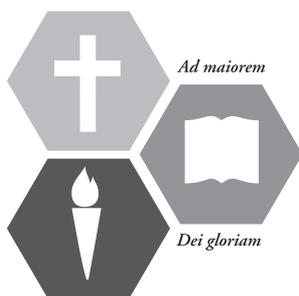


# *Christian Homeschooling Foundation & Practice*

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# Introduction

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## *The Value of Christian Schools*<sup>1</sup>

The Christian schools ought indeed to be welcomed even from the point of view of a merely secular broadening of the mind. They ought to be welcomed by every friend of real education simply because they tend to liberate our people from the dead hand of monopolistic state control which keeps education in a miserable rut and checks true intellectual advance. Even in their mere capacity as private schools they are worthy of all support.

But incomparably greater is their value as *Christian* schools. As Christian schools, they are like a precious salt amid our people, a precious salt that checks the ravages of decay; as Christian schools, too, they offer blessings with which all the blessings of this world are not worthy to be compared; they offer a liberty of which that lost civil liberty ... is but a by-product; they offer the liberty with which Christ has made us free.

One word more needs to be spoken. What has Christianity to do with education: What is there about Christianity which makes it necessary that there should be Christian schools?

Very little, some people say. Christianity, they say, is a life, a temper of soul, not a doctrine or a system of truth; it can provide its sweet aroma, therefore, for any system which secular education may provide; its function is merely to evaluate whatever may be presented to it by the school of thought dominant at any particular time.

This view of the Christian religion ... is radically false. Christianity is, indeed, a way of life; but it is a way of life founded upon a system of truth. That system of truth is of the most comprehensive kind; it clashes with opposing systems at a thousand points. The Christian life cannot be lived on the basis of anti-Christian thought. Hence the necessity of the Christian school.

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1. This selection is taken from J. Gresham Machen's *The Christian School: The Out-Flowering of Faith* (Grand Rapids, MI: National Union of Christian Schools, 1934).

In a book written by two radically skeptical writers, John Herman Randall and John Herman Randall, Jr., there is an interesting passage. “Evangelical orthodoxy,” say these skeptical writers, “thrives on ignorance and is undermined by education; Catholic orthodoxy is based on conviction, and has an imposing educational system of its own.”<sup>2</sup> Is that dictum of these brilliant skeptical writers true? I am bound to say that it may seem to have a certain sting of truth about it. When we contemplate a type of Protestant orthodoxy that is content to take forlorn little shreds of Christian truth and tag them here and there upon a fundamentally anti-Christian or non-Christian education, and when we contrast such a procedure with the great system of Roman Catholic schools and the serious, comprehensive effort which the Roman Catholic Church makes to inform and mould human life, we can well understand the contrast so humiliating to Protestantism, which the Randalls have so forcibly drawn. Yet the dictum is not true; and in proof of the fact that it is not true I point . . . to your Christian schools. You at least are seeking to oppose a Christian system to the system of this world; you at least are not making the huge mistake of trying to found the gold and silver and brass and iron of Christian theological seminaries or Christian colleges upon the clay feet of non-Christian schools; you at least are not appealing to ignorance, but you believe that real Christianity should have an educational system of its own. God grant that other Christian people may follow your example! You are the torchbearers of real advance for the whole Protestant Church. You have pointed out the way. God grant to others the grace to follow you! Thus and thus only will the darkness of ignorance be dispelled and the light of Christian truth be spread abroad in the land.

*J. Gresham Machen*

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2. John Herman Randall and John Herman Randall, Jr., *Religion and the Modern World*, 1929, p. 136.

# What is Christian Education?

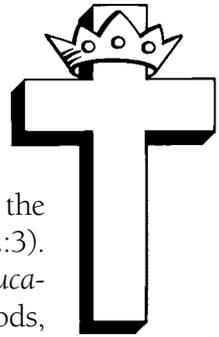
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by Eric D. Bristley

As Dr. D. James Kennedy avows, “Few Americans realize that, from 1620 when the Pilgrims landed until 1837, virtually all education in this country was private and Christian.”<sup>3</sup> In the light of this great heritage, we as parents should seek to recapture the vision of our God-given responsibility of bringing up our children “in the training and admonition of the Lord” (Ephesians 6:4). In so doing, we must embrace a biblical philosophy of education, provide a biblical curriculum that reflects the Christian worldview in each subject, and practice a biblical method of teaching that seeks to make disciples of Christ. Our ultimate goal as Christian home educators is to glorify God and enjoy Him forever.

