

THE BIBLICAL EDUCATOR

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

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TRAINING FOR OUR ROLE IN SOCIETY

By Loretta J. Solomon

What do you do with a fourteen-year-old who hates school? Put him in vocational training classes! So the educators of today advise. "After all," they say, "not everyone is college material." Certainly, it is true that not everyone is college material, but to claim that students need not struggle through academically oriented courses because they are not college material presumes that the main purpose of those courses is to prepare teenagers for college. Is this true?

The stated reason for education in most public schools today is to prepare students to function well in society, whether or not this includes college. The purpose of the junior high and high school curriculum then, is to prepare all students to function well in society.

What do they need to know to function well in society? Getting down to the basics, these students will need to be able to purchase food, clothing, and other necessities of life. To do this they *will* need to know how to read, to pass the driver examination test and to be able to reach the nearest market. They *will* need to know arithmetic; maybe not analytical geometry, but certainly addition, subtraction, multiplication, and division. You might think that any student graduating from high school would have a working knowledge of these basics. Think again. In large schools where there is a wide variety of electives, this is not always the case. There are sometimes low requirements for English (reading), mathematics, science, history, and other basics. In some schools only one or two years are required for these subjects.

In these schools there is an attitude present that often allows students to pass their basic requirement classes having learned little of the subject matter. The attitude that "not everyone is college material" becomes translated something like, "This student simply does not have enough material between the ears to grasp this subject." Now, that might possibly be true; then again, it might be that the person is merely not interested, and/or the instructor is not able to interest him. To put it in educational terms, the teacher is unable to motivate that student to learn. The educator, who has long since lost the enthusiasm and idealism that he acquired during his training, shrugs his shoulders and passes the student with a D. He does not want *that one* in his class again next year. The requirement is met. The student graduates not knowing the subject.

Much has been said in our day about why Johnny can't read. The basic culprit is the "Look See" method of teaching reading. Slowly, schools are beginning to return to teaching phonics. This, however, will not solve the problem as long as teachers still believe that it is not possible to teach their students something difficult. Often, teachers lower their expectations for the pupils, bringing the whole class down to a level where the "class clowns" are willing to perform. I have seen a short story class watch a series of "The Beverly Hillbillies" video-taped for their class. Not only were they not reading the classics, they were not reading at all!

Some readers of this article might be tired of hearing criticism about education's supposed failures. They might say, "If the kids don't like to read and study, okay, let them saw wood, make cookies, or tear cars apart. They don't have to read after they're out of school." Don't they? It's true, there *are* a lot of pictures around these days. But for the Chris-

tian, there is more involved than whether or not the kids like to read and study. Christians *do* have to read, and not many adults feel comfortable buying and carrying the Children's Living Bible. The Bible is the only totally reliable source of truth in our world, and it is not printed at the fourth-grade level.

Public education has not been able to prepare all of its students to function well in society. Because of the attitudes of both teachers and students that often accompany the availability of vocational training, academic achievement levels are suffering. Consistently, private schools which do not have large VoTec programs have higher academic achievement. Though the absence of these programs is not the only difference which may be accountable, the attitudes which are a result of their presence are one of the major causes for the difference in achievement levels.

The irony in this situation is that frequently parents do not desire to send their children to private Christian schools because they are lacking in vocational classes. They want their children to have this exposure. They want their children to enjoy the benefits of costly facilities and equipment that are available in public schools. (This is understandable considering it is their tax dollars which have paid for these extras.) Conversely, it is usually the lack of funds which makes it impossible for Christian schools to "compete" in this area. But, is this an area where competition is really necessary?

The statistics show that Christian schools are achieving what public schools are not. Their students are not only learning, but test scores show that they are remembering what they have been taught. They know how to read. They know how to write. They know good literature. They know mathematics. They know history. They know science. And they often know these much better than their public school counterparts. The Christian schools *have* taught their students how to function well in society, for they have given their students a moral and spiritual foundation which will help guide them in every area of life.

