

# THE BIBLICAL EDUCATOR

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

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## HOMework VS. THE HOME

By David Chilton

I once knew a teacher (let's call him Willie) who was a real hot dog in class. Little that he taught was of any value—although what has been said of broken clocks was occasionally true of him: correct twice a day. Willie used to spin absurd theories, with elaborately inapplicable applications, and try them out on his students. Whatever he taught that was worth anything could have been put in a nutshell, and, moreover, should have been. If he'd had an ounce more sense, you would have heard a distinct rattle as he walked by. But he had a gift for talking fast. So fast that his listeners were often convinced that even if they didn't know what he was talking about, he surely did—which means that he really had them fooled.

Well, anyway, Willie's gift of fast talking landed him the only job he ever held in his life. He became a teacher in a Christian school. Naturally, he felt that he now had a Mission: to inspire his captive audience with the same divine fire that consumed him. So he proceeded at once to do just that. He drove them nuts, too.

One of Willie's methods of turning his students into walking egg-plants was by assigning homework. Now, I have nothing against homework *qua* homework. But Willie subscribed wholeheartedly to a falsehood known as *the priority of the intellect*. He regarded himself as a great intellectual, and since he spent all his lazy life looking up irrelevant data—ever learning, and never coming to a knowledge of the truth—he saw no reason why he shouldn't also make his students able chroniclers of small beer. He reminded me of the Emperor Caligula, who marched his legions down to the seashore, complete with a dazzling display of banners, drums and trumpets . . . in order to collect seashells.

It was always easy to spot Willie's students. They were the ones who dragged wearily into school every day, bleary-eyed and droopy from staying up past midnight to complete those ever-so-important assignments. When they complained, Willie accused them of laziness. When other teachers protested, he airily dismissed them as "humanists" who were more concerned about the children's need of sleep than about "dominion." (What an abused word that has become. The only "dominion" Willie ever demonstrated was in his uncanny ability to put himself outside a couple of tacos faster than anyone else—so he could make his getaway before the check arrived.) When he was timidly approached by the school's headmaster, Willie talked fast, delivering a series of six-syllable words with all the gusto of a Rockefeller-funded anarchist throwing grenades. Verbally, he beat the stuffing out of the headmaster, who meekly retired to the office. And that was that. Another victory for seashell-research.

But it wasn't only sleep that the students needed. They needed time with their families. One of Willie's many problems was that he never understood the thrust of Deuteronomy 6:6-7: *And these words, which I command thee this day, shall be in thine heart: And thou shalt teach them diligently unto thy children, and shalt talk of them when thou sittest in thine house, and when thou walkest by the way, and when thou liest down, and when thou risest up.* The instruction spoken of here does not primarily refer to formal educa-

tion of any sort: "teach diligently" means simply *repeat*. The idea is not one of a structured, classroom atmosphere; nor is it even so much that of a regular time of family devotions, although that may well be a part of it. The point of the passage is that in *all* family activities, the implications of God's word are to be *repeated*, impressed upon the children, worked into the fabric of daily life.

Children should be trained by their parents to see God's covenant in every rainbow, His messengers in clouds and rain and fire, His music pouring forth from streams and birds and the rustling of leaves. They should live in an atmosphere of praises for God's providences, of awe at His judgments, both in world history and their own circumstances. They should be reminded, again and again, that God is "infinite, eternal and unchangeable, in His being, wisdom, power, holiness, justice, goodness and truth." I know preschoolers who spontaneously sing psalms as they romp and play, who can recite the whole history of the Bible in detail, from Creation to the Resurrection—not merely because of set Bible study times, but because biblical history is constantly being retold and reinforced in their daily experiences. They see their whole world in terms of the covenant.

But this requires *time* well-spent at home—not just time spent in the formal learning of lessons, but time spent with the family: working, building, fixing, mending, playing games, enjoying hobbies and crafts, shoveling snow, planting gardens, expressing the love of God in a multitude of ways. The intellect must be developed; but it must be developed in conjunction and harmony with every other aspect of our being. Intellectual growth that is separated from the development of the whole person will result in a warped intellect and perverted outlook.

