The Importance of Christian Education

(Though I wrote this article several years ago and quoted some leaders of that day, the message is unchangeable. For this reason, it is submitted for your consideration.)

Sometime ago I wrote an article entitled "God's Thoughts and Man's Thought" which appeared in The Abundant Life. In the article reference was made to the influence of the religion of humanism which is being propagated in the public (state) schools. At this time our desire is to bring to light why enlightened Christians cannot, in all good conscience, sacrifice the children which God has given to them on the altar of secular humanism.

First, let us see that each child born is really a gift from the Lord. Note the familiar passage in Psalm 127:3, "Lo, children are an heritage of the Lord: and the fruit of the womb is his reward." The psalmist goes on to declare that the man who has many children is well equipped in life as the soldier with a full quiver of arrows. This man is happy. However, the point is that the children are a gift (the Lord's heritage) to the parents. This Jacob confessed to his brother Esau: "And he (Esau) lifted up his eyes, and saw the women and the children; and said, who are those with thee? And he (Jacob) said, The children which God hat graciously given thy servant" (Gen. 33:5). Note that the children were given graciously by God. For parents to consider their children other than God's gracious gift is a sin. For parents to raise the gracious gift of God contrary to the Scriptures is also a sin.

Second, parents are to raise the children according to God's standards. Ephesians 6:4 tells us that God has commanded the father as the head and leader of the home to make sure that the children are educated after the precepts of the Lord: "And, ye fathers, provoke not your children to wrath; but bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord." If this is not done the father must carry the major part of the blame as the leader and head of the family.

For those who might argue that education is not included in this passage, I draw your attention to the words "nurture" and "admonition." The word "admonition," according to R. C. Trench in Synonyms of the New Testament, p. 107, "is the training by word by the word of encouragement, when this is sufficient, but also by that of remonstrance, of reproof, of blame, where these may be required; as set over against the training by act and by discipline which is paidei,a" (nurture). Trench went on to say that though admonition is the milder term, "yet its association with paidei,a (nurture) teaches us" that admonition "is a most needful element of Christian education," and that nurture without admonition would be very incomplete.

The word "nurture," which is the stronger word of the two, without question refers to education in every area of life. J. H. Thayer in the Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament gave the meaning of "nurture" as follows: "the whole training and education of children (which relates to the cultivation of mind and morals, and employs for this purpose now commands and admonitions, now reproof and punishment)." Thayer went on to say that "in Greek writing from Aeschylus (525-456 B.C.) on, it includes also the care and training of the body." It is the word translated as "chastise" as found in Hebrew 12:5, 7, 8, 11, and "instruction" in II Timothy 3:16. In Kittel's Theological Dictionary of the New Testament, Volume 5, p. 596, it is stated that this word "denotes the upbringing and handling of the child which is growing up to maturity and which thus needs direction, teaching, instruction and a certain measure of compulsion in the form
of discipline or even chastisement. Paideia, (the Greek word) is both the way of education and cultivation which has to be traversed and also the goal which is to be attained." Then in a footnote it is given – "In every age paideia implies for the Greeks a process of growth, and there is always a relation between the words for education and nourishment, originally almost identical in meaning." The article extends for 30 pages showing the history and use of the word in the realm of education. Time will not allow us to study this in such detail. However, a brief survey of the verb form of this word, which carries the same meaning, will give us enough proof to show that the education of children in every area of life is taught in Ephesians 6:4. In Luke 23:16, 22, the word is translated "chastise," and refers to the scourging of Christ. In Acts 7:22, the word is translated "learned." Here it shows the education which Moses received at the hands of Egypt: "And Moses was learned in all the wisdom of the Egyptians, and was mighty in words and in deeds." In Acts 22:3, where it is translated "taught," Paul states that he was "brought up in this city (Jerusalem) at the feet of Gamaliel, and taught according to the perfect manner of the law of the fathers ...." See Hebrews 12:6, 7, 10, where it is translated "chasten." Much, much more could be given but this is sufficient for any individual to substantiate that fathers are to provide godly education to their children in every area of life.