Parents themselves are the key to effective vocational training. The Christian school generally has greater parental cooperation than the public school. No one is better qualified to know the student's tendencies and abilities than the parents. Indeed, it is one of the parents' main responsibilities to know their children. If a child "is not college material," his parents should know where his strengths do lie. It is the parents' obligation to help him find achievement and success in that area.

Experiencing achievement is not only important in determining vocational direction; it is a very worthwhile end in itself. When a person attempts something which he has not done before and successfully performs the task, he begins to see *how* one learns. He also experiences success and gains the knowledge of his own worth. In short, he gains self-esteem. This can be very important for the student who has trouble succeeding in one or more subject areas. Lessons in music, the arts, or sports often have manifold benefits. The development of self-confidence is not the least of these.

The curriculum in school, including reading, mathematics, science, etc., becomes more meaningful if the student is made to see how the learning of that particular subject will help him in whatever area of endeavor he selects. Finding the correlation between certain subjects and occupations may be difficult, but in most cases correlations can be made. The student will be much more motivated to learn if he can see how it will help him later in life.

It is very often true that after being out of school for a few years, a person who was previously poorly motivated may decide to seek a college education. Consider the deficit that will hamper this individual as he pursues his academic endeavors.

There are many reasons why students should apply themselves to learning those subjects which are difficult or uninteresting for them. Parents would do well to make a study of these reasons and consistently teach them to their children. Not only will the learning of these subjects aid them in whatever occupation they eventually choose, but also, the gaining of knowledge is part of God's plan for us:

To know wisdom and instruction; to perceive the words of understanding; to receive the instruction of wisdom, justice, and judgment, and equity; to give subtilty to the simple, to the young man knowledge and discretion. A wise man will hear and will increase learning; and a man of understanding shall attain to wise counsels. . . . (Proverbs 1:2-5)

AN EDUCATIONAL COMMENTARY ON THE BIBLE

By Rodney N. Kirby

#16 "Pilgrims and Covenant People"

Text—Genesis 12:1-3

We have looked in a previous article at a concept which characterizes our society. In Gen. 12:1, God tells Abraham to leave his country and go "to the land which I will show you." Heb. 11:13, speaking of Abraham, calls him a pilgrim on the earth. Abraham was not a *nomad*, but a *pilgrim*. A pilgrim has a destination; a nomad does not. Abraham's destination, immediately, was the land of Canaan; ultimately, his destination was the heavenly city of God. Contrast this with Cain, who was cursed to be a nomad (Gen. 4:12), and who even named his land "Wandering" (Nod—Gen. 4:15).

People in our society generally are not pilgrims, but nomads. People do not settle down in one place, to exercise dominion over the earth. Rather, they wander nomadically from one place to another constantly, seeking whatever they can find. Desert nomads go to one place until the food or water there runs out. Then, instead of trying to produce more food or water, they move elsewhere. Present-day American nomads are not in search of food and water, but money, contentment, social standing, etc. But when the nomad is laid off from work (or becomes discontent, or loses his social standing), he does not try to overcome the problem. Rather, he moves elsewhere, where he can get a job without further cost (in the way of self-development) to himself.

As our students study different societies in history, we must be on the alert for signs of such nomadism in a culture. It will point to lowered productivity, for more time and money is spent on moving than on capital investment. Also, people are not trying to improve their situation (by finding new ways to overcome problems), but are merely seeking to preserve their *status quo*. Thus, economic growth turns into stagnation. Also, nomadism will be accompanied by a breakdown in family ties, particularly within the extended family. Children move away from their parents (more than is necessary to "leave and cleave"); the children are thus less able to take care of the parents in their old age. The parents don't want to move to a new city with their children after they retire; all their acquaintances would be left behind. The children won't move back to their parents' town; their good job would be left behind. So there is nothing to do but put the parents in a nursing home.

This is not to say that moving to a different city is always bad; after all, God told Abraham to move. The difference lies in the *motivation*. Are you moving because you are tired of what you are doing here? Or are you moving because a new opportunity for dominion (long-term) has opened up? Maybe the civil government is sorely persecuting Christian schools; so you move to a different state, where you have the freedom to train your children Biblically. This would be a long-term investment, leading to dominion, and would be legitimate.