That, in fact, was a primary reason for Willie's problems in teaching. Little Willie grew up without much of a family life at all. Members of his "home" were always off in different directions, rarely communicating with each other. They lived in emotional isolation, with brothers and sisters hardly ever even calling each other by name (it was more like "Phone's for you, Stupid"—not playfully, but with hate). So Willie locked himself in his room, hid among the books, practiced talking fast, and self-consciously, jealously, tried to laugh at the world. He attempted to construct a separate universe out of his own twisted imagination, and became a teacher in order to impose that structure on others.

A major problem with any institution is the sinful tendency to view itself as central to all of life; and that goes double for schools. The Christian school does have an important responsibility in teaching, but we must remember that our students have needs and commitments that go far beyond the demands of formal education. The school—in theory, anyway—is an arm of the home, and should support the aims of godly homes. Children should be encouraged to spend time with their families, and parents should be informed that the school intends to help, rather than hinder, their efforts in building family relationships. Administrators should make sure that homework assignments are coordinated—to increase communication and cooperation among teachers, so that students are not overburdened with heavy workloads from all their teachers at once.

And, teachers— Don't feel like you're a failure if you don't assign two hours of homework every night. Your object is to *teach*, not dominate. Besides, handing out a lot of busy-work is fairly easy, and it's often a substitute for the really difficult task, which is *teaching*. Admit it—there have been times when you've assigned homework to your students, for the simple reason that *you* haven't done *yours*.

Finally: Let weekends, holidays and vacations alone. Don't ruin them with schoolwork. Give yourself and your kids a break. Tell the students to have a good time with their families—and then go thou and do likewise.

## MOTIVATION

By Loretta J. Solomon

Motivation is an important word in a teacher's vocabulary, and rightly so. If students are not motivated to learn, behavioral problems soon appear. A well-motivated student is a joy to teach. A poorly-motivated student is a problem. There is no lasting impression made on an unmotivated student. While a motivated student learns to remember, an unmotivated student learns to forget. Keeping students interested in the learning process is of key importance to every teacher.

The first week of school students are highly motivated. Everything is new and exciting. They come to school wearing new clothes, carrying new notebooks and pencils. They are anxious to see their teachers, and discover what their classes are like. Soon however, as the shoes scuff and the pencil erasers disappear, motivation wanes. As daily routine is established and the schedule becomes monotonous, the interest of the students' slackens.

Because interested students are indispensable for learning, the problem of motivation has been a major concern of educators. This has been one of the main reasons for the constant changes in educational theory and training. Where educational instructors of the past said, "Don't smile until after thanksgiving," the educators of today are saying, "Be creative." The resulting innovations are amazing. We now have individualized study programs, open spaced classrooms, audio-visual and computer equipment available for classroom use, and many other "new" practices. It is, of course, very difficult to measure whether or not these new methods have actually succeeded in keeping students interested in learning. It is easy for methods to become gimmicks, and the teacher placed in the role of entertainer rather than educator. One might question what would happen if the teachers could not keep coming up with new and better ideas. Or, are there other ways of motivating students?

One factor that has definitely influenced many students to buckle down and study is peer pressure. Admittedly this is ineffective for the few students who have experienced failure for so long in the school system that they have become calloused towards what others think of their performance. For the most part, however, pupils do not like to get consistently lower grades than their friends or be thought of as unintelligent. There has been movement to do away with the discomfort that some students feel by abolishing the grade system. This would take away one of the major motivations students have for trying to do their best. Grading is also one way of rewarding the efforts of the diligent and condemning the slothful. (There has been much debate about the pros and cons of this issue, but that is not within the scope of this discussion.)

