

Christian Education and Bringing Every Thought into Captivity – 2 Cor 10:3-5

Introduction – We are a congregation of people who have thought a lot about Christian education and are working hard to put into practice what we have learned and believed. We all agree that there is still much to recover, much to rebuild, and much to reform. Looking out over the landscape of Christendom in our modern America, we also see whispers of hope that more and more are seeing the same truth, while the majority of Christians still believe that a secular education is a good (and even the best) decision for their children.

Christian Education is Biblically Mandated – There is no biblical instruction for the civil government to take responsibility that “no child is left behind.” That responsibility rests squarely on the shoulders of fathers (Deut 6:7, Eph 6:4). Abdication of this responsibility always brings great grief and confusion to people and nations. Fathers are not simply being told here to teach a little Bible here and there; they are told to bring their theology (their worldview) to bear on everything that happens all day long. This is because all subjects (not just “Bible”) are to be submissive to Jesus Christ (Col 1:16-17).

Christian Education is Covenantal – We encourage you, in general, to have as many children as the Lord would give. But not because we are woodenly anti-birth control. Rather, we do this because we believe the promises of the covenant (Psalm 103:17-18) and we declare one of the primary purposes that God created the institution of marriage and the family is that He wants godly offspring (Mal 2:15). However, covenant children do not simply grow up faithful in some kind of automatic way. We all come into this world needing to learn a lot (Prov 4:5, 7, 16:16, 19:8). In the covenant of the family, primarily, the covenant blessing of the fear of the Lord is given and nurtured, cultivated, informed and equipped through education.

Christian Education is Martial – We educate our children because there has been a war since the Fall (Gen 3:15). We are to train our children to see the antithesis and to see that there is no neutral ground. Fundamental assumptions about the nature of truth, goodness, and beauty are either submissive to the declared Word of God, or they are in rebellion to it (Matt 12:30). Every nation, every vocation, every station in life, is to bow the knee to the Lord Jesus Christ (Psalm 67, Phil 2:9-11). Education is one of the most religious things we do with our children. It is also one of the most martial (Psalm 127:3-5).

Christian Education has a Goal (2 Cor 10:3-5) – It is not an accident that we still walk in the flesh. God’s plan for mankind is to develop a physical, truly earthy culture upon a world He has redeemed. Christ’s kingdom is not of this world (John 18:36) but it has come to this world. We are called to pull down strongholds, the strongholds of an unbelieving culture. God calls us to cast down everything that sets itself against Him and to bring everything to the obedience to Christ – down to every last thought. *“Every fact has been thought before – by God – and is interpreted by Him. Solid education, therefore, is the process of learning how to think God’s thoughts after Him”* – Douglas Wilson.

Is “Secular” Education a Faithful Option for Christians? – Too often this debate centers around how many Christians are teaching at the local school (which can be a faithful vocation, i.e. Daniel in Babylon), whether or not prayer is allowed in the school, or whether or not abstinence will be taught or practiced. But as Christians we must consider more fundamental presuppositions.

Let the words of a pagan and a reformer instruct us –

“Education is a weapon, whose effects depend on who holds it in his hands and at whom it is aimed” - Joseph Stalin.

“I advise no one to place his child where the Scriptures do not reign paramount. Every institution in which men are not increasingly occupied with the Word of God must become corrupt...I am much afraid that schools will prove to be the great gates of hell unless they diligently labor in explaining the Holy Scriptures, engraving them in the hearts of youth.” – Martin Luther

Both leaders understood something fundamental about education. There is nothing neutral about it at all.

The Work is Long, Hard, and Costly (Gal 6:9) – We will grow tired, but we must not become weary. And this is because the work, when done by faith, is going to render good fruit in due time. It already has begun; and we have just begun.

Our Hope in God’s Grace Here (Is 65:22-23) – As the gospel goes out to all the world over generations, we are instructed to expect to see the curse on childrearing and our vocational work here upon the ground reversed. Our hope in our childrearing is the hope of gospel maturity in the world and a progressive manifestation of Christ’s victory over all the created order.