## Biblical Foundation

Christian home educators should be committed to an educational philosophy which is not after the traditions of men, or the principles of this world, but after Christ, “in whom are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge” (Colossians 2:3). *Christian education means that Christ is central to education.* Consequently, our educational theory, methods, and practice must be built upon Christ as their cornerstone. But how can we know Christ apart from His Word which is the truth? The sacred Scriptures are the Word of Christ written. In them God has revealed Himself and His saving purpose in Christ. Because there is only one God and one Christ, there is only one truth. This truth is the center and criterion of Christian education.



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3. From the Foreword by Dr. D. James Kennedy to Christopher J. Klicka's *The Right Choice: The Incredible Failure of Public Education and the Rising Hope of Home Schooling* (Sisters, OR: Loyal Publishing, 1995), p. 6.

While the Bible is not used as the textbook in every subject, it is the foundational handbook for every course and the standard for teaching. As the foundational book, Scripture is the only infallible rule for faith and practice, for grammar and literature, for mathematics and science, for health and physical education, for geography and history, and for social studies and the arts. The beginning of wisdom is the fear of God.

## Biblical Principles

For education to be consistently Christian it must self-consciously teach all subjects in the framework of biblical authority. To accomplish this we must have a methodology that guarantees its biblical character; the proper methodology, therefore, is to use the Bible in each and every course both directly and indirectly. It is applied *directly* when we derive our understanding of each topic from the actual statements of the Bible and using the text of Scripture appropriately in each subject. It is applied *indirectly* as we work out the implications of biblical truth as the proper framework for understanding each subject.

These basic principles and fundamental truths are the teachings of Scripture. *Biblical doctrines must regulate the way we teach and learn.* One key goal of Christian education is to teach students to reason biblically. Because of this, the educational process must show how the doctrinal truths of God's Word provide students with the Christian worldview. This worldview is a unified system of principles that guides the way we educate. It requires that every thought be made captive to the obedience of Jesus Christ (2 Corinthians 10:5).

Christian home educators, who are committed to the Bible as the standard for education, should seek to interpret God's Word in line with the *authority* of biblical truth and the *faith* of historic Christianity. This authority and faith is outlined by the following biblical principles:

### ***The Sovereign Triune God***

The most fundamental teaching of the Bible is the sovereignty of the Triune God. This truth is foundational for all Christian teach-

ing. It alone separates Christian education from all forms of humanism and naturalism. Education which is truly and distinctly Christian must be dedicated to the glory of God above all else. Because the Creator is the sovereign God, He is Lord of Heaven and Earth, and He speaks with absolute authority about all things. There is nothing in this universe which can be truly learned apart from Him. He speaks as the Triune God. Unity in education is possible only on the basis of one God who is absolutely self-existent and independent of His creation. As the Trinity, He is the source of both unity and diversity in the world and in human life, for He exists as one God in three Persons.

### ***Creation in Six Days***

When God created all things in the universe *ex nihilo* (out of nothing) in six days, He created everything with meaning and purpose. Since all studies deal in one way or another with God's creation, all studies should be subordinate to God's revelation concerning His handiwork. The way to properly understand any subject is to study it in relation to its Creator. Because God created all things, there is nothing unknown to Him. Consequently, God's understanding—not man's—is first. All facts take their significance from the place God has assigned to them in creation. There are no uninterpreted facts which man can ever discover. Without God's revealed truth, these facts cannot be properly selected, systematized, and given a meaningful interpretation. Without the framework of a biblical worldview all education in science is futile.

### ***Man, the Image of God***

Because God created man in His own image, the ultimate purpose, meaning, and standards for human life and society come from God. Christian education must therefore reject all speculations of the evolutionary theory of human origins and rights. Man is a unique creature of God formed distinct from the animals. Endowed by his Creator with the gifts of religion, language, reason, choice, creativity, and society, man is like God in every way a creature can be. Created to serve and glorify God in the earth, Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden talked directly with God and

received from Him their original education. God taught man the truth about his role in the universe and his relationships with other people. God taught them that their most fundamental relationship is with Him as their Creator. Culture, society, and education are thus bound to religion. The student must be continually confronted with this pivotal truth about himself and society.

### ***Man's Fall into Sin***

The biblical record of the fall of Adam has serious and far-reaching implications for all of education. Because of the fall, man's entire nature as well as all of human society has been corrupted by sin. Not only is his heart hostile to God and His law, but his will is enslaved to corruption, and his mind is darkened by error. His whole nature has been corrupted by the evil influence of sin. Because of this, Christian education cannot start in a supposedly neutral fashion as though the child were an innocent person who simply needs the spark of goodness to be ignited within him.

