

THE BIBLICAL THEORY OF CHRISTIAN EDUCATION



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“You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your might. And these words, which I command you today, shall be in your heart. And you shall teach them diligently to your children, and you shall talk about them when you are sitting in your home, and when you are walking by the wayside, and when you lie down, and when you get up. And you shall bind them as a sign upon your hand, and they shall be like frontlets between your eyes. And you shall write them upon the doorposts of your home, and on your city gates!”
-- Deuteronomy 6:4-9.

What is Christian Education? “The fear of the Lord is the beginning of knowledge.”(1) In the light of the Word of God - for “in Thy light shall we see light”(2) - we will here, in this paper, endeavor to discover the Divine Will on the subject of Christian Education.

In this paper, we shall briefly deal with:

- firstly, the definition of Christian Education - what it is;
- secondly, the goal of Christian Education - what it aims to do;
- thirdly, the subjects of Christian Education - who should be taught;
- fourthly, the teachers of Christian Education - who should do the teaching;
- and fifthly, the methods of Christian Education - how we should teach.

1. Firstly then, let us take a comprehensive look at the definition of Christian Education.

The word “education” is initially derived from the Latin *educare*, meaning “to educate” or “to train”. This Latin word in its turn is probably still more remotely derived from two other Latin words, *e* and *duco*. Taken together, these words mean: “I lead out of.”

“Education”, therefore, means a “leading out” - leading something out of a person. It is, for this reason, the process of encouraging the development of God-given inherent gifts and the knowledge -- which the Lord has given to each person, and especially to each child.

However, the word “education” is also often used today with an expanded meaning to cover the opposite process as well. For today, by “education” we not only mean what we draw out of someone. We also mean what we put into someone -- which latter process should really be called “inducation” or induction, or indoctrination.

Nevertheless here we will use the word education in the broad sense to cover both that which we take out of someone which God had previously put into them -- as well as that which we implant from God’s world into someone (something which was not in them before). So the word education, when taken thus, covers “inducation” as well -- namely that teaching process of encouraging the development of knowledge and virtues in a human being, by incorporating them into his personality from the outside-inwards.

Both of these aspects -- education and “inducation” -- were employed before the fall. Yet they were both rather more instinctive processes then, than they are now. That is to say, before the fall both education and “inducation” came more as a matter of course to Adam than they do to us now; and they were both more directly employed then, than they are now. For God was the direct and sole Educator before the fall, or at least while only the first human being existed. Whereas after the fall, God now also educates indirectly -- by means of a human teacher.

Man, before the fall, was still the image of God, and possessed perfect righteousness, holiness, dominion and knowledge.(3) However, this perfect righteousness, holiness, dominion and knowledge of man was subject to growth. For Adam was not destined to remain static. He was destined to acquire more and more knowledge and to grow in grace, even though he had never sinned. Yet Adam was nevertheless intact before the fall. And so, because of this intactness, it was easier for him to learn and to acquire knowledge then -- than it is for us now.

But after the fall, man changed and thereby became a totally depraved sinner. Consequently, it is precisely after the fall that education receives its full emphasis. So God's indirect education of man after the fall through the conscious and laborious efforts of one's fellow man, is in very sharp contrast to the direct educational work of God the Supreme Teacher before the fall when man learned things with great facility.

And yet, even though education is a universal requirement of all fallen men, and even though all human beings and hence all children must be trained in the way in which they should go so, that when they are old they will not depart therefrom(4) -- it must nevertheless be kept in mind that each man and hence each child is a special creation of God. For everyone has special gifts which must be educated or drawn out.

Each man's and each child's special gifts of God should therefore not be crushed under a stereotyped "educational juggernaut" which aims at the uniformification of all education. Think for example of the special gifts of artistic ability of Bezaleel and Aholiab,(5) which artistic gifts the other Israelites did not possess. Yet these gifts had to be drawn out of them, only after which they were able to serve God's covenant people with their talents.

So then, education and "induction" are related processes of respectively drawing things out of people and implanting things into people, and they are both addressed to the whole person, not to only part of the person concerned. More specifically, in the education of the young, they are addressed to the whole child to be educated. Indeed, it is the education of the child with which we are more specifically concerned in this paper.

Now this total approach to educate the whole person we derive from the Lord Christ's Great Commandment. That enjoins us: "You shall love the Lord thy God with all your heart, and all your mind, and all your soul; and you shalt love your neighbour as yourself."(6) This also commands that we must love God and our fellow man "with all your strength"(7) -- whereas we are elsewhere further commanded to love God "with all your might."(8)

Education involves every aspect of our being. That, of course, includes our bodies too. For "don't you know your bodies are the temple of the Holy Spirit?... Glorify therefore the Lord your God also in your body!"(9)

So we see that true education (and true "induction") means that we must: vertically love God with all our heart; horizontally love man [*i.e.* both our neighbour and our self as God's image] with all our heart; and totally love both God and man with all our heart and

all our mind and all our soul and all our strength and all our might and a;; our body - with all our being. To teach someone to love with his soul, demands religious education. To teach a person to love with his mind, demands an intellectual education (of which classic Methodism with its pietistic emphasis on the conversion of the soul alone knows nothing). To love God with all our body, requires physical education. And to love with all our might and with all our strength, demands a total education -- *mens sana in corpore sano*, a sane mind in a sane body; to which we may well add: *cum anima sana*, with a sound soul.

Christian Education, then, is this same process of education and “inducation” when pursued in accordance with the incarnated and the inscripturated Word of God. As opposed to ordinary education (which, apart from the influence of God’s common grace, is really not education at all, but is in fact rather seduction unto the devil) -- Christian Education may be defined as that humanitarian discipline which educts or extracts and develops those individual gifts given by God to each person; and which inducts or inculcates and develops those special graces, general virtues and general items of knowledge to be communicated from God to every person, in accordance with Jesus Christ as the incarnate Word of God and in consonance with Scripture as the written Word of God.