We must, in our Christian schools, take this approach in our study of

various societies. We also must instill this attitude in the children, so that they will not become *nomads*, but *pilgrims*.

As Christian teachers, we must carry this concept of having a destination over into our teaching methods. Our teaching should have specific goals. The old saw is true—"Aim at nothing, and you will surely hit it." We must sit down and consciously decide what our goals are going to be—on a schoolwide basis, on a classroom basis, for each subject, and for each unit of study. Then, we must evaluate everything that we do as to whether or not it helps us attain that goal. Our teaching must be structured, logical, and systematic. We do not base our units of study on the children's experiences, but on the goals we want to attain.

Now, let's look at Gen. 12:3—"I will bless those who bless you, and the one who curses you I will curse." This shows the *centrality of the covenant people in history*. God governs all of history—*everything* that happens—with an eye on His particular people (cf. Rom. 8:28). Here, we see that nations rise and fall according to their relation to the covenant people. If a nation blesses God's people, God will bless that nation. On the other hand, a nation which reviles or despises the children of Abraham will receive the curse from God.

First, who are "God's people?" Is it the nation of Israel, as modern fundamentalism proclaims? If so, then, as a nation, America must be sure to be supportive of Israel in her struggles against the Palestinians. But what does the Bible say? "Therefore, be sure that it is those who are of faith that are sons of Abraham" (Gal. 3:7). It is not Israel after the flesh who are included in the family of Abraham, but "spiritual" Israel—those who, by the working of the Holy Spirit, have the same faith Abraham had. And so it is not the nation of Israel which is at the center of history, but *Christians*.

What does it mean that God will "bless" or "curse" a nation? These terms have a special meaning in Scripture; they refer to *covenantal* blessings or cursings. Deuteronomy 28 summarizes these covenantal blessings and cursings. If you obey God faithfully, then. . . . But if you disobey, then. . . . These blessings and cursings are not purely "spiritual" (i.e., non-worldly); they include things *in this world*. Deut. 28 lists many physical results of our obedience or disobedience; in fact, not one "spiritual" blessing or cursing is listed (eternal life, hell, etc.). Of course, other Scriptures teach about such things. But the New Testament repeats this notion of physical blessing—notice the words of our Lord in Luke 18:29-30—those who forsake all to follow Him will receive many times as much *at this time, and in the age to come, eternal life*.

The curses, likewise, also include physical, temporal punishments. If we look at other passages which use this word "curse," we see several connotations. In some passages, a "curse" is tied in with "servanthood" (Gen. 9:25; Josh. 9:23). Elsewhere, it is used in a context with being "scattered" (Gen. 49:7). Other passages mention some specific, unusual form of punishment in connection with "cursing" (Josh. 6:26; II Kings 9:34). In the New Testament, we see especially that one must be in a position of authority to pronounce a curse—see Luke 6:28 and Rom. 12:14. Cursing is an *official* action, reserved to God or to those given authority by God. It is not only a verbal pronouncement (like when a pagan says, "God damn him"), but it carries *force* with it. A curse accomplishes something.

So now we can see what it means that God will "curse" a nation. He makes an official decree that the offending nation will receive some sort of punishment—generally in the form of dispersal (see ancient Israel under the Assyrians) or servanthood (ancient Judah under Babylon). The nation that despises God's children *will* be punished. Remember, too, that these curses are *covenantal*—they are related to the law of the covenant. Thus, a nation which is not obeying God's Law will come under the curse. Notice that this passage is speaking of nations *outside* of Israel—they, too, are obligated to keep God's covenant law, or be cursed.

And so we may evaluate cultures historically by how they treat the Christians in that nation. The nation which allows Christians to exercise dominion under God will prosper. That nation which persecutes Christians will be cursed.