Likewise, the human teacher is also corrupted by sin and does not always properly present God's truth. Because of sin's power, the teacher must acknowledge that he cannot change the heart of the student. Because sin has corrupted the whole of human thought and education throughout history, unbelieving scholarship can have a pervasive influence even upon those who seek to teach from a biblical worldview. The Christian teacher must grow in awareness of the influence of the sin that affects his thinking from his educational background and the society around him. Apart from abiding in Christ and His truth, he is liable to be made captive to ideas promoted by the various forms of the non-Christian worldview.

### ***Christ the Redeemer***

As a result of Adam's sin, God and man have become alienated. But God, in His grace, took the initiative to restore the relationship. After setting forth the requirements of redemption in the Old Testament, He fulfilled them in the New Testament in His Son, Jesus Christ. The Messiah came as the second Adam to undo the sin of the first Adam and its results. As the perfect Son of God, He became man and was crucified as the only Redeemer of

mankind. By His redemptive work, Christ restores believers to a right relationship with their Creator. This restoration involves education. As part of His mediatorial work, Christ has an educational program which involves teaching all the things He has commanded. Christ teaches His people as the Bible is read, taught, and applied. All Christian education must therefore be subject to Christ as God's final Prophet, Priest, and King.



Jesus Christ is the only way, truth, and life, also in education.

### ***The Holy Spirit and Salvation***

Jesus Christ sent the Holy Spirit to teach the truth. The Holy Spirit is the only One who can make Christian education effective. For the teacher, to impart wisdom is a gift of God. For the student's heart to be opened to God's truth, a change of heart is required. In the new birth, the Spirit opens the mind and frees the will to embrace Christ by faith. Without this new birth, the Bible will never be the ultimate authority over the student's reasoning. Faith is the proper response to biblical truth, the only means by which the heart submits to it. While Christian education can be used by the Holy Spirit to bring the student to saving faith and to benefit a student after he comes to faith, ideally its full effect comes to those who already believe. Without faith, Christian education is ineffectual. Thus, both the teacher and the student are dependent upon the Holy Spirit and His work of grace.

The Holy Spirit uses believers as a means of leading students to Christ, in Whom are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge. Christian parents have the unique opportunity and privilege to train up their children in the fear and admonition of Christ. By combining teaching with prayer, exhortation, and discipline, the parent can be used by God to disciple his children to Christ. Thus Christian education, while not to be reduced to evan-

gelism, will include the positive presentation of gospel truth as the answer to the ultimate questions in each subject. The gospel will be proclaimed as the answer to the student's deepest need for purpose, meaning, and goals in learning.

### ***The Kingdom of Christ and the Antithesis***

Because the Word of God is the only standard for education, Christian education is at odds with all pagan thought. Since it is part of Christ's program for building His kingdom, Christian education is engaged in spiritual and intellectual warfare with the kingdom of darkness. The fact of the new birth creates a distinction between two types of people—Christians and non-Christians. Christians are bringing every thought captive to the obedience of Christ and earnestly contending for the faith. The non-Christian, however, looks to man as the standard of all things, reasons according to the flesh, and calls his education neutral.

Because all education is inescapably religious, it can never take place in an ideological vacuum. Neutrality is impossible; for the educational worldview will either be Christian or non-Christian. Christ clearly taught, "He who is not with Me is against Me, and he who does not gather with Me scatters abroad" (Matthew 12:30). Therefore all non-Christian education is ultimately anti-Christian because it does not submit to the claims of Jesus Christ. Well-trained Christian students must be prepared to battle intellectually against the spirit of this age with an aggressive yet humble approach; therefore, Christian home educators seek to help train Christian warriors and leaders who will go forth in the power of the Holy Spirit to win decisive victories for the honor, glory, and kingdom of Christ.

### ***The Return of Christ***

Christian education is a part of God's purpose to put everything in creation under the feet of Christ. Christ is now reigning, but not everyone has bowed the knee to His authority. Not every area of life and thought has been made subject to Him. Christian education serves as part of His purpose to subdue people from all nations to the glory of God. He is calling out a people unto Him-

self who will learn His ways. Christian education is never an end in itself, but serves to magnify the glory of God. It should never lose sight of the fact that there is no final perfection in human life, society, or in education itself apart from the appearance of Jesus Christ. At His return, Christ will bring a conclusion to history through judgment of both the living and the dead.