2. Now that we know what education is -- now that we have defined it -- we are in a position to take a look at the goal of Christian Education.

When God created our first parents, Adam and Eve, He gave them - and in them, also their descendants - a most glorious “inducational” and educational goal, namely: “Be fruitful and multiply and replenish the earth, and subdue it, and have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the fowl of the air and over every living thing that moveth upon the earth.”(10) And by persuading Adam and Eve both inwardly through His Holy Spirit(11) as well as outwardly through His Divine Word,(12) God instructed our first parents as to the goal of their lives.

Having created them with the ability to reach that goal, unloseable eternal life and unloseable eternal knowledge, God proceeded to educate them. He this went on to draw out from Adam and Eve the gifts which He had previously put into them -- and also to “inducate” them, alias to indoctrinate them by confronting them with the world and all its fullness outside of them and all around them. In this way, God started to put into them what He had previously put into the whole world outside of them.

Next, God took His pupil, man. As the Supreme Teacher, He got man started on his task of subjecting the earth and the sea and the sky -- by putting him into the Garden of Eden to dress and to keep it.(13)

Positively, God instructed man to till the ground. Negatively, He instructed man to refrain from the tree of knowledge of good and evil. As a patient Teacher, the Lord God brought every beast of the field and every fowl of the air He had formed -- to Adam, to

see what he would call them. And whatsoever Adam called every living creature, that was to be its name.(14)

The Supreme Teacher exhibited the variety of created things to His first human pupil. And the first human pupil then studied them. The pupil saw these things, and himself pronounced his own words about them - which words which were then heard and approved of by the Supreme Teacher. So here we have the first true teach-yourself method of education, and the first truly audio-visual means of education.

This then was the beginning of human education; but it was not the end. For man was destined to progress out of the Garden of Eden which was his starting point -- and to fill the entire earth.

Man was destined by education and “inducation” to increase in the knowledge of the Lord and of the Lord’s Earth -- and ultimately to subject the whole Earth, the whole Sea, and the whole Sky to God’s glory.(15) Man was destined to see to it that the Earth “shall be filled with the knowledge of the glory of the Lord as the waters cover the sea.”(16) This, then, was -- and still is -- the great goal of Christian Education.

But this great goal of increasing in the knowledge of God and of subjecting the Earth and the Sea and the Sky to God’s glory -- demands also a number of lesser goals, in order to achieve the great goal. And so the lesser and more immediate goals of Christian Education must be to acquire knowledge - specialized knowledge - of both the Earth and the Sea and the Sky, as well as of the God Who created and redeemed and sustains them all; to acquire knowledge of God and of all of God’s earthly creatures in all of God’s earthly creation.

So Christian Education demands instruction -- in religion [which teaches about the Creator (and Redeemer)]; in philosophy [which teaches about creation as a whole]; in mathematics (to teach us how to count God’s creatures); in natural sciences like physics and biology (to teach us to understand the properties of the things God has made). Christians are also to be instructed in history and geography; in language(s) including also reading and writing; in art; and in morality, *etc.* [each of which teach about one or more aspects of creation]. In short, very broad and comprehensive instruction should be given in every aspect of learning -- instruction in all of the main special sciences as lesser goals, in order to accomplish the great goal of subjecting all of God’s world to His glory.

Yet, as a result of the fall, man’s mind has now become darkened by sin(17).

Accordingly, it is now incapable of understanding God’s world correctly -- without the aid of God’s Word. So it is now necessary to hearken closely to the written Word of God. This is what Paul advised, in his advanced education of Timothy, where he told him: “You must continue in the things you have learned and have been assured of, knowing from whom you have learned them.... From a child, you have known the Holy Scriptures which are able to make you wise unto salvation through faith in Christ Jesus. All Scripture is God-breathed -- and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction (*i.e.* for indoctrination and induction and “inducation” and education) in

righteousness...so that the man of God may become perfected, thoroughly equipped unto all good works.”(18)

We are thus, thoroughly, to become equipped not merely unto some good works -- not just unto the wonderful work of saving souls, but “unto all good works.” Having become equipped thoroughly unto the good work of saving the soul, we must then thoroughly become equipped from the Holy Scriptures to save the body; and also to save the whole world with all its fullness and everything God put in it.

In one word, we must be educated to dominate God’s world to His glory. For that is what God created man to do originally, before the fall.

Scripture, therefore, has been breathed into by God -- so that the fallen yet redeemed man of God may be perfected. Scripture is given so that the man of God may be equipped thoroughly unto all good works, even as the man and woman of God were equipped thoroughly unto all good works in the state of rectitude. For they were equipped for their lofty and comprehensive goal of subjecting the whole Earth and the whole Sea and the whole Sky, “thoroughly equipped unto all good works” to the glory of God.

Therefore the goal of all Christian Education can only be to do all of these things according to our individual special gifts -- to be always abounding in the work of the Lord. Yes, even in our daily, ordinary, so-called secular work for the Lord. For our ordinary work that we do each day in our office or in our kitchen, is still work in the Lord’s world. It should therefore be done to His glory, “for as much as you know that your labour is not in vain in the Lord.”(19)

3. Now that we know what the goal of education is -- what we are trying to achieve with Christian Education -- we must next inquire who should be educated. Who then are the subjects of Christian Education?

The subjects of Christian Education, as opposed to the subjects of Non-Christian Education, are all persons brought inside and especially all children born inside the Covenant of Grace. And whereas, except for our very first forebears, all adults once started out their lives as children -- our analysis of the subjects of Christian Education should also start with the children. For we are born as children, before we grow up and become adults.