We also have the promise of ultimate triumph, in the last clause of vs. 3—"In you *all* the nations of the earth shall be blessed." During the course of history, various nations will come under the curse. However, it is God's design that, ultimately, all nations receive His blessing. And so, we see the goal of history (this side of the return of Christ) to be a time when all nations shall come out from under the curse, and receive the blessings of the covenant.

In a sense, then, the people of God are at the center of all human history. Of course, Christ is the focal point of history (Heb. 1:3—"He upholds all things by the Word of His power"). But, since Christians are united to Christ, we may legitimately say that we, too, are the focal point of all history. "God works *all* things (all human history) together for good to those who love God, who are the called according to His purpose" (Rom 8:28). Rather than presenting history as class struggles, as meaningless repetitions of cycles, etc., we see history as being governed by God on behalf of His chosen people. This must be communicated to our students.

BOOK REVIEWS

The Separation of Church and Freedom: A War Manual for Christian Soldiers, by Kent Kelly (Calvary Press, 400 South Bennett Street, Southern Pines, N.C. 28387, \$7.95 hb, 308 pp).

Reviewed by Kevin Craig

"Satan has preached for decades that 'Christians shouldn't get involved in politics,' and we have believed him. This book explodes that myth and challenges God's people to stand up and be counted for the cause of Christian liberty."

So opens Kent Kelly's latest book, an extremely significant book that every Christian needs to have.

The essay by William Ball alone is worth the price of the book. Ball, one of the most important figures in the current Church-State struggle, shorts us to do our "homework." Let's face it: Christian "fundamentalists" are portrayed as ignorant, incompetent boobs. In too many cases, the shoe fits. We need to do our homework.

The third section of the book, "The Practice of War," is also worth the price of the book. Herein are very practical and tested methods of establishing a stronghold in the media and in the legal system. Very little can be accomplished in the courts alone. As William Ball astutely puts it, "There is a court higher than the U.S. Supreme Court—it is the court of public opinion" (p. 221). Biblical ideas need to be disseminated so that they might take root in the hearts of many people. Here is how. Please buy this book and begin implementation of the suggestions in "Volume 3."

We could go through the book and pick out quotes of wisdom and insight and fill a whole issue of *The Biblical Educator*. But our purpose here is to pick up where Kelly has left off. Sooner or later everyone who hasn't encountered problems with the law in running a Christian school or day-care center will. We need to know *how* to act, and *why*. Section two, "The Philosophy of War," offers some suggestions, but it is inadequate. We must evaluate the *how* and *why* of our relations with the "State" in light of four principles.

1. "Civil magistrate," "Civil government," "State" etc., are *constructions of men*. The biblical doctrine of the "State" is both complex and understudied. The ideas wrapped up in the terms "Church" and "State" are often far from biblical. "Church" in Scripture refers not to buildings, but to believers and their seed (Acts 2:39). "State" is not found in the Bible. For the Puritans, "government" referred chiefly to the "self-government of the Christian man." The "State" had only a minor influence as a form of "government" (i.e., as "civil government"). In terms of our responsibilities as a body of believers, we must understand that Christians constitute the New Israel, a holy nation (Gal. 15; 1 Peter 2:9). If the Church will educate her children biblically, she will radically change the character of the "nation" in which she lives (Deut. 6:7-9). Scripture teaches that as Christians fulfill the Great Commission (Matt. 28:18-20), all nations will become Christian nations (Ps.

67:4, Is. 11:9) obeying the Scriptures (Mal. 1:11; Rom. 16:26). The kind of government that exists in a nation that has been discipled is greatly different from the government of one which has not. On the one hand is the government of Christ, established in His Resurrection and Ascension (Acts 2:30-36), and now being spread by his saints (Ps. 149:4-9); on the other hand are "the powers that be" (Romans 13:1). Virtually all activities of our present, non-Christian "government" are activities that should be rightly handled by godly families; *the family* is God's central institution of government. Our second principle establishes the priority of *Theocracy* (lit., "God's Government") over humanistic "government."