## Biblical Worldview Curriculum

The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom, not only in our educational philosophy, but also for each discipline of study. Education is not made Christian by merely adding a course in Bible, or by beginning a class in prayer. If the course content or teaching method is humanistic, Christian supplements will do little to change the orientation. A Christian curriculum must derive its fundamental principles from God's Holy Word and work these out in a self-conscious manner. Christian home educators should seek to provide students with these principles as well as the content and skills which enable them to develop a biblical worldview in each subject. The following is an overview of such a curriculum.

### ***Biblical Studies***

Foundational to the Christian curriculum is the study of the Bible. Students need to be mastered by the Word of God before they can properly evaluate the writings of men. Bible study focuses the student's attention on the inspired text of the Bible as they are taught to understand and interpret it correctly. Its purpose is not the mere study of religion, nor even historical studies of Bible characters, but to arrive at a unified understanding of the biblical system of truth. It is this system of truth that provides the fundamental principles of a Christian worldview which must be applied to every area of life and thought.



To properly learn each subject, the student must not only be able to read, but he must also have the standard by which to judge what he reads. Therefore, the very first book a child should be taught is the Holy Bible. The Bible is the

mind of God revealed to man. From it we learn about the creation, the fall into sin, and God's gracious plan of redemption. It is this knowledge which provides the key to correct understanding and enables the student to correctly interpret all he learns in the light of God's truth.

### ***A Biblical View of Language and Literature***

In the beginning God spoke and it came to pass. The three Persons of the Trinity have spoken to each other eternally. When God created man in His own image, He gave him the gift of language. The Bible tells us that after the Great Flood, the whole earth used the same language. Men, however, sought unity apart from God when they built the Tower of Babel. Seeing this, God confused their one language by changing it into many languages, and scattered them abroad over the face of the whole earth. Language thus originated with God, and is to be used for His glory. Men in their sin misuse and corrupt this gift. To discern the proper use of language, we need to study the Bible. It is only from the Bible that we come to know truth and error.

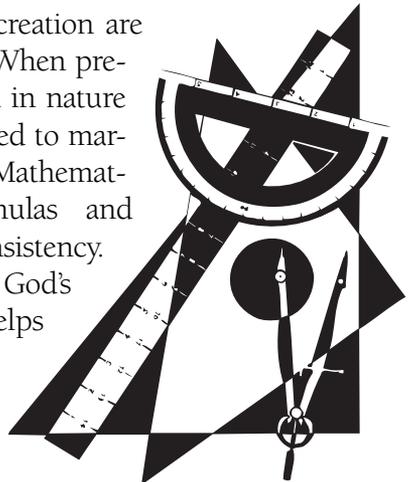
Reading and writing are foundational skills each child must learn. Without reading, they cannot study the Bible for themselves. Reading and writing are also basic to learning all other subjects in the light of God's Word. The teaching of phonics, therefore, is very important. If students cannot read the Bible, they will be truly illiterate. They must be taught to read, write, speak, study, and think in terms of the Word that makes language and life meaningful. They must develop the linguistic abilities that God has given them to glorify Himself. Language skills thus are not neutral, but must be oriented toward reading, writing, and speaking the truth in love.

Because language is thought expressed, and thoughts are never neutral, all literature has a religious point of view. Therefore, when reading *any* kind of literature, the question should be asked: Is the author Christian or non-Christian? If non-Christian, from what religious point of view is he writing? Most importantly, how does the author's message compare with what the Bible teaches? Students must learn to read and evaluate all human literature from the perspective of Scripture truth.

While it is important to acquaint students with the great literature which has helped shape Western Civilization, the study of such great books must be subject to the greatest book—the Bible. After learning the Bible properly, the student will be equipped to judge the words of human authors by the Word of truth. The student should learn to prize not only great classics, but distinguish Christian classics from the classics of unbelief. The great classics of the Christian heritage will inspire and challenge both teacher and student to follow Christ more completely.

### ***The Biblical View of Mathematics***

As Trinity, God is the reason why there is both unity and diversity in creation. This is the basis for unity and differentiation in mathematics. The Bible teaches us that the Creator is a God of order (1 Corinthians 14:33). As we study the created universe we are impressed with its mathematical order. Creation is governed by mathematical laws which reflect the character of the One who made it. Many of the laws of creation are described in terms of mathematics. When presented with the marvelous precision in nature and physics, the student should be led to marvel at God's mathematical ingenuity. Mathematical principles never vary; formulas and equations always exhibit flawless consistency. Consequently, as a tool for studying God's creative handiwork, mathematics helps uncover God's methods of creating. It is impossible for us to understand creation without God's gift of



mathematics, for we would not have the means of measuring His world. Mathematics is a tool to help men rule over the earth under God. All callings in life demand planning, calculating, and evaluating in order to carry out our God-given responsibilities. Mathematics plays an important role, whether it be in business, medicine, engineering, art, science, etc. Therefore, the Christian student should master this wonderful gift to advance Christ's kingdom on Earth.