Now ever since the fall of man all people and all children, even Christian people and Christian children (that is, children born of Christian parents), are conceived in sin. They are “shapen in iniquity,” even before their birthd.(20) Indeed, they cannot see the Kingdom of God -- unless they are born again from above.(21)

This applies even to infants from Christian homes. However, these Christian children -- unlike Non-Christian children -- are sanctified from birth [and indeed even from conception(22)], on account of their being conceived and born inside the Covenant (23).

Children conceived and born of at least one Christian parent, are “holy” children. They are not “unclean”; as are the children of unbelievers -- according to God’s most Holy Word.(22)

We read that before the exodus “the Lord doth put a difference between the Egyptians and Israel.”(24) Indeed, God promised He would send the Angel of death over the land of Egypt Who would take the life of every first born child -- unless the blood of the Passover lamb was painted on the lintels of each home in which he or she resided.(25)

So God’s Word says that children born inside the Covenant of grace -- are holy, and are not unclean. Indeed, what God hath cleansed and made holy, let no man call unclean (26).

Nevertheless, it is still up to Christian parents to point to the blood of the lamb across the lintels of their home - as did the covenantal parents of old. Thus God will “put a difference” between our children and the children of the heathen, when God passes through the land and smites all of the first born and executes judgment “against all of the gods of the Egyptians.”(25) This divine threat was duly carried out -- in accordance with God’s most perfect punitive justice.

And yet, the Lord then spared His covenant people and their children. Why? Because they were not born in sin and iniquity? No! Only because the blood of the lamb was painted on the doorpost, and because they were born or living under covenantal privileges -- living under the blood of the lamb, sprinkled on the doorposts of their homes.(25)

So on the one hand we see that Christian children, the principal subjects of Christian Education, are to be regarded as sinners and “by nature children of wrath” -- as are all children.(27) For it is not possible that “a clean one come out of an unclean” one; no, not one.(28) But on the other hand, by virtue of God’s Covenant, Christian children -- unlike Non-Christian children - are also regarded by grace as saved sinners.(24).

If the (Christian) children were born of two unbelieving parents, the children would be unclean. But now, because those children have at least one believing parent, they are holy.(24)

“Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and you shalt be saved -- and your household!”(29) That is what the Lord says. Unless and until the contrary is clearly evidenced in the later lives of these covenant children -- they are to be regarded as saved by virtue of their covenantal position from birth; and, indeed, even from their very conception.

Now this **difference** which God puts between the believers and their children on the one hand and the unbelievers and their children on the other hand, is demonstrated visibly -- in holy baptism. For believers are commanded to: “Repent, and be baptized...for the remission of sins.” They are assured that they shall then “receive the gift of the Holy Ghost.” Indeed, God then further assured them that “the promise comes to you and to

your children, and to all that are afar off -- even as many as the Lord our God shall call.”(30)

This does not mean that the adult believer or his infant child becomes holy in baptism. No! To the contrary, both adult believers and their children are baptized because they already appear to be holy before their baptism. Indeed, it is for this reason alone that they are entitled to receive holy baptism.

Nor does this mean that baptized or unbaptized hypocrites who falsely claim to be believers and their so-called holy children necessarily get saved. Although this is of course the case -- if they are elect, and if they hence come to possess saving faith either then or later. Neither does this mean that unbaptized unbelievers and their children are necessarily permanently lost.

It is true that there is certainly no Scriptural basis at all for believing that either unbelievers or the children of unbelievers are automatically saved. For even all the infants of the unbelievers were drowned to death at the time of the flood, when only Noah and his children and their wives were saved and baptized inside the ark.(31) Certainly God is sovereign in His decree of reprobation. For “whom He wishes to, He hardens.”(32) Yet even in respect of those outside the Covenant, such as Job -- God “hath...mercy upon whom He wishes to have mercy.”(32)

However, the Scripture definitely supports the assumption that the children of believers, at least until they have reached an age of personal discretion, are to be regarded as truly saved -- simply because they are born in the covenant; even though some may later give convincing contrary evidence against their saved status, as in the sad case of Cain (33). Therefore, the whole matter rests in God’s gracious election and in the secret of rebirth and in conversion to the living God.

Yet the visible Covenant between God on the one hand and the believers and their children on the other is, of course, always the normal *locus vocandi* of His children -- that is, the normal place where God calls most of His predestinated elect. For even where He does not call them from inside the Church, He regularly brings them all into the Church -- after they have been called, and before they die.

And so, the children of believers in Christ are in an entirely different category to the children of unbelievers. Therefore also the unbaptized children of Baptist believers are holy, and should in our opinion accordingly receive holy baptism.(23) For all the children of all believers are born inside the covenant; whereas the children of unbelievers are not.

All the children of all believers are, therefore -- in our opinion -- entitled to receive the initiatory sacrament of the Covenant, holy baptism. But the children of unbelievers, are not. And this we feel is so, even in respect of a child of mixed parentage where the husband is an unbeliever and only the wife is a believer -- or the other way round. “For

the unbelieving husband is sanctified by the wife, and the unbelieving wife is sanctified by the husband. Otherwise your children would be unclean; but now, they are holy.”(24)

Now all this throws much light on the subjects of Christian Education. For such are both the actual and the intended recipients of Christian baptism -- viz. the believers and their children, and they alone, in contradistinction to unbelievers and their children. Indeed, what has been said of the education of Christian children -- also holds true of their further education through to their Christian youth, and then further into the maturity of their Christian adulthood.