Fathers, what kind of education are you providing for the "heritage of the Lord" which "God has graciously given" to you? If you have not considered this before, then, in all love, I beseech you to prayerfully become involved in the godly education of the children which God has entrusted to you. Remember that you shall have to give an account of this stewardship also. (See Luke 12:47-48.)

However, the mothers too have a part in the education of their children. In I Timothy 2:11-15, I believe that God's Word teaches the importance of the role of the mother. The passage is a troublesome passage to many, and verse 15 has many different interpretations. Yet, let us consider the passage.

Paul stated in I Timothy 3:15, that he was instructing Timothy concerning how the ministry of the church should be carried out. In I Timothy 2:11-14, God's Word states that the woman is not to teach nor to usurp authority over the man. The reason for this is because, first, the woman was created after the man, and, second, the woman is easily deceived. Then Paul states in verse 15 that if the woman wants to be saved or delivered from silence she is to raise her children so that "they continue in faith and charity and holiness with sobriety." They cannot do this if she does not teach them around the house by precept and example. (Note the importance here of the woman being a keeper at home according to Titus 2:5.) The mother gets to speak loud and clear in the lives of her children. No wonder that Proverbs 31:28 says of the virtuous woman, "Her children arise up and call her blessed; her husband also, and he praiseth her."

Mothers, when is the last time your children stood up when you walked in the room and blessed you? When is the last time your husband praised you? How have your children continued in their lives? Should you remain silent?

Let us also briefly look at Titus 2:3-5 in this light. Here it tells the older women to be "teachers of good things." God's Word lists several things for the older women to teach the younger
women. This is to be done in order that "the Word of God be not blasphemed." Since this is not being generally done in the day in which we live, the Word of God is being blasphemed.

Mothers, especially the older ones, please keep the roles given to you by our Lord and teach these things by precept and example to the younger women. I am thankful to see many younger women striving to fit this pattern. May God bless others.

These two passages should be sufficient to show that the instruction of children does not fall on the shoulders of the fathers alone. No, the mothers are also responsible. However, due to the role of the father as head and leader, he is to take the lead and over-all supervision in the education of his children.

Third, we need to see what the center of Christian education is. Christian education is not a morning chapel service along with prayer and teaching certain Bible facts. It must have a far more substantial foundation than this. There are many schools under the guise of Christian schools but are nothing more than humanistic schools sprinkled with chapel, devotions, and prayer.

Christian education must be founded upon the bedrock of God's Word. Ecclesiastes 12:13-14 gives the foundation for Christian education: "Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter: Fear God, and keep His commandments: for this is the whole duty of man. For God shall bring every work into judgment, with every secret thing, whether it be good, or whether it be evil." Note that God's Word states that "the whole duty of man" is to "fear God, and keep His commandments." This is in every area of life, not just in worship on Sunday, nor on Wednesday night. Every child must be taught that he is responsible to God and that ultimately he must give an account to God "whether it be good, or whether it be evil." Every subject taught, every method used, and every vocation desired must fall under the dominion to "fear God, and keep His commandments."

The government would have us to believe that man was created for "life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness." This is not true. God says that man was created for His glory: "Thou art worthy, O Lord, to receive glory and honour and power: for Thou hast created all things, and for Thy pleasure they are and were created" (Revelation 4:11). See also Colossians 1:16. Therefore, the children are to be taught that they were created for the glory and pleasure of God and not for their own glory and "pursuit of happiness." Besides, true liberty is not doing what one desires, but doing what God commands in the Scriptures. From these passages alone (and many more could be supplied) it can readily be seen that to teach anything contrary to the truth of God is not of God. It is self-evident that the state schools teach contrary to God and Christ. In fact, the state schools are antichrist. This is because the foundation and the superstructure of the state educational system is in antithesis to that of God's Word. It was established earlier that the parents are to educate the children only "in the nurture (discipline) and admonition of the Lord." Since the state schools teach contrary to the Word of God we cannot, we must not, allow the "heritage of the Lord" to be subjected to the teaching of the devil. When the assertion is made that the state schools are antichrist, we do not mean that each and every person associated with the state schools are antichrist. The charge is made against the system. That some teachers and administrators are Christian is not denied. However, it is believed that they are working in a
system which produces what R. J. Rushdoony calls "intellectual schizophrenia," that is, it is a house divided.