At the center of classroom motivation is the teacher. The teacher is in the place of authority. Because of this he has a tremendous influence over the studenta. Students are remarkably receptive to the attitudes of the teacher though they sometimes give the impression of being unaware and unaffected. If the teacher is genuinely interested in what he is teaching, the students will know this, Enthusiasm generates enthusiasm. When a teacher is excited the

students can't quite help but become interested too. If, however, the teacher is not interested in the subject at hand, it would be very surprising indeed to find that the students were. For example, coaches whose entire interests lie in the physical education field are sometimes asked to teach history or science. Parents then wonder why their children find history or science so uninteresting.

The teacher *is* in control of the situation, whether he feels like it or not! It may surprise him to notice that the days when he is having an off day are the very days that the students are restless and inclined to whisper more than usual. By the teacher's lack of interest that day, he is inviting lack of interest on the students' part. They are responding according to the attitude he has presented. Here the problem of motivation has expanded. Motivation is needed for teachers and students alike.

How do teachers remain highly motivated to keep a good level of learning and achievement in their classrooms? In some schools they are encouraged by silent intercom systems which enable principals to listen to their teaching unnoticed. Outside of these rather devious methods of motivation, there are some which willing teachers can use to aid themselves.

The connection between classroom behavior and the teacher's attitude has already been mentioned. This connection points the way to an ever-present source of motivation for the teacher. The behavior of his class shows him if he is sufficiently inspired. The behavior of his class should inspire him sufficiently if he is not! By keeping himself in touch with the attitude of his class, he will know both if he is interesting to the students and if he himself is interested in his teaching and his subject matter.

The general theory could be stated: the teacher is only as good as the attitude of his class. As with any theory, there are a few variables to be considered. One is the general difference in certain age groups. For example, first through third graders are naturally more interested in learning than fourth and fifth; junior high more so than high school. But allowing for a few exceptions, the same principle can be used.

If this theory is true, teachers have a serious problem during those times when they find they are discouraged, or simply too tired to care. After all, their new schools get scuffed too! How do dedicated teachers keep up their inspiration for doing their best? Here Christian teachers have a tremendous advantage over non-Christian teachers. Their teaching job is a ministry to their students. Their primary goal is to present Christianity to their students to the end that they may acknowledge Christ as their Savior and grow in the knowledge of God. Teachers must remind themselves of the importance of their job before God. It is hard to imagine any other occupation which has the potential for shaping society as much as teaching does.

The Christian teacher is also aided by the promise and exhortation found in Galatians 6:9: "And let us not be weary in well doing: for in due season we shall reap, if we faint not." Followers of Christ are promised lasting reward for their faithful efforts. They also have the ever-present Spirit of God to enlighten and encourage them in their task of molding young disciples of Christ. Daily encouragement can be gleaned from the Bible and from acquaintance with Christ himself, our great teacher.

## BOOK REVIEWS

By David Chilton

*Images of the Spirit*, by Meredith G. Kline (Baker Book House), 142 pp., \$6.95

I usually *like* to read a good book at least three times before turning to another; with Meredith Kline's books, I *have* to, and this one is no exception. It is one of the most fascinating works of theology

I've ever seen. It is also one of the most *full*, which is one reason why its central ideas take a while to sink in. Don't let the book's brevity fool you: short as it is, it's packed with a staggering load of information. Yet Kline doesn't waste time with argument and illustration where he thinks a couple thousand Bible references will do just as well, and he rarely even quotes the verses. The only profitable way to read this book, therefore, is slowly, with a Bible handy, looking up every single reference. It's a necessity to do so, because while most of his theses have strong biblical support, they are almost always startling. Examples:

1. The "Spirit of God" which hovered over the earth at the creation was a *theophany* — identical with the pillar of cloud that led the Israelites through the wilderness.
2. This "Glory-cloud" (God's Temple) was the pattern for the creation of both the universe and man — a creation "in the image of God."
3. When Adam and Eve heard "the voice of the LORD God walking in the garden," they heard an ear-splitting, earth-shattering *roar*—and the same goes for that not-so-"still, small voice" that spoke to Elijah on Mount Horeb.
4. The original Sabbath (Gen. 2:2-3) was also the first "Day of the Lord," in which God rested on his throne of judgment; and that is the basis for "the Lord's Day," in which Christian worshippers gather before God's throne in a weekly, forward-looking enactment of the final Day of the Lord. (Kline's argument here, by the way, while not specifically aimed at settling the question of the relationship of the Sabbath to the Lord's Day, has considerably sharpened the focus on the whole issue.)