2. "We must obey God rather than men" (Acts 5:29). But this is not to say that we engage in rampant revolution and obey no laws except those explicitly recorded in Scripture.

3. *We must obey all the laws of human government*. The force of 1 Peter 2:13-18 is ably set forth by Kelly. But his exposition needs the clarification found in our fourth principle:

4. *We must distinguish between God's commands to rulers and His commands to Christian families*. 1 Peter 2 establishes our attitude toward the "State." It says nothing about the "State's" relationship toward God or its legitimate powers under God. A ruler must govern according to God's Law. These laws are clearly and authoritatively spelled out in both the New and Old Testaments of God's Word. But *whether or not* the "government" is passing Biblical laws (v. 18), The Christian citizen must obey "the powers that be" (limited only by Acts 5:29).

For example, God has not given authority for any ruler to pass laws forcing Christian schools to put drinking fountains in every room and on every building. Any ruler who so rules *exceeds his legitimate authority*. 1 Peter 2 does not grant the "civil magistrate" an undefined "police power." The people of a nation are not "sovereign" and may not give a ruler the prerogative to go beyond *God's Law*. Go to the Bible, especially the Pentateuch: rulers are told very clearly what laws to enact in their nations. (See Greg Bahnsen's *Theonomy in Christian Ethics*). Christians are told very clearly what laws to enact in their homes and schools. Exceeding the bounds of God's Law is rebellion on the part of the ruler, just as failure to obey the commands of God's Law is sin for the Christian (1 John 3:4). But even if a ruler passes a law requiring the constructing of a hundred drinking fountains, Christians, according to 1 Peter 2, must obey. God has nowhere *prohibited* Christians from constructing drinking fountains. If we lived in a totalitarian "State" as those Christians who in the New Testament age lived under the "government" of the Beast (Rev. 13, 17), there wouldn't be much we could say. We build the fountains. Obviously, when the "government" is ungodly it is *tough* to be a Christian; its *hard* to tithe when the "State" wants *four tithes*, but that doesn't mean God is not to be obeyed.

But God be praised! *We live in a nation where ungodly laws can be fought and changed*. If you notice a destructive law on the books, and the idea of building all those drinking fountains does not appeal to you, you can work to change the laws; such are the blessings of God in this country. It's these liberties that really pinpoint the problem. We have humanistic laws and humanistic government because *Christians* have been slothful in their responsibilities as citizens. Ultimately, the people always get the government they want. Christians *say* they don't want humanistic government, but their laziness belies their claims. The only lasting way to eliminate ungodly laws is for *families* to take upon themselves all the responsibilities that the modern "Service State" currently assumes. If we are unwilling to do so, then we must not only live under the present humanistic laws, but we can expect the laws to become even more self-consciously anti-Christian. If Christians fail to tithe and care for the poor, then they are evildoers, because God so commands us. When a non-Christian government arises *as a consequence of our failure to obey God*, it is truly "a terror to the evil" (Rom. 13:3), extracting God's due *and a penalty to boot*. Christians may complain, but God will not be mocked.

New Individualist Review (LibertyPress, 7440 Shadeland, Indianapolis, IN 46250), 1010 + xviii pp., hardcover, \$12.00.

Reviewed by David H. Chilton

One of the most significant publishing ventures of recent years is the Liberty Fund, Inc., which produces excellent books under the imprints of *LibertyClassics* and *LibertyPress*. It would be a grave disservice to say that the Liberty Fund publishes inexpensive books. It is far more true to say that the Liberty Fund publishes very expensive books—at very low prices. Every volume is beautifully bound and attractively printed. Because the contents have lasting value, the books are made to endure as well.

New Individualist Review has arrived, hot off the LibertyPress, and the publishers have certainly performed a great service in making it available to a wider audience. *NIR* was a periodical edited and published by students at the University of Chicago between 1961 and 1968, and was immediately recognized as a highly literate contribution to freemarket thought. Its writers were such men as F. A. Hayek, Milton Friedman, William F. Buckley, Henry Hazlitt, M. Stanton Evans, Murray Rothbard, and many other well-known thinkers in conservative and libertarian circles. It also published the work of students themselves, and their writings are often astonishing for their depth of insight and clarity of expression. (Do college students still write like this? Most college papers I've read—to say nothing of those I wrote—were the intellectual equivalent of cotton candy. The maturity of the young *NIR* writers is amazing).