The point of Christian Education, then, is that God puts a **difference** between the Egyptians and their children outside of the covenant and the Israelites and their children inside the covenant. This is a difference which stems all the way back to the fall of man. At that time, the Lord God addressed Himself to the devil and said that He would put enmity between the seed of the devil outside the covenant on the one hand -- and the seed of the woman inside the covenant on the other.

So God put enmity between the devil and the Saviour, and between the world and the Church. And now, if we are going to stand up and demand separated Christian schools for our separated Christian children in accordance with the separated position of our separated Christian churches -- we are going to earn the enmity of the children of darkness. They are going to accuse us of sinning against mankind, and of dividing humanity and of preaching religious intolerance. So let us expect enmity, and let us expect the hatred of the world. Because if they have hated our Lord -- they will not love us, His covenant children.

Now all that we have said here about the subjects of Christian Education, namely Christians and their Christian children and they alone, presupposes a holy alias a separated Christian School.

Such is to be for holy or separated Christian children -- as opposed to the inclusivistic system of education now practiced practically universally.

Even in the U.S.A, its State-controlled Non-Christian Schools do not know the true goal of education. They do not treat our precious covenant children primarily as the children of God which they are. They rather treat them primarily as the children of the nation. Or, worse still, as the children of the world!

4. Now that we know who should be educated in terms of Christian Education, our next question is: Who is to do this educating? Who is to conduct this kind of education -- this Christian Education? So, let us now turn to the teachers of Christian Education.

Of course, before the fall, when the goal of all education was clear and unquestioned -- when there were no Deweys and Pestalozzis and Herbert Spencers, and when it was clear

that the method and the goal of education was to do everything to the glory of God -- there was no problem at all. The Teacher of education was the Lord God omnipotent.

The Almighty Creator, God Himself, then taught His pupil man to dress and keep the Garden and to give names to the animals.(34) And man, while then still the unbroken image of God, reflected God's glory -- and taught his wife Eve.(35)

After the fall, both man and his wife taught their children.(36) Indeed, their educational work of teaching their children was later auxiliarily supplemented by the work of the Church; the school; and the State - and in that order of decreasing importance! Yet throughout the whole educational process, it is always God Who is the Supreme Teacher.(37) That is so even when He often teaches indirectly through human teachers; pre-eminently, through a child's parents. For it always remains the fear of the Lord which is the beginning of all true knowledge.(38)

Now the parents are the first and the most important teachers of Christian Education under God. They are irreplaceable, whatever Socialism may say to the contrary. For only Adam and Eve could have educated Cain, Abel and Seth -- because they were the only human beings around to do this at the time (36).

Even by the time of the exodus and thereafter, education was still largely a parental concern. For when covenantal children then and thereafter inquired as to the meaning of the Passover -- the father was to educate them as to its historical origin and religious meaning.(39) So too in the Mosaic law, parents were enjoined in respect of the divine statutes: "You shall teach them diligently to your children, and shall talk about them when you are sitting in your home and when you are walking by the wayside, and when you lie down, and when you get up."(40)

Later, even in the time of the Post-Davidic Kingdom, the parental educational task is again emphasized. "My son, hear the instruction of your father (not: hear the instruction of the State)! And do not forsake the law of your mother!"(41) "Hear, you children, the instruction of a father, and give attention to gain understanding! For I give you good doctrine. Do not forsake my law! For I was my father's son -- tender and only beloved in the sight of my mother. He taught me also, and said unto me: 'Let your heart retain my words! Keep my commandments, and live!'"(42)

Is this not wonderful, this Covenant Theology? - My son, listen to what I your father am telling you! I was taught this by my father, and I listened to him; and he to his father, and so on all the way back to the God of our fathers, the God of Abraham and of Isaac and of Jacob Who remains loyal and faithful unto a thousand generations! This is the kind of education we need to get back to in this twenty-first century: education as the primary responsibility of the father.

But this paternal duty and privilege of training one's children does not exclude the mother's duty. Thus Paul wrote to Timothy:(43) "I thank God...when I remember the

unfeigned faith that is in you, which dwelt first in your grandmother Lois and your mother Eunice -- and, I am persuaded, in you too.”

The Fifth Commandment enjoining that children honour their father and their mother,(44) also implies that the parents have done an honourable job in educating their children. Indeed, we are given the inspired New Testament comment on this Commandment -- where fathers are instructed in connection with their children to “bring them up in the nurture and the admonition of the Lord.”(45)

Now this parental duty on the Christian parents to give their children a Christian upbringing -- necessarily follows from the parents’ covenantal relationship to their own children. Too, in the baptism of their children, the Christian parents vowed to God in the presence of the Church of Jesus Christ to bring up their children in the nurture and the admonition of the Lord.

However, this baptism presupposes not only that the parents must themselves give their child a Christian Education. It implies that also the Church must do so. Because, after all, the child was baptized (or, if of Baptist parentage, at least dedicated) in the Church.

Now in the first family, after Adam and Eve had tried to educate their children Cain and Abel and Seth and all the others, a son was in due time born to Seth. “He called his name Enos. Then began men to call upon the Name of the Lord”(46) -- that is to say, human beings who had previously been calling upon the Name of the Lord in their family worship, now for the first time publicly and collectively began to call upon the Name of the Lord. For they then began to call upon the Lord’s Name -- as a Church, as a Congregation.

Furthermore, they then began to call upon the Name of the Lord -- and not just on the Name of God. That is to say, they now called upon the Name of the Lord, the Redeemer, *Jehovah* -- yes, *Jehovah-Jesus*.

Together with Genesis 3:15, this text Genesis 4:26 is the root of the Church of the Lord. It is the first mention in Scripture of the service of God in a circle larger than the family - - larger than the first family, the family of Adam and Eve. This text is, in fact, the first record of the public worship of God amongst the Sethites, the covenant people of God who lived before the flood.