### ***A Biblical View of Science***

Science is the study of God's creation. The facts of creation can be properly understood only by looking at them through the lens of Scripture. By studying science as God's creation the student learns to see God's awesome power, the beauty of His handiwork and design reflected in every creature. Because creation was brought into existence by God's wisdom, and man was created as a part of it, he is called to understand and subdue it for His glory. In Eden God assigned man his task of ruling over the animals and plants, and keeping the earth. Under God's authority, he is to cultivate, care for, and develop each aspect of the world for God's glory. Adam pursued scientific education when he learned to cultivate the soil, plant and dress the trees and vegetation, study the animals, and give each a special name that described them.

To rule over the earth as God commanded, the student must similarly acquire an organized and systematic scientific knowledge. By studying both God's physical laws and His creatures, students will learn to apply this knowledge in accordance with His holy will. As they grow in their knowledge and appreciation of each new discovery about God's world, they should acknowledge that Jehovah is the One who made it and learn to subdue and care for creation in the right way. To do this, the study of science must be subject to the Word of God. Creation must never be seen as something independent of its Creator, about which men can study without reference to Him. Otherwise the student may fall into the trap of the evolutionary worldview and "what is falsely called knowledge" (1 Timothy 6:20).

## ***A Biblical View of Health and Physical Education***

The purpose of health and physical education is to cultivate our bodies to the glory of God. The human body has been created by God, and as His creature the student must learn the importance of taking care of it. A healthy body enables one to diligently serve God and perform the duties He commands. Therefore, principles of proper diet, exercise, and rest should be taught for maintaining good health to the glory of God.

Physical education also helps prepare students for responsible leadership and effective work. Students should be taught to play and labor for God's glory—not our own. Due to sin, people are naturally inclined toward laziness. Consequently, physical exercise and sports, when combined with sanctification, can play an important part in developing self-discipline. Through competition students are taught the importance of playing by the rules, accepting direction from those in authority, using skills in harmony with others, and being gracious in victory as well as in defeat.

## ***A Biblical View of Geography***

For man to rule over the earth as God has commanded, he must have a practical knowledge of geography. The study of geography must begin with the Holy Bible. Here God reveals that the earth consists of separate but interrelated parts which form a unified whole. During the worldwide flood in the days of Noah, the surface and appearance of the earth was greatly changed. With this important knowledge, the student can properly study the great continents and oceans, their particular characteristics, their many natural resources, the variety of climates and weather patterns, and God's ingenious ecological balance over all the earth.

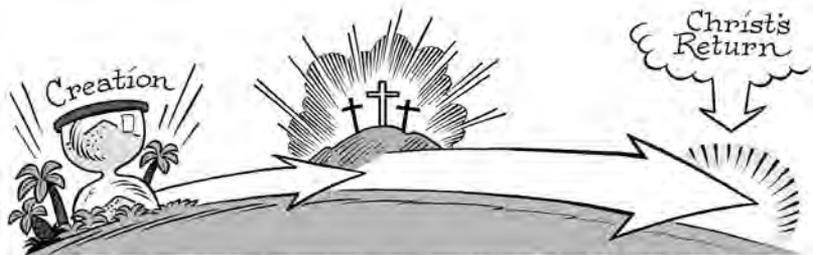
We also learn in Scripture the origin of the nations, how God divided mankind at the Tower of Babel. It was here that God confused man's language and laid the basis for the nations. The student is then able to properly study the geographical circumstances of the various nations, both ancient and modern. He studies their locations, their natural resources, physical environments, and general climates as planned by God. He learns how these physical

traits affect the nations' economies, their position in world trade, their military defense capabilities, and their independence of—or dependence upon—other nations. The study of geography plays an important role for Christian students as they learn about the worldwide advance of the kingdom of God, and how they may help promote Christian missions to every nation and land.

## ***A Biblical View of History***

The Bible clearly reveals that God is the Lord of history. He governs all nations and peoples by means of His providence. He acts indirectly and directly in history through blessings and judgments upon the earth (Deuteronomy 28). The prophecies recorded in Scripture, many of which have been fulfilled, demonstrate that history has not only been planned by God but proceeds according to His purpose. For this reason all history—ancient, medieval, and modern—must be seen as the sovereign rule of God over the affairs of men. All men and nations are accountable to Him. The lessons of history warn students that God's curse on unfaithfulness and His blessing on faithfulness will surely come to pass.