Those are just a few of the many revelations in this volume, the main point of which is to trace the development of the basic motifs of the image of God throughout Scripture. Once you've grasped Kline's insights, you can apply them to many biblical passages which do not come under consideration in his book—with results that are equally as surprising and fruitful. Kline's goal, of course, is not to be "innovative" or spectacular, but to encourage us to develop a *biblical mind*, that we may regain the understanding of Scripture which was held by its original readers.

Those who have read *Images of the Spirit* will also be interested in Kline's additional studies along the same lines, published in *Kingdom Prologue* (Vol. I), a syllabus-style book which covers Part One, Section A (193 pp.) of a much larger work promised by Dr. Kline. It is available from Gordon-Conwell Seminary for \$8.50 (plus postage); but since it builds so much on the previous study, I would advise obtaining a thorough understanding of *Images of the Spirit* before attempting to plumb the depths of *Kingdom Prologue*.

It would only be fair at this point to register one of several disagreements I have with Kline, on an issue which often troubles the minds of conservatives who begin reading the works of our Bible scholars. It centers on the issue of six-day creation. It has long been well-known that the creation week of Genesis 1 is structured in a very poetic, parallel form—so poetically, in fact, that the literary symmetry *a/one* (so the tale goes) has led conservative scholars to abandon the literal six-day hypothesis, and to allow as how the whole thing is probably symbolic anyhow.

During my brief sojourn at an allegedly conservative seminary, the professors and I were able to agree on only one thing: I didn't belong there. One morning a prof was lecturing very earnestly on the subject of the six days, explaining how the Hebrew vowel-points, breathing-marks, *vav* consecutive and other assorted what-nots had ganged up on the text, and that six-day creation had lost the battle. One student turned to me and whispered: "Now *there's* a case where knowledge of the Hebrew is a *hindrance* to understanding the Bible!" It was, of course, a cute but thoughtless remark; all things being equal, a man who understands the original languages will understand the Bible better than one who is unacquainted with Greek and Hebrew (which is why we advocate learn-

ing these languages at the grade-school level).

What then is the problem? It is this: all things are rarely equal. Something often happens to people—even conservatives—who engage in scholarly pursuits. Suddenly it becomes important (fashionable) to achieve academic respectability, which means winning the acclaim of unbelievers. Is it not strange (it isn't, really) that hardly anyone noticed the significance of those literary parallels until Charles Darwin came along to help us rethink our theology? When I think of where our knowledge of Scripture would be, if Christian theologians hadn't felt forced to sit at the epistemological feet of the evolutionists, my heart weeps for what might have been. And the joke is that the much-sought-after respectability isn't there. Think of the whole theological scholarly enterprise as a pack of dogs sniffing at each other—and then realize what's wrong with the illustration: the "sniffing" is one-sided! The evangelical are nosing up to the liberals, and they don't even notice us, except to laugh. Far from gaining us respectability, our academic promiscuity has gotten us only (to change the metaphor before I get in trouble) egg on our face.

Well, what about those literary parallels! The truth is, there never was a problem, until the blind leaders of the blind invented it. God created the world in six days, and he did so artistically. Then He authored the Bible to tell us about it. The same God who created the world also created Scripture; and since He was thereat the time, He ought to know how it was done. The *literary* parallels exist because there were *real, physics/* parallels when it happened in the first place.