Later, in Israel, the Church(47) stood under the leadership of the Levitical Priests. Still later, it was under the scrutiny of the Prophets and the Scribes and the Teachers such as Gamaliel.(48) And in New Testament times, the Lord gave to the Church “some Apostles and some Prophets and some Evangelists and some Pastors and Teachers for the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry.” This was “for the edifying - the building up - of the body of Christ, till we all come to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God.” Not just the Church Leaders must come to this knowledge. But all of us, and all of our children too.

Indeed, we are thus all to come “unto a perfected man -- unto the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ... Henceforth, we are no more to be children” - no more do be like untaught children.(49) This then is why we have leaders in the Church. Not to put Christians to sleep, but to educate people so that they be no more like children -- but so that they may come to the full stature of Jesus Christ by being educated into Christian maturity.

Now although the parents always remain the primary teachers of education, and although the Church has its educational tasks too, specialized covenantal schools were also started by the covenantal community both in Old Testament and in New Testament times. For example, companies of Prophets were trained at special Dchools from the days of Samuel onwards.(50) Too, the sons of the Prophets sat at the feet of their instructor Elisha.(51)

Such schools were located at Bethel, Jericho and Gilgal -- II Kings 4:3-5 & 4:38. And much later, when the Jews of Ephesus spoke evil anout the Christian way, the Apostle Paul separated his Christian Disciples from the synagogue -- “disputing daily in the School of Tyrannus.” That Christian School continued to meet each day for some two years.(52)

This then brings us to the School as a teacher of Christian Education. It is indeed sometimes maintained by some Christian Scholars, that the School is not an original Christian institution. They claim the idea of the School was borrowed by the early Christians from the ancient Greek Heathen -- just as Paul the Apostle took over the Ephesian School of Tyrannus to instruct the Christians after they had left the synagogue, as we saw above.

However, this view loses sight of the fact of the covenantal Schools of the Prophets -- from the time of Samuel onwards (to which we referred above). It also loses sight of the fact that the ancient Greek School, developing under God’s common grace, must have had some or other historical beginning somewhere in the remote past. Indeed, if it did not originate in Greece -- it must have been borrowed from somewhere else.

It may have been borrowed from the Israelitic Prophetic Schools. After all, they antedated the Greek Schools by some five hundred years. Or perhaps both Greek and Hebrew Schools went back to a common Pre-Israelitic root -- a covenantal School since the times of Seth and Noah.

Be that as it may. Schools are very ancient institutions. They are widely found in all kinds of societies, ranging from the Puberty School of savage society to the Public School of the modern State. And any resemblance between these two institutions, is hardly coincidental!

The important point, however, is that the School is not a creation ordinance -- as is marriage and the family. The point is, that the School’s officials must pay due regard to the teachings of the Christian Community (which is more ancient than the School) -- and even more particularly to the even more ancient and fundamental Covenantal Family.

So, although we grant that over against the Family and over against the Community (and the State and the Church), the School does possess a relative sphere-sovereignty in matters of practical administration -- the Christian School is nevertheless at all times dependent for its educational philosophy and curriculum upon the wishes and the *fiat* and the world outlook of the Christian Community and especially of the Christian Family. For, in the last analysis, the School remains the agent of the Christian Family and of the Christian Community, who employ the School to teach their Christian children a Christian world view according to the wishes of the Christian Parents and the Christian Community -- and not according to the wishes of a power opposed to the Christian viewpoint of the Christian Parents and the Christian Community, such as an apostate Christ-denying State. It is not for either a supposedly-neutral or an Antichristian State to dictate policy in the Christian School. It is for the Christian \parents and the Christian Community to dictate the policy of the Christian School.

All socialistic and communistic systems of totalitarian State control of Christian Schools -- are unbiblical. The most effective way to resist this, is to establish Christian Schools and Christian Parent Teacher Associations to liaise with them.

The present State Schools in most lands of the world, in spite of their erudition and financial resources, are fundamentally incapable of providing a truly Christian Education for Christian children -- because they differ from the Christian Community even on the most fundamental matters. They do not agree with the Christian Community as to what education is, or as to who the Christian community is trying to educate. For such State Schools do not recognize that Christian children are essentially different from the Heathen, the Jewish, the Mohammedan or the Atheistic children of the rest of the nation concerned.

Now all this brings us to consider the State as a teacher of Christian Education. Principally, the State as a law-enforcing body was instituted by God only after the Flood, when God delegated to man the divine right of punitive vengeance with the words: "Surely, your blood of your lives will I require; at the hand of every beast will I require it, and at the hand of man. At the hand of every man's brother, I will require the life of man. Whosoever sheds man's blood, by man (by the State as the God-ordained organized agent of man) shall man's blood be shed. For it is as His image that God made man."(53)

From this text, it is perfectly clear that the State's essential calling is to protect man against wild beasts and human murderers -- and to use force to attain this end. The State is God's Minister, empowered to raise tributes and dues and rates and taxes (54) for the purpose of preserving law and order.

However, when the States goes beyond this function -- as it is doing in practically every country of the world today -- when the State in addition raises taxes not merely for maintaining law and order but also for educational purposes, pension purposes, for regulating commerce or forcing people to attend its own State-controlled schools -- the

State is acting *ultra vires*. That is, it is going beyond its own God-given powers. Indeed, whenever the State tries to “statify” the Non-State areas of human society -- it threatens to get a stranglehold over those other areas of life (such as the Family and the Community and the Church).