A proper understanding of history is built around the key events of creation, man's fall into sin, the cross of Christ, and the return of Christ. Creation sets the stage for history. With Adam's sin, history becomes a conflict between the children of light and the children of darkness. Because God's plan is to sum up all things in Christ (Ephesians 1:10), history has one purpose. Consequently its meaning and interpretation must be understood in terms of Christ. History is more than a chronicle of names, dates, places, and events. History is the study of the moral or covenantal relationship between God and man in time. Its focus centers on the redemptive work of Christ and how He is building His church. All earlier events must look forward to the cross. All later events must



be viewed as the hand of God directing history toward the final victory of the risen Christ at the end of the age.

History studies should focus on the unfolding of world history, with a special emphasis on the shaping of Western culture and its global influence by God's providence. The studies should also include the efforts of past Christians to apply God's Word to individual nations. Students should be equipped to study the vain attempts of apostate men to build the kingdom of man. Those who have attempted to destroy Christ and His Kingdom—in order to restore pagan ideas in the civil, ecclesiastical, and academic disciplines—will have their lives and works evaluated by the Bible. This comparison will help us as we work by God's grace to restore His Word to our lives, families, nations, and cultures in obedience to Genesis 1:26–28, as modified by Matthew 28:19–20. God's people must diligently work and “occupy,” as they advance His kingdom on earth through the gospel for His honor and glory.

### ***A Biblical View of Society***

Biblical sociology (social studies) begins with God, who exists in an eternal relationship between the Persons of the Trinity. Because the Bible stresses both God's unity and plurality as equally ultimate, we find that it does not place the human individual or the corporate society above each other. Thus Christianity has the only solution to the problems of humanism as it careens between individualism and collectivism.

In His infinite wisdom, God instituted the fundamental social relationship—the family—at creation. From this basic institution, all other social orders have developed according to His providence. He ordained the state, the church, and the family. Each social sphere is directly responsible to God and each has rights that must function within the sphere of authority given to it by Him. These coordinate rights and responsibilities have been clearly marked out in His Holy Law.

The Bible also provides social facts which should be taught. For example, the social structures of the Old Testament covenant community of Israel demonstrate God's purpose for each, and con-

trasts them with pagan society. A biblical presentation of the social order is needed to address effectively the current corruption of society. Biblical law provides the tools for analyzing the various social structures of different nations and peoples.

Having analyzed God's original order and the perversion of the order by apostate man, the student should be led to see God's provision for an alternate society. What sin has distorted in the social order established by God, He restores by His grace. Students should be instructed in how Christ and His redemption not only restore the relationship between God and man but, as a result, the social relationships between men, women, children, races, and nations. The Christian family and the Christian community—the church—should be presented as the alternate society in the midst of chaos.

### ***A Biblical View of Government***

The study of government (political science) and politics must be grounded in the Word of God. In studying civil law and government we need God's infallible standards in order to distinguish justice from injustice. Because civil government enacts laws, it is concerned with deciding right and wrong. Right and wrong, however, have to do with morality, and morality is religious. This means that civil government, by its very nature, is a religious institution.

The Old Testament reveals God's system of law for civil government. At Mount Sinai, through His prophet Moses, God gave to Israel an entire system of civil law and government. The passages following the Decalogue reveal a complete system of law with due process, a federal system of government with three branches at each level, and separation of powers with a system of checks and balances.



The student who learns this system has the proper criterion by which to analyze human governments of the past and present. By using God's perfect law as the standard, political orders can be analyzed as to their structure, laws, and policies. This knowledge will provide the student with understanding necessary for intelligent Christian voting and stimulate him to promote a responsible government regulated by God's Law.

### ***A Biblical View of Economics***

God is the possessor of the earth, the source of all wealth. He owns it, and gives it to whomever He wills. He also ordained laws to govern human economics. God has given men the right to own private property, the right to choose an occupation, the right to make a profit, and the right to decide how earnings should be spent. Yet because God owns all things, the student should be taught to exercise these rights as God's steward.

According to Scripture, it is not the duty of civil government to regulate the economy except as it regards the enforcement of God's law against stealing. God's Law affirms the right of private property and profit from labor. To exercise these God-given rights, Scripture provides guidelines for an economic system that glorifies God and shows charity toward the needs of others. Such an economic system is based upon hard work, competition, and the risks of the marketplace. These factors compel sellers to use their skills and economic resources more carefully, which produces a higher quality of goods and services at very reasonable prices. The proper role of civil government is to serve God as a referee, praising good and punishing evil in the marketplace in terms of God's Law.