Now, Dr. Kline is a great scholar, light-years ahead of most in his Bible knowledge; but even he seems to have felt the need to pander to the liberals on this point. The important thing is, *don't* let it keep you from reading his book; *don't* let it worry you unduly when you run across it; finally, *don't* let it suck you into the trap. The fact of poetic structure in the creation account does not in the least imply that it didn't happen that way. It implies, instead, that it happened *beautifully*. When we find a literary parallel, we should not say: "Aha! It must not be true!" We should say, rather: "Aha! So *that's* how it happened!"

Remember this rule: When a theologian tells you that something *beautiful* cannot be *true*, he is saying less about the text and *more* about what may have been his own personal disappointments with a high-school girlfriend. Those things are hard to get over.

*Why Raise Ugly Kids? Fulfill Your Child's Health and Happiness Potential*, by Hal A. Huggins, DDS (Arlington House, 333 Post Road West, Westport, CT), \$12.95

Okay, so it's too late for you and me. Still, there's a chance for your kids, if you follow the recommendations in this book—or so the author claims. While most of the suggestions seem sensible and are backed up with evidence, they are also tinged with not a little of the medicine-man religion, which is a common failing of this kind of book.

There are two basic mistakes we can make as we approach health and medicine, both of which can be corrected by a proper view of Scripture. First, we can assume that anything man's technology comes up with is necessarily good. But the Bible tells us that man is fallen, and that what might appear to be "dominion" is really *abuse*. Second, however—and much more prevalent in certain circles—is the notion that the so-called "natural" way is best. The idea here is that any medical or scientific practice that isn't followed by a bunch of plate-lipped pagans running around in banana leaves is bad. Thus, I run into Christians who, *in principle*, are opposed to inoculations, processed sugar, synthetic vitamins, pasteurized milk, and so on. Superficial biblical support is claimed for all this, on the basis that "Jesus didn't.. ." (fill in the blanks). I once collided with a

"Christian witch" who, completely oblivious to the point of the passage, asserted that Jesus' picking grain on the Sabbath was a divine indication that it's wrong to cook vegetables!

But this is Baalism. While we must not side with technology *as a matter of principle*, we must not become nature-freaks *as a matter of principle*, either. Even in the Garden, man was commanded to use technology to improve his environment; now that "nature" is fallen, it is especially important that we not assume "nature's way" to be the best. *Both man and the environment are fallen*: therefore, we are forbidden to take our cues automatically from the recommendations of either the AMA or Chief M'Bongo-Bongo (although it is important to stress that medical science in the West, as a product of Christian civilization, has a considerable edge over savagery).

Dr. Huggins is not nearly as loony as are some of his fellow-writers in the field of health, and his book does have some good points. The main thesis of his study is that our facial structure, and teeth in particular, are shaped by our sleeping habits. Sleep on your face, and it begins to look as if you lost an argument with the Big Boys from Chi. If you're over 30 and your face resembles a bulldog's, forget it. A deathbed repentance can't save you. But this book is written for parents who want to raise beautiful kids, and it just might work—although it conjures up visions of worried moms anxiously setting their alarm clocks for 3 A. M. every night, just so they can wake up and check their children's sleeping position. But I suppose such a sacrifice is preferable to that of scraping up enough cash to send your child's orthodontist to Las Vegas for two weeks.

Huggins takes a while to divulge his conclusions, apparently feeling that we'd rather read blow-by-blow descriptions of every single conversation he's ever had with anyone about teeth. I suppose this is what passes for hot stuff with those who really get jazzed up on bicuspid literature. Huggins and I seem to run in different social groups. Be he does offer interesting tidbits on the way. For instance, guess what his solution is for bad breath after eating Mexican food? *Brush your tongue with Clorox!* (Even if it doesn't take care of your breath, it ought to cure those cravings for dining out at El Gordo Guacamole.) He also has a section on why cholesterol is good for you, which appeals to both my palate and my iconoclastic spirit; on the other hand, I choose to ignore—with relish—his warnings against cheddar cheese. What is my conclusion, then? Use the book—but use your head as well.