In exceptional circumstances, namely where law and order (which the State must regulate) are being threatened by neglected and uneducated Non-Christian children and youths, or even by Christian youths as a result of the neglect of the Church and of the Christian Parents to educate their own children themselves -- which neglect had led to a problem of juvenile delinquency which is disturbing law and order -- the State may well have an exceptional and temporary duty to start its own State Schools. But even then, the State must always recognize the right of the law-abiding Community in general and the Christian Community in particular to establish and to maintain and to extend its own School Systems alongside those of the State.

The State always has a God-given duty to see to it that nothing treasonable or seditious, nothing which disturbs law and order, nothing contrary to public morality is being taught in any School in the land -- even in so-called Private Schools and also in Christian Schools. Cf. II Chronicles 17:7-9. But the Bible knows nothing of the State’s essential duty to promote education directly as an exclusively State-planned and State-controlled enterprise. This rôle which the State (at the expense of the Parents and of the Community) has permanently and illegally arrogated to itself today practically throughout the entire world, is quite unscriptural.

One can of course be thankful indeed for the strong Christian leadership of the government of a Christian State, when many of its citizens are indifferent to Christianity. This used to be the situation in South Africa - a situation almost unique in the modern world.

Thwarted by the unsympathetic policies of the State Schools controlled by a British conqueror government immediately after the defeat of the old Boer Republics at the beginning of the twentieth century -- the Christian Afrikaners rightly established their own Christian-National Schools. But during the next half-century, they regained control of the States -- so that the South African State from the nineteen-sixties onward required (at least on paper) that all of the education in all State Schools be Christian.

One should therefore be extremely grateful for the Christian influences in those Afrikaans Christian State Schools then operated by the government of the Republic of South Africa. There, Parent Teacher Associations functioned strongly. Too, separate Private Schools were also operative. Indeed, it was then up to the Christian Community to maintain and extend the Christian character of those South African Schools, whether State or Private.

But even in such a case, strictly speaking the Christian Community and not the Christian State should have operated those Schools. For when that school-controlling and necessarily coercive Christian State degenerated into a Non-Christian State, it became

very hard to promote quality Christian Education in the State Schools under the control of a new Non-Christian Government as its successor.

Worse still. Also the non-coercive Christian Community has degenerated. And in a highly degenerated Non-Christian society, where covenant children are forced to attend the State Schools and to associate with the children of unbelievers and to be taught by the Non-Christian teachers employed by an indifferent State which knows nothing at all about the true goal of education -- the situation becomes very serious indeed. Ultimately, there then comes a time, as in Daniel chapter one, where the curriculum of such State Schools is no longer helpful to the covenanted People of God.

Even though even such a Non-Christian State is still God's Minister, it does not realize this and it does not value the Word of God. So true education cannot possibly come into its own in such a situation.

The very position of such a State-controlled School, is then an infringement of the rights of the Christian Parents and the Christian Church and the Christian Community -- all of which to that extent cannot live out their baptismal vows (which the parents undertook and which the Church of Christ and the Christian Community undertook) to raise that baptized child in the fear and admonition of the Lord. And so the State School in that situation, is nothing less than a dire threat to the proper function of God's covenant of grace.

So then, whereas the State does have a subsidiary role in Christian Education, the real role of the teacher of such education should be played not by the State but by the Christian School and by the Christian Community and/ or the Christian Church. All of them are to do the bidding of and to act as the agent of the Christian Parent under the Triune God of Christianity Who is the Supreme Educator. For, in the words of the Prophet Isaiah to God's covenant people:(55) "All your children shall be taught by the Lord."

5. Now that we have established who should do the teaching -- we can finally refer to the methods of Christian Education.

What then are the methods which we should follow in Christian Education? Now this little word "method" is derived from the combination of two Greek words, *meta* (elided to *meth'*) and *hodos*, a road. These two words, when taken together as *meth'-hodos*, mean "with the road" -- or perhaps "on the road," to put it into better English.

So when you have a good method, you are "on the road." Then you know what you are going from, and you know what you are going toward. Then you know whose child and what kind of a child you are dealing with in education. Then you know what you are trying to do with the child - not primarily to try to make him a faithful citizen of the State,

but primarily to build him up as a citizen of the Kingdom of God (which does not, of course, ever exclude his being trained unto loyal national citizenship).

That then, is what a “method” is. The Christian educational method implies that the “road” taken by Christian Education leads from a fixed point of departure. That latter is the Christian child, by virtue of his covenantal birthright, throughout his earthly life towards a fixed goal (*viz.*, the heavenly Jerusalem). Then, indeed, not even all the devils of hell are going to stop that child from getting there.

We have seen above that the earthly point of departure in Christian Education is the child of Christian Parents, and the earthly goal of Christian Education is to perfect and to thoroughly furnish the man of God unto the good works of subjecting the earth and all its fullness to the glory of God. It necessarily follows that the only educational methods which are Christian, are those methods which attempt to map out the road to be taken by a Christian child on his way through maturity to the goal of doing everything to the glory of the Lord God of the covenant. So we do and must have specifically Christian educational methods.

But even so, what methods should we adopt? Well, this obviously depends on who has control of the child. From birth until the child of the Covenant goes to his Christian school, his education will be undertaken almost exclusively by the Christian parents. They are free under God to adopt their own educational methods, as long as they bear in mind that their child is a child of the Lord and must, therefore, be educated towards the goal of living in everything to the glory of the Lord of the child.

So we see that whether the Christian child eats or drinks or does anything, he is to do it all to the glory of God.(56) . So when the child eats or drinks he must be educated methodically to do all this to the glory of God -- and he will accordingly be taught to render thanks to God especially at meal-times.