Wealth is not just a result of economic shrewdness. Economic prosperity is possible only by God's blessing upon the lawful use of labor and profit. Productive harmony in the marketplace is possible only through the grace of God which enables men to obey His law in their hearts and minds. To the extent that men understand and obey God's Law in the economic realm—that is, when Christianity has a significant bearing on economic life—men will respect each other's property; refuse to steal from or cheat one another; abide by contracts; and, when in charge of a corporation

or elected to public office, they will not use their power to amass wealth for their own selfish ends.

### ***A Biblical View of Culture, Art, and Technology***

The arts and technology are gifts given to men by the Holy Spirit. When an artist paints a picture, a musician composes a song, an architect designs a building, or an engineer designs a machine, each is using his God-given talent. Every gift should be used to reflect the wisdom of its Creator and imitate the beauty and usefulness of His creative work. The humanistic worldview sees culture, art, and technology as existing only for self-expression, human enjoyment, and selfish vanity. The non-Christian uses culture as a way to revolt against God and glorify himself. He thinks that he can create out of nothing something totally original. When man creates, he is not creating something absolutely new, but merely discovering a potentiality which has existed from the beginning. Its proper use becomes a blessing from God for the benefit of men, while its misuse becomes a curse for the destruction of men.

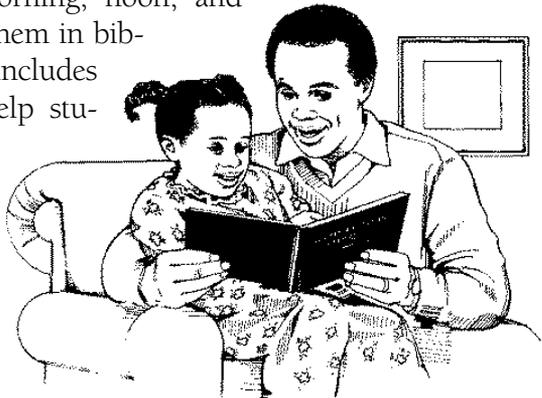
Because the arts and technology create works that express thought and emotion, they exert a moral influence on one's behavior. The arts and technology can be powerful forms of religious fellowship; *religious* because thoughts, emotions, and actions are always moral, and *fellowship* because of the sharing between artist and audience. For the Christian, this imposes a serious responsibility. It means we are not to enjoy art and technology which promotes thoughts, emotions, and behavior contrary to the Word of God. The Scripture says, "... what communion has light with darkness?" (2 Corinthians 6:14). Instead, the student should be taught to enjoy art and produce technology that reflects the glory of God's creation and ministers to others. The student is to develop his talents in harmony with God's truth and law. Furthermore, the Christian should use both the arts and technology, either directly or indirectly, to promote the Gospel of Jesus Christ and thereby promote a biblical understanding of God's world. In so doing, the student will learn how to employ his skills to advance the kingdom of God on earth for His honor and glory.

## Teaching Method: Making Disciples of Christ

Education is part of Christ's Great Commission to disciple the nations. The Bible tells parents that they have a moral responsibility before God to bring up their children in the discipline and instruction of the Lord (Ephesians 6:4). The word *discipline* means to train, and the word *instruct* means to teach. Education thus includes both instruction as well as discipline. Therefore, as teachers labor to nurture, instruct, and discipline students, their central task is to make disciples of Christ.

For a biblical curriculum to be profitable, it is necessary for the teacher to practice a biblical method of teaching. Both the mind and the will of the student need to be trained and brought into subjection to God's authority. The teacher should pray and work to the end that the student's reasoning will submit to God's authority. The mind needs to be trained to submit to Scripture, and to resist the temptation of leaning on one's own understanding. False ways of thinking need to be rebuked and the mind brought to humility before God. The student must become a fool that he might become wise (1 Corinthians 3: 18).

Not only should the student be taught to reason in a consistent, biblical, organized manner, but to exercise proper biblical discipline to reach the goal. By warning against unbelief, rebellion, and the spirit of this age, the teacher seeks to train the student to become a disciple of Christ. Parents should train their children morning, noon, and night, as they instruct them in biblical truth. Training includes regular discipline to help students stay on the right path and learn godly habits. Christian training should be the same at home, at school, at church, and



at play. In this way, the student learns that God's Word is to be believed and obeyed consistently, everywhere, and at all times. Otherwise, he will learn to be inconsistent in his behavior before God and man. In short, he will grow to be a hypocrite.