Now I will show that the philosophy and environment of the state schools are contrary to God and His Word; that is, of antichristian principles.

First, it should be pointed out that the so-called "father of public (state) education," John Dewey, and others who played a large role in the establishing of our present state educational system were religious humanists. (For a copy of the "Humanist Manifesto" I & II, write the American Humanist Association, 7 Harwood Drive, Amherst, New York 14226.) As humanists their philosophy is totally against God's truth. For example note the statement by Paul Blanshard, a signer of the Humanist Manifesto II in 1973:

_I think the most important factor moving us towards a secular society has been the educational factor. Our schools may not teach Johnny to read properly, but the fact that Johnny is in school until he is sixteen tends to lead toward the elimination of religious superstition. The average American child now acquires a high school education, and this militates against Adam and Eve and all other myths of alleged history._ (Taken from Homer Duncan's valuable book Secular Humanism. It is published by Missionary Crusader, 4606 Ave. H, Lubbock, Texas 79404.)

There is much concerning this statement on which I would like to comment, but time will not permit. However, it is self-evident what the purpose of state education is to Blanshard.

Are Blanshard and the signers of the Humanist Manifesto II of 1973 really all that bad? Are they antichrist? This is strong language; can one really make such a claim? Well, let the humanists speak for themselves as we quote part of the 1973 manifesto. (It is obvious I cannot take the space to quote all of it and I shall follow the condensation as given by Analee McGraw in her booklet Secular Humanism and the Schools: The Issue Whose Time Has Come. This can be ordered from The Heritage Foundation, 513 C Street, N.E., Dept. G, Washington, D.C. 20002)

_Traditional dogmatic authoritarian religions that place revelation, God, ritual, or creed above human needs and experience do a disservice to the human species. Any account of nature should pass the test of scientific evidence; in our judgment, the dogmas and myths of traditional religions do not do so. ... We find insufficient evidence for belief in the existence of a supernatural God. ... As non-theists, we begin with humans not god, nature, not deity._

_We reject these features of traditional religious morality that deny humans a full appreciation of their own potentialities and responsibilities. Traditional religions often offer solace to humans, but, as often, they inhibit humans from helping themselves or experiencing their full potentialities. ... We can discover no divine purpose or providence for the human species. ... Humans are responsible for what we are or will become. No deity will save us; we must save ourselves._

_Moral values derive their source from human experience. Ethics is autonomous and situational, needing no theological or ideological sanction. Ethics stems from human need and interest. To_
deny this distorts the whole basis of life. Human life has meaning because we create and develop our futures. ... We strive for the good life, here and now.

This should be self-evident to anyone that those who give their approval to the humanistic system in anyway are giving their approval to the system and teaching of antichrist. Our Lord said that one cannot serve both God and mammon, but that one serves either God or mammon (Matthew 6:24). I John 2:22 states, "Who is a liar but he that denieth that Jesus is the Christ? He is antichrist, that denieth the Father and the Son." This is strong language. But when we weigh the humanist's own confessions with God's Word we find that the humanists and their ways are of the devil (antichrist). Can we take the "heritage of the Lord" (our children) and subject them to the teachings of the devil? No, they must be raised in God's "nurture and admonition."

That the state schools teach on the humanistic philosophical level can be adequately proven over and over again. However, only one clear example is needed to prove this fact; the example of the state schools teaching evolution at the expense of special creation. (The humanistic philosophy in the state schools is broader in scope than the teaching of evolution, but space will not permit such an analysis. It reaches into every area of life – religion, ethics, values, counseling, group therapy, survival games, sensitivity training, as well as all of the fields of learning.)

That evolution is humanistic is seen in the quote given above from the 1973 Manifesto: "As nontheists, we begin with humans not god, nature not deity." Even the 1933 Manifesto, which John Dewey signed, stated, "First: Religious humanists regard the universe as self-existing and not created. Second: Humanism believes that man is a part of nature and that he has emerged as the result of a continuous process."