In addition, daily family worship with his parents will make the covenant child as conscious of his childship of his heavenly Father as he is conscious of his childship of his earthly father. And as the parents answer all their child’s questions by methodically relating them to the Creator, Sustainer, Redeemer and Perfector of all things -- the child grows in the grace and knowledge of the Lord, and he will be brought up “in the nurture and admonition of the Lord.”(45)

Now concurrently with this process at home, the parents will, of course, methodically take their child to the house of the Lord each week, to its **Sunday Schools** and also particularly to its regular **Divine Worship Services**. And when during those regular Divine Services the child sees an infant or an adult being baptized and asks why, the parent will explain that he himself was also baptized in the Church, and, unlike the less fortunate children outside of the covenant, he has a right to be called a child of God.

This should make the child conscious of his missionary calling to other little children and to adults in the neighbourhood [*cf.* the case of Naaman’s little maid who witnessed to

him(57)]. It should also make the child conscious of the unbaptized masses, even the unbaptized children and adults outside of the covenant in the regions beyond. And so regular missionary giving can be stimulated out of the child's own pocket money.

The child should also be given a Bible as soon as he can hold it and before he can even read it. And he should be taught methodically to read the Bible: not only a children's Bible, but the whole Bible, the true Word of God, unadulterated, not watered down. He should be taught to read God's Word daily and to take his Bible with him to Church.

When the child is old enough to go to an elementary school, he should be sent to attend the Christian School, and not an indifferent Covenant-breaking school. He should attend the Christian School, the School of the Covenant, where born-again and dedicated Christian teachers will [on behalf of and answerable to the Christian parents who undertook the vow of giving their child a Christian education at the time of his baptism] teach the Christian child more about his relationship to God, his relationship to himself, his relationship to his fellow-children of God, and his relationship to God's Earth and all its fullness.

More specifically, the teaching methods followed in the Christian School will bear in mind:

A) That the child to be taught was shapen in iniquity and conceived in sin. Hence, he is by nature inclined to hate God and his neighbors, including his little neighbors and even his little covenantal neighbors.

B) That the child to be taught is also a covenant child, a son of the Second Adam Jesus Christ, and is to be regarded as born again and therefore as belonging to the Lord. Because this is so, the child will be encouraged to love God as his Father by virtue of his covenantal status. Conversion should normally be a natural process rather than the dynamic crisis it usually is in the case of adult believers.

Yet "the wind blows wherever it wishes, and you hear its sound but cannot tell where it comes from and whither it is going: so is every one (even every infant) that is born of the Spirit."(58) For this reason, the teacher will always bear in mind that the child -- though to be regarded as elect by virtue of his covenantal status -- may possibly not yet be born again, and probably not yet be converted.

Hence the teacher will have to know how to lead the child to Jesus. But this knowledge, of course, will not be confined to only one method. Indeed, it will certainly not be restricted to the covenant-rejecting method of traditional Methodism, which treats the child of the covenant like an unsaved heathen child and which dramatically tries to save the child of the covenant from the flames of hell in typical Youth-for-Christ style.

No! Rather should the child, when aroused by the Spirit of God by whatsoever one of the scores of methods He may sovereignly choose to employ, be referred back to his own baptism by the teacher. On that basis, the child should be led to render thanks unto the

God of his baptism for making him conscious of its meaning and of the eternal love of the One in Whose name he had been baptized.(59)

C) The third point to be remembered in the methods of the Christian school and of the Christian Junior Sunday School, is the most important fact that each child is a special creation of God. Consequently, each child is entitled to special treatment.

A special method should be followed in dealing with each little child. For each little child is a special creation and the product of a special family. So, if child A shows a talent for music in the School, whereas child B shows a talent for mathematics -- child A is not to be discouraged from developing his musical talent for the present, just in the interests of class uniformity in a situation where the majority in the class are more interested in mathematics than in music; or worse still, because of a rigid curriculum. This stunts the child and denies the timeous development of the gift which God has given him. However difficult the application of this individual approach may be in practice, it should still always be attempted in the Christian School.

Again, if God has given a child the gift of lefthandedness, this child should not be forced to use his right hand. Lefthandedness, just like righthandedness, is a valuable gift of God.(60) And to combat this is not only psychologically unwise, but it is also an insult to the Giver of every good gift, including the gift of lefthandedness.(61)

D) Fourthly, some general methods and standards must, of course, be maintained. And so school children are best graded according to age, ability and interest. But this is merely a good method. It is not an end. For the end is not to be promoted to the next class at the end of the year. Indeed, the end is ultimately not even to matriculate. All these short term aims should only be regarded as means to the sole end -- of glorifying God every moment.

E) Christian school methods will attempt a total educational approach in that the whole child is to be educated religiously, morally, intellectually, manually and physically. Here too, due respect must be paid both to the individual gifts and to the individual limitations of each child, as well as to the maintenance of general class standards. The Christian teacher's love of each of the Lord's children entrusted to her care -- will go very far indeed in harmonizing all these requirements.

F) Because the teacher will not only be educating the child, but also "inducating" him, she will judiciously employ all the basic forms of educational methodology. Such will include: the giving of information; exhibiting things; memory work; self-discovery -- whichever best suits the individual child and the purposes of the moment. But again, the teacher will not forget that these are all only methods towards the one educational goal -- the glory of God.

G) Discipline will be administered in Christian schools as one of the several methods of education.(62) The modern Non-Christian trends of cruelty on the one hand and of

spineless pacifism and appeasement of the child on the other hand, will not be tolerated in the Christian School.

What has just been said about the educational methods of the Christian Home and the Christian School -- applies *mutatis mutandis* equally in the various other spheres of Christian Colleges, the Christian University, the Christian Business, the Christian State, the Christian Community and the Christian Country. Naturally, one should make due allowance for the differences in the internal functioning of these several spheres. But above all, whether at Home, or at School, or after leaving School in mature life -- Christian Education will never confuse all its various methods with its one unchanging goal. And that goal is to train Christians to eat and to drink and to do everything to the glory of the one and only Triune Lord God.