## The Goal of Christian Education

### *To Glorify and Enjoy God*

The purpose of Christian education is not primarily to meet human needs or develop human potential, but preeminently to labor to the greater glory of God, the honor of the name of Christ, and promote the development of His kingdom. In a word, the ultimate goal of Christian education is to glorify God and enjoy Him forever. It means that we are to serve Him in every area of life and calling. This takes place when the student learns to fear God and trust Christ so that he will think and act biblically. For this reason, true Christian education must be God-centered: *ad majorem Dei gloriam*—for the greater glory of God.

God created man for the joy of communion with Himself. Therefore, one's joy and fulfillment in life is not to be found in himself or in the world in which he lives, but in loving communion with his Creator. As students learn to glorify God and live for Christ, they will have true enjoyment in life. Without holiness there is no happiness. As the student grows in the knowledge of creation, and discovers the wonders that God has made, he should be taught to enjoy and praise the One who made it. Each new discovery should lead him to acknowledge that God has made us and all things. If education is to train the child for life, then the chief end of man must be constantly kept in view.

### *To Fear God and Trust in Christ*

The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom. To fear the Lord means to take what He says seriously. When education begins with the fear of God, it promotes respect for God's authority as expressed in His Word and Law as the foundation for learning. With reverential awe, the student will approach schoolwork seri-

ously, attempting to do his best. This is absolutely necessary for the student's proper attitude in education.

Since the fear of the Lord is necessary to glorify Him, and without faith it is impossible to please Him, the student needs to come to a saving faith in Christ before he can think and act biblically. The first American college, Harvard, established this standard: "Let every student be plainly instructed and earnestly pressed to consider well, what the main end of his life and studies is, to know God and Jesus Christ, which is eternal life, and therefore to lay Christ in the bottom, as the only foundation of all sound knowledge and learning. And seeing the Lord only gives wisdom, let every one seriously set himself to prayer in secret to seek it of Him." Christian teachers should, by their instruction, discipline, and godly example, pray that the Lord may be pleased to use their teaching as a means to effectually call students unto Christ.

### ***To Reason according to a Biblical Worldview***

In every area of study, Christian home educators should train their children to understand God's perspective and think His thoughts after Him. To do this, they must grow in their knowledge of the Word of God and learn the mind of Christ. They must learn to reason in terms of biblical truth, and develop a truly consistent biblical worldview. By godly instruction and precept, through the inculcation of scriptural wisdom, students are to develop their God-created minds unto Christian maturity. They must be taught how to rightly discern and judge all things in the light of Scripture. Christian education fails if it does not instill the pattern of thinking after God's words and logic.

If a student learns to think in terms of himself or the creature, his decisions regarding right and wrong, truth and error, reality and fantasy, will be humanistic or naturalistic. Without realizing it, he will be acting as his own god, determining for himself good and evil (Genesis 3:5).

### ***To Love and Serve God and Our Neighbor***

Knowledge for the sake of knowledge is useless and leads to intellectual arrogance, but *true knowledge must be used practically to*

*advance the Kingdom of God for His glory.* Christian education therefore uses knowledge to glorify God and minister to others. Biblical ethics demands that education must not be used as a means of self-glorification. Students should learn to obey and serve God more fully so that they may minister to others more effectively. Students must learn to walk in the truth, and through faith manifest the fruit of the Spirit in good works. Thus, after coming to faith in Christ and developing a biblical worldview, the development of strong godly character and a lifestyle of service is most necessary. In fact, godliness is necessary for a proper understanding of the truth.

To love and serve God is an empty lie if there is no heart to serve others. Christian education aims to train men and women who love God in both word and deed, and express this love in ministering to others. One's vocation must be seen as part of this moral responsibility. It is not merely the obtaining of a paycheck, but to serve God and our neighbor. This love includes loving what God loves, and hating what God hates. Loving others does not mean that we will embrace all faults and lies in others, but it does mean that we will love them by ministering Christ to them.

Biblical education is devoted also to the development of the student's spiritual, academic, and physical welfare. Each student has received talents, opportunities, and blessings from his Maker. Christian education seeks not merely to develop one's potential, but to assist the student to find his place, meaning, purpose, and responsibilities in the plan of God. Christian home educators seek to help prepare their students to fulfill God's calling for their lives, that they might labor to advance the kingdom of God on earth for His glory. Christian education can help determine God's call on their lives, and equip them with skills and knowledge by which they can glorify God effectively. As students better understand God's Word and how to apply it to God's world, they will be able to take dominion in their calling under Jesus Christ. Christian home educators are dedicated to train up their children in the way they should go, so that when they are old they will not depart from it (Proverbs 22:6).