This LibertyPress reprint is a complete facsimile edition of all seventeen issues of *NIR*, plus an introduction by Milton Friedman (who was a faculty advisor) and a cumulative index. The only drawback is the lack of a comprehensive Table of Contents; but you can make one up yourself if you've got a couple of hours to spend on the project. In fact, I'll tell you what: Send me a self-addressed, stamped envelope, and I'll send you a copy of the one I made, which can be taped inside the covers. It'll cost me some time and money, so please don't request it if you aren't going to buy the book.

New Individualist Review has two features which render it especially valuable. First, it is packed with material explaining and defending the operation of the free market. There are scores of articles on such issues as education, law, business, government bureaucracies, foreign aid, international politics, behaviorism, welfare, and the results of "economic planning" in various countries. There are biographical essays on Tocqueville, Hume, Mencken, Richard Weaver, and others. And there are reviews of several distinguished works, including Murray Rothbard's *Man, Economy and State* (reviewed by Ludwig von Mises), and A. J. P. Taylor's *The Origins of the Second World War* (reviewed by Harry Elmer Barnes). If *NIR* were comprised of these articles alone, it would be an outstanding book, enormously rewarding for all who are con-

cerned with economic and political liberty.

Second, however, *NIR* has another feature which makes it particularly important reading for us: the conservative/libertarian debate which runs throughout the entire collection.

A bit of historical background at this point would help (but it should be noted that neither conservatives nor libertarians will agree with my analysis; nevertheless, I'm right). In the 19th century, the term *liberalism* referred to the philosophy of the free market. The name was later picked up by statist, and is now used to designate the various forms of interventionism which lie anywhere to the right of pure Marxism. Meanwhile, the old liberals split into the two camps of conservatives and libertarians. A major reason for the division was that liberals had begun to move more consistently toward epistemological self-consciousness, seeking to justify their economic positions on the basis of "first principles." Although the earlier liberals (Smith, Burke, Bastiat, etc.) had assumed a generally Christian consensus, such a consensus had really disappeared. A Christian economy can contain both a stable society and individual liberty; but this is not possible without the Christian base. When the old liberals abandoned Christianity, they also abandoned any hope of keeping stability and freedom together. The result was that the "conservative" liberals became somewhat statist in orientation, assigning the state vast powers unwarranted by Scripture; and the individualist, "libertarian" liberals tended toward anarchy, denying the state powers that are biblically legitimate.

As biblical Christians, we do not side with either camp. But that is why the debates in this book are so important. They can help us think through the issues, show us where our own unexamined "first principles" are essentially humanistic, and force us to come up with biblical solutions. Francis Schaeffer once said that the problem with the evangelical church is *not* that it doesn't have the answers. The problem is that it doesn't know the questions.

For example, think of all the time and money spent (wasted) by Christian conservatives on getting prayer, Bible reading and "scientific creationism" reinstated in public schools. How many would even consider—much less tolerate—the argument that public education is inherently immoral? (See our March 1981 issue, "What's Really Wrong With Public Schools?") The libertarians don't deal with it from an explicit biblical stance, while many conservatives *claim* to do so; but the libertarians are actually closer to the biblical position. Again: should we have a military draft? Libertarians say *no*, and many conservatives say *yes*. The libertarians are right on this one too. (An entire issue of *NIR* was devoted to the question, covering 60 pages. For the best *biblical* treatment of it, get "The Bible and the Draft," by John Robbins, 30¢ each from *The Trinity Review*, P. O. Box 169, Jefferson, MD 21755).

Most of the topics discussed in *NIR* are of continuing interest and relevance, and the articles are lively, informative, and often zestfully polemical. As a whole, this book is the best all-around economic education available for the price.

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