Summarizing, we have defined Christian Education as the science of extracting individual gifts from and inculcating general virtues into pupils in accordance with the commands of the Word of God made flesh in the Word of God made book. The goal of Christian Education was seen to be man's conscious subjection of the entire Earth to God's glory, and its subjects were seen to be only Christian believers and especially their children. The Teacher of Christian education is always God, now operating preeminently through the Parents but also through the Covenant Community and/or through the Church and the School and the State -- and in that order of decreasing importance. Whereas the methods of Christian education were found to vary from family worship and saying grace at the table and Bible reading and Sunday School and Church attendance, to methods employed in the Christian School such as the principles of grading and individuality and discipline against the background of the universality of sin and the reality of the covenant of grace - yet always mindful of the fact that all methods are but means to the sole end of glorifying God.

This then is the Biblical theory of Christian Education. There is only one really permanent educational answer to the humanistic, socialistic and communistic schools of our age. That is the free Christian School. Will you help us build it? "How long do you keep halting between two opinions?"(63)

"Let us rise up and build! ... The God of heaven, He will prosper us. Therefore we, as His servants, will arise and build."(64) For "as for me and my house, we will serve the Lord."(65)

REFERENCES

- (1) Proverbs 1:7.
- (2) Psalm 36:9.
- (3) Colossians 3:10; Ephesians 4:24; Genesis 1:26-28.
- (4) Proverbs 22:6.
- (5) Exodus 31:2-6.
- (6) Matthew 22:37.
- (7) Luke 10:27.
- (8) Deuteronomy 6:5.
- (9) I Corinthians 6:19-20.
- (10) Gen. 1:28.
- (11) Gen. 2:7, 19-20, cf. Job 32:8 and Prov. 2:6.
- (12) Gen. 1:29.
- (13) Gen. 2:15.
- (14) Gen.2:19.
- (15) Gen. 1:28; 9:1-7; Ps. 8; I Cor. 15:20-28; Heb. 2:5-10; 4:1-11; Revelation 14:13.
- (16) Habakkuk 2:14.
- (17) Gen. 1:2-3; 1:26-30; 2:7,16-18; Job 26:13; 32:8; 33:4-6; 34:14; Ps. 33:4-9; 104:7,30-32; John 1:1-18; II Cor. 4:6; Eph. 4:18; Heb. 11:1-3; I John 5:6-8.
- (18) II Timothy 3:14-17.
- (19) I Cor. 10:26,31, 15:45 and 58.
- (20) Ps. 51:5; Rom. 5:12f; Job 14:1-4.
- (21) John 1:9-13; 3:3-8.
- (22) Jer. 1:5; Luke 1:15; I Cor. 7:14; Galatians 1:15.
- (23) Gen. 17:9-14; Col. 2:8-13; Acts 2:37-39.
- (24) I Cor.7:14 cf. Exodus 11:7. See too: *Heidelberg Catechism* QQ. 72-74; *Belgic Confession* art. 34; *Decrees of Dordt* I:17; and *Westminster Confession of Faith* 10:3.
- (25) Ex. 12:12,21-26 cf. I Cor. 5:7 and *Westminster Larger Catechism* QQ. 31 & 68.
- (26) Cf. Acts 10:15.
- (27) Eph.2:3.
- (28) Job 14:1-4; 15:14; 25:4.
- (29) Acts 16:31.
- (30) Acts 2:38-39. Cf. n. 25 *supra*, and *Westmin. Conf.* 27:4.
- (31) I Peter 3:18-21 cf. Gen. 6:18 & 17:14; Luke 17:29,32 cf. Gen. chs. 18 to 19; Num.14:18,29,33; 16:27-33 & 26:9-11 *etc.*
- (32) Romans 9:18.
- (33) Gen. 3:15 4:2-19,25; 6:1-7; Matt. 23:33-35; 24:9-10; John 15:18-21; I John 3:11-13; Jude 5 and 11.
- (34) Gen. 2:15-20.
- (35) I Tim. 2:11-14.
- (36) Gen. 4.
- (37) Jer. 31:34 and 32:33.
- (38) Prov. 1:7.
- (39) Ex. 12:26f.
- (40) Deut. 6:7.
- (41) Prov. 1:8.

- (42) Prov. 4:1-4 *cf.* Pss. 78:1-7 & 105:4-10.
- (43) II Tim. 1:2-5.
- (44) Ex. 20:12.
- (45) Eph.6:4 *cf.* John 21:15*f* & Gen. 3:14-21 & 4:1-4 & 5:1-4..
- (46) Gen. 4:25-26 *cf.* 3:14-21 & 4:1-4 & Heb. 11:4
- (47) Acts 7:38.
- (48) Acts 5:34.
- (49) Eph. 4:11-14.
- (50) I Sam. 10:10.
- (51) II Kings 4:38 and 6:1*f*.
- (52) Acts 19:1, 8-10.
- (53) Gen. 9:5-6.
- (54) Rom. 13:7.
- (55) Isaiah 54:13.
- (56) I Cor. 10:31.
- (57) II Kgs. 5:2-3.
- (58) John 3:8.
- (59) *Cf.* Gen. 17:8-14; Deut. 6; Col. 2:9-14; Rom. 6:1-4; Acts 2:38-39.
- (60) Judges 3:15-25.
- (61) James 1:17, *cf.* n. 60.
- (62) Heb. 12:5-13.
- (63) I Kgs. 18:21.
- (64) Neh. 2:18 and 20.
- (65) Joshua 24:15.