of the Unchanging God (Mal. 3:16). Chilton's defense of the proposition that even the Old Testament is the authoritative and binding word of God is important if the reader is to be able to apply a consistent Christianity to education. (If the reader is confused, or has never heard of the idea of the continuing validity of all of God's law, let me assure you that Chilton is not suggesting that we are saved by God's law, or that we are to return in some way to temple sacrifices. But the Old Testament says more than "Thou shalt not steal." It describes in detail actions that constitute theft.) If Christians are going to get anything accomplished, we have to start taking God's word seriously.

But why take anything seriously if the Bible says that everything is going to get worse and worse and worse until finally Jesus comes to rescue impotent Christians from their failure? Why indeed! But—praise the Lord—the Bible says no such thing! In a surprising chapter, "The Conquest of Poverty," Chilton shows how the Church can expect victory in this age! Returning to the faith of our fathers, Chilton demonstrates that Christians must be optimistic. As he concludes: "This book . . . is written to encourage a return to Scripture; to stir into flame the embers of godly principles which form our great heritage, and which will lead again to dominion under God's law. The statistics cannot ultimately prevail; and, dark as it looks . . . we can still change the drift of our culture. God has given us the tools, and guaranteed our success if we obey."

As this review is being written, the book has been out for less than a week. Those Marxists who pose as Evangelicals may choose to ignore entirely this book. Or, it may already have created such a furor that you have already purchased it. If you haven't, send to the address above today.

Wealth and Poverty, by George Gilder (Basic Books, Inc., 10 E. 53rd St., New York, NY 10022). 306 pp., \$16.95.

Reviewed by David H. Chilton

Let's begin by assuming that you have a defective copy of this volume: chapters 16, 17 and 18 are missing. In that case, you are in possession of one of the greatest books in recent economic history. The mere presence of forty pages or so of immoral economics can't change the fact that *Wealth and Poverty* is magnificent. "But you misunderstand me," Gilder will protest: "Those chapters embody the major point of my argument!" I know, I know; but the only way I can justify giving this book a rave review is by misunderstanding its point. Or, rather, I prefer to think of the wheat—and not the chaff—as the "point."

As I have implied, Gilder's book is mostly "wheat." It is one of the best defenses of capitalism I have ever read. Gilder powerfully demonstrates that the essential nature of capitalism is giving, not grabbing; that, in fact, the theological basis for capitalism is found in the Golden Rule. It's been said before, but Gilder says it better and more convincingly than most. Envy-ridden socialist propagandists—from the *New York Times* and *Christianity Today*—profess to believe the mercantilist fallacy that anyone who gains in an exchange does so at someone else's expense, and that capitalism therefore hurts the poor. On the contrary,

argues Gilder: "Rather than wealth causing poverty, it is far more true to say that what causes poverty is the widespread belief that wealth does" (p. 99); and it was the "vast expansion of the welfare rolls that halted in its tracks an ongoing improvement in the lives of the poor, particularly blacks" (p. 12).

The Welfare State hurts the poor in many ways. Its very existence reeds the really racist notion that "blacks cannot now make it in America without vast federal assistance" (p. 66). By stripping the needy of incentive, by destroying the familial responsibilities of men, by consuming the seed for tomorrow's corn, the practice of state welfare has eroded the three "pillars of a free economy and a prosperous society" (p. 74): *work, family and faith*.

A basic lesson of economic life is that "in order to move up, the poor must not only work, they must work harder than the classes above them. Every previous generation of the lower class has made such efforts. But the current poor, white even more than black, are refusing to work hard"—to a large degree because they are paid *not* to work (p. 68). "Nothing is more deadly to achievement than the belief that effort will not be rewarded, that the world is a bleak and discriminatory place in which only the predatory and the specially preferred can get ahead" (p. 69). The work ethic is in serious trouble when substantial numbers of people "believe that their best chance of striking it rich comes not from work and investment, but from suing the successful; not from health, but from opportune disability; not from extended and productive careers, but from timely retirement" (p. 109). "To the average American the word *unemployment* came to mean not joblessness, but a nice weekly check"; being laid off is now regarded as a fringe benefit (p. 157). Even when welfare is packaged as government-created "work" (for public-relations reasons), the result is usually not *jobs* in any productive sense, "but rather seats at the trough" (p. 166). "A job guarantee gives what cannot be given. It implies that everyone could diminish effort and slackly accept pay without causing the entire system to decay... Crucial to a real job is the risk of being fired if the work is not performed" (p. 168). Thus, the destruction caused by welfare is not only the fact that it is funded by legalized theft; it also creates the demonic illusion among its recipients that one need not work for a living. The productive are plundered, and the unproductive are rewarded for their impotence. (Of course, welfare mothers *are* often rewarded for "productivity" of another sort, but that only complicates the problem.)