*Socialism: An Economic and Sociological Analysis*, by Ludwig von Mises (The Liberty Fund, 7440 North, Shadeland, Indianapolis, IN 46250), \$11.00 hardcover, \$5.00 softcover

The people at the Liberty Fund have done it again. They topped themselves with their beautiful reissue of Mises' *Theory of Money and Credit*, and now they've topped that with this stunning new edition of *Socialism*. By now, readers of this newsletter should be familiar with my high praise for the work of the Liberty Fund. No other publisher drives me to my thesaurus in search of superlatives as does this one—and by now I've just about run out. The Liberty Fund has always been characterized by excellence at every stage of the publishing process. The sheer artistry and craftsmanship of these volumes are so extraordinary that one is tempted to review them from an aesthetic standpoint alone. Their beauty and durability are surpassed only by the quality of their contents, and that is particularly true of this important republication of Mises' outstanding

analysis of socialism.

Ludwig von Mises was seemingly unable to write anything without producing a classic, and thus his books continue to be reprinted. First written in 1922, *Socialism* is one of his most significant works, more relevant today than when it was originally published. If you don't believe me, pick up the latest copy of virtually any evangelical magazine and see how the fallacies of crypto-Marxism are palmed off as biblical orthodoxy. When a major cultural outlet for millions of American Christians turns into a platform for the socialist message—what Mises called "a grandiose rationalization of petty resentments"—you ought to know we're in trouble. When a supposedly "moral" majority fails to recognize these odious excretions as apostasy, Mises' refutation of socialism is, sadly, too relevant.

Mises begins his work with a comparison of socialism with "liberalism" (in the older sense of the term, meaning "free-market society"). He then analyzes socialist "economics," demonstrating the impossibility of socialism ever being able to succeed. As we have noted in previous issues, socialism can't work. There is no such thing as a truly socialist state, nor can there ever be. The rulers of "socialist" countries are, as Clarence Carson has pointed out, "merely gangsters tied to Marxist ideology." The only reason socialists manage at all is because they are subsidized by the guilt-ridden West. Socialism is, in reality, one of the most *anti-social* theories ever devised—and it becomes even worse when it breaks out of theory into practice. It is institutionalized envy, which is why Mises suggested that a more accurate term would be *Destructionism*.

Mises goes on to discuss socialism's secular millennialism—the silly notion, held by socialists and non-socialists alike, that socialism is "inevitable"—and also its alleged ethical ideals (I recall hearing, as a young boy, a visiting preacher attempting to refute Communism with the specious and immoral argument that "Communist *goals* are good and Christian, but Communist *methods* are wrong"). Mises also deals with "Christian" socialism, observing that it is no less destructive than its atheistic counterparts. Unfortunately, the only "Christians" Mises was aware of were 19th-century versions of Ronald Sider. He failed to see the relationship of Christianity to biblical law; thus, he also failed to recognize that Christian civilization provides the only basis for "the free and prosperous commonwealth," a genuinely liberal economy under the rule of law. On the whole, however, this work is magnificent. Proverbs 13:22 is still true, and we who are based on biblical law can make better use of Mises' heritage than the secularists can.

But do you, as a Christian teacher or parent, really need to learn the lessons of this book? Or can you afford to leave such studies to the experts? Toward the close of the volume, Mises answers; and even if you're all stocked-up on dehydrated food, you'd better listen:

Everyone carries a part of society on his shoulders; no one is relieved of his share of responsibility by others. And no one can find a safe way out for himself if society is sweeping towards destruction. Therefore everyone, in his own interests, must thrust himself vigorously into the intellectual battle. None can stand aside with unconcern; the interests of everyone hang on the result. Whether he chooses or not, every man is drawn into the great historical struggle, the decisive battle into which our epoch has plunged us.

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