No wonder the state schools reject special creation as found in the Scriptures. Can we as Bible believers take the "heritage" which God has given to us and subject them to such antichristian principles for nine months out of twelve? Can we expect to have the major influence on our children when they receive such overwhelming teaching contrary to God's Word? No wonder the homes in our nation are destroyed when we are being told that we are only a higher form of an ape. The moral of the day is no better. If Christian parents do not provide or strive to provide godly education for the children which God has given them no one else will. Equally, we as Christians who do not have children should strive to support our brothers and sisters in Christ who are trying to fulfill God's Word in this matter. I John 3:17-18 applies here also: "But whoso hath this world's good, and seeth his brother have need, and shutteth up his bowels of compassion from him, how dwelleth the love of God in him? My little children, let us not love in word, neither in tongue, but in deed and in truth."

Not only is the teaching of the state schools against God's Word, but the environment is also devilish (ungodly). Notice this statement by Senator Jesse Helms as found in the introduction of Homer Duncan's book:

When the U. S. Supreme Court prohibited children from participating in voluntary prayers in public schools, the conclusion is inescapable that the Supreme Court not only violated the right of full exercise of religion for all Americans; it also established a national religion in the United States – the religion of secular humanism.
Since that time, our schools have been increasingly plagued with vandalism, crime, violence, drug abuse and promiscuity; and academic standards and achievements have been falling sharply year by year. Sad to say, our schools have reflected the disruption and discord of our society as a whole. As our nation faces the challenges of the 1980's, it is time to recognize the obvious: America has been ignoring its spiritual and moral heritage, and that is the road to disaster.

Recently the writer read where it is considered to be more dangerous in Chicago for the state school teachers than for the police on the streets. Can we send our children, the "heritage of the Lord," into an environment for twelve to sixteen years which is ungodly and antichristian in origin? It is certain – to do so is not raising the children according to God's "nurture and admonition." Neither is this teaching the "heritage of the Lord" to "fear God, and keep His commandments."

We can rest assured that the state schools, which are government schools, teach the humanistic philosophies of our governmental leaders. That our leaders are humanist can be proven by their own words. I quote from pp. 13, 14, of Homer Duncan's book showing that our President and Vice-President are humanists. (Just because our President claims to be "born again" and a Southern Baptist does not mean that he is Christian. His speech betrays him. And our Vice-President comes from a long line of Unitarian humanists.)

In April, 1978, "President Carter sent the following telegram to The American Humanist Association:"

Those who participate in the annual meeting of the American Humanist Association are furthering a movement that greatly enhances our way of life. As you know, the advancement of human rights has become the cornerstone of this administration's actions at home and abroad. The work of your organization in this area is, therefore, especially gratifying to me, and I welcome this opportunity to applaud your important accomplishments. May you have a most productive and inspiring 1978 session. /s/ Jimmy Carter, President.

How is it that any individual who loves God can "applaud" an organization that is against God; that is antichrist? Is it not clear how our President supports bills and makes policies that are contrary to God's Word? No wonder he desires to bring the state schools totally under the power and dominion of the government.

Vice-President Mondale, who has written in the past to The Humanist magazine, spoke in August 1970 at the 5th Congress of the International Humanist and Ethical Union which was held at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology. In his opening remarks he stated:

Although I have never formally joined a humanist society, I think I am a member by inheritance. My preacher father was a humanist – in Minnesota they call them Farmer Laborites and I grew up on a very rich diet of humanism from him. All of our family has been deeply influenced by this tradition including my brother Lester, a Unitarian minister, Ethical Culture Leader, and
chairman of the Fellowship of Religious Humanists. (Vice-President Mondale's brother, Lester Mondale, signed the 1973 Humanist Manifesto.)

Therefore, having seen that according to the humanists themselves, they consider humanism a religion, yet it is a religion of man (humans), not of God. It is antichrist, and, therefore, of the devil. Their goal is to bring in a perfect age, a golden utopia, by the evolutionary process of the power and wisdom of man. And one of their main vehicles for achieving their goal is the state educational system. (For further proof of this fact see R. J. Rushdoony's book The Messianic Character of American Education.) Their desire as they strive to build their own utopia is to dethrone God and to enthrone man.