Work cannot be separated from the rest of life. The deadly effects of statism are evident in the breakdown of the family as well. Indeed, the "stagnant lower class" can be defined in terms of its "lack of family structure" (p. 71). Benefits from the state work to "destroy the father's key role and authority. He can no longer feel manly in his own home," recognizing that "when all is said and done his wife and children can do better without him. The man has the gradually sinking feeling that his role as provider... has been largely seized from him; he has been cuckolded by the compassionate state" (pp. 114f.). By working against familial bonds, the state is causing further poverty—through the very means which was supposed to alleviate poverty in the first place. As Gilder observes, the *real* "welfare fraud" is committed by the creators of the welfare system themselves, who conceal from the poor "the most fundamental realities of their lives: that to live well and escape poverty they will have to keep their families together at all costs and will have to work harder than the classes above them" (p. 118). But responsible manhood is discounted in the benefits business, and the result is that the inner-city role models are undisciplined, improvident young bucks rather than stable, authoritative fathers.

Another factor in the demise of the family has come from the government's "antidiscrimination" agencies, which routinely describe American society "as racist, sexist, exploitative, and corrupt, not because it is, by any relevant standard, but in order to vindicate sweeping new powers for government and its messianic new class" (p. 95). Thus,

even though men are more highly motivated to work than women are, federal scrutiny of employment practices has led companies to prefer the credentials of (higher-class) women over (lower-class) men—and "there is no way to reconcile the interests of black men with the cause of feminism" (p. 135), which poses an insurmountable dilemma for a social reformer. Not quite, actually: with humanists the credentials usually win out, so that "the antidiscrimination agencies have become an enemy of black progress almost as deadly as the welfare system" (p. 137). And not only of *black* progress: the access of other minorities to the mainstream of American life has been blocked by the federal enforcement of bilingual education—guaranteeing them "their civil right to be taught in tongues" (p. 129)—and thus allowing them only the option of becoming wards of the state.

Even more important than work and family, however, is *faith*, an atmosphere of trust in God's providence, in one's neighbor, and in the benefit of social institutions. When a culture is permeated by confidence in "a law of compensations beyond the immediate and distracting struggles of existence" (p. 73), enterprise has a base from which to work, an ethical context which provides meaning and purpose for all activity:

Under capitalism, the ventures of reason are launched into a world ruled by morality and Providence... In such a world, one can give without a contract of compensation. One can venture without the assurance of reward. One can seek the surprises of profit, rather than the more limited benefits of contractual pay. One can take initiative among radical perils and uncertainties. When faith dies, so does enterprise (p. 27).

This is profoundly true. It can be demonstrated from Scripture and from history. Unfortunately, Gilder does not mean it in the orthodox Christian sense of faith in God's inerrant word. Biblical faith does not face an uncertain future, for all history moves in terms of God's decree—and He has given us the promise of victory. This does not mean we can know the details of our personal futures: we always face the risk that our enterprises will fail. But risk for the Christian is not in a vacuum. We know that God's providence rules over all things, including our failures—and that all things are working together for our good. But Gilder's definition of providence is merely "the miraculous prodigality of chance" (p. 267), which is no providence at all. Providence depends upon the Provider. The only real basis for a vigorous entrepreneurship is a vigorous Christianity. Humanists who attempt to establish it on any other grounds are doomed to failure, frustration and foolishness. Gilder criticizes the Austrian economists for their inability "to give capitalism a theology or even assign to its results any assurances of justice" (p. 6). This is not quite true. Henry Hazlitt made a stab at it in 1964 with *The Foundations of Morality*, a great fat book which concludes: "Morality is autonomous"—leaving the reader better-educated and worse-off than when he started. And Gilder's "theology," based on chance, is nothing but a *logy* with no *Theos* (and, for that matter, with no *Logos* either).

Now about those three chapters I don't like: There is much that is good in them, but two issues are of grave concern. First, Gilder tells us that inflation can be "a healthy adaptation to new conditions" (p. 195). Christians cannot agree with this. Inflation is always theft. It is morally wrong, regardless of its seemingly beneficial effects at first. There can never be a justification for government monopoly or expansion of the money supply. Second, Gilder shows what is really behind all the "supply-side" rhetoric about tax cuts: "The purpose of the cuts, it must be continuously stressed, is to expand the tax base—to make the rich pay more taxes by inducing them to consume less and invest more" (p. 225). Thus, for Gilder and the supply-siders, the power-state is a *given*: they have merely devised a more sensible way to pay for it. I must admit that I like the supply-siders a lot more than I like the Ronald Siders. But regardless of the refreshing new flavor, it's still the same old statist poison.