Do we not see the need to remove the "heritage of the Lord" from this ungodly system and labour to provide a system which is founded on God's Word? The Scriptures teach that the parents (and the responsibility mainly lies on the fathers) are to bring the children up (educate) in God's "nurture and admonition." Man (children included) is the creation of God and is responsible to Him. These sinful (depraved) children are to be instructed after the precepts of God's truth, and "God shall bring every work into judgment, with every secret thing, whether it be good, or whether it be evil." (Ecclesiastes 12:14)

No, we cannot make children of God out of our children, nor can we implant divine life into their souls. But we can, and are commanded, to teach them truth and not the lies of Satan. If we do not do so, we disobey God and His Word. May God give us wisdom and the means to reclaim the ground which we have yielded to the government.

Lastly, we need to see the ultimate of education; that is, what is true education? I believe II Corinthians 10:1-5 will give us insight at this point, especially verse 5. It is self-evident that Paul is speaking about the ministry and objectives of the minister. Nevertheless, the same principle will apply to the warfare of the educational process.

The minds and hearts of the children, being depraved, will cause the child to do everything contrary to the right ways of God. For instance, one does not have to teach a child (even an infant) to lie. The child will do this automatically because of his depraved state. Therefore the war is on! The child is to be taught not only to tell the truth (keep God's commandments), but that he is responsible for not doing so ("God shall bring every work into judgment.") Also, every subject is to be taught as it is in harmony with God's truth. Paul stated in II Corinthians 10:5 that we are to cast down "imaginations (reasonings) and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God." We should strive to bring "into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ." Truly we are at war!

This sort of teaching is a must if we are to raise the "heritage of the Lord" according to God's Word. However, the child must be taught that true education is not knowing that there is a God; not knowing about God, but to know God Himself. The child must be taught that in order to attain this level of education he is at the mercy of the Sovereign God of the universe. No man can give this. We can discipline the children according to God's Word, but only God can manifest Himself to the children (or to anyone else for that matter).
The child must not only be told that God is the creator and is sovereign over the universe, but the child must know it for himself. The child must know that because God is such, he (the child) is obligated to bring every thought and action under subjection to God's authority. This can only be truly accomplished by having divine life implanted within the child. The child must be told that he "must be born again."

No, the preacher, the parent, nor the teacher can give divine life, only God can do this. But we are to still teach the children according to thus saith the Lord. We are to do what God has commanded and not turn those minds over to the institutes of antichrist. God forbid that we allow the "heritage of the Lord" to be subjected to such things.

Then, in God's sovereignty if He chooses to turn the hearts of our children unto Him so that they reach the height of the educational ladder we can loudly praise His holy name. And as stated above the truly educated person is one who knows God. (If a choice had to be made between knowing the three R's, etc., or the Lord, our prayers should be for the Lord. But why should we have to rule out the three R's? Why not seek to fulfill what God has commanded and pray for God to do the rest?)

Study I John 2:20; I Corinthians 2:15-16 and Proverbs 28:5, and it will be clearly seen that he who knows God knows "all things," judges or discerns "all things," and understands "all things." The world does not know that drunkenness is sin; they think it is a "sickness." The world judges sodomy to be an "alternate life style" rather than an abomination of the Lord. The world (state schools) understands man to be an off-spring of amino acids, and that the universe just happened to come into existence. But he who knows God knows all things.

While much more could be said, and needs to be, I shall close with this brief introduction concerning the importance of Christian education. We should thank God that He is beginning to open our eyes to this needful subject. May we use every available means (time, talent, money, and prayer) to reclaim the ground we have lost. The battle is hard, but it is of the Lord. May we buckle on the armour, wield the sword, and march forward in the strength and power of Jehovah fighting the warfare that He has commanded. He is the Captain; His Word is the manual. Let us rise up and fight in this honorable battle to educate the "heritage of the Lord" according to His "nurture and admonition."

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February 25, 1991