**Christian Education, No. 1

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We are engaged in the matter of Christian education. Christian education requires a great deal of investments: investment materially; investment in terms of the lives of people; investment of their time; investment of their energies; their capacities; their skills; and, investment of a church ministry. There are only so many things that we can do as a local body. There are only so many things that you can do as an individual. Each day we make a decision for the investment of capacities which are then forever invested, for good or for bad, for profit or for loss.

**Christian Education**

In the field of Christian education, we are entering a realm that many churches view as an untouchable area. They would have nothing to do with it. They sense the demand. They sense the loneliness of being in Christian education. They sense the potential of being left to do the work while others go about their business in other ways and pursuing other interests. They are aware of the fact that it's an area that people easily forget, and an area which people do not get very enthusiastic over.

**Satan**

Now that is not without reason. It is because Satan has done his work so absolutely perfectly. That is the person that we must think of, first of all, when we think of Christian education--in whatever realm. His Majesty the devil is the first element that we must deal with. That's the reason for Christian education to begin with. God created this creature, made in maximum wisdom and maximum beauty of all the angelic hosts. God put this creature at the pinnacle of the hierarchy of angelic beings that He created, so that none was superior to the Archangel Lucifer. He was created by God to actually be the supervisor of God's throne room, and to be the captain defending the holiness of the Almighty God of all the creation. For some time he did just exactly this. This creature ruled all of God's creation. That's the point to remember first of all. When God created him, God also created the fabulous structure of the universe, and he put into the middle of it a gem called the planet earth. God said, "You, Satan, are in sovereign authority over this. You are under my authority. You are over the angels, and you are in authority over all of my creation. You will dispense my will through this creation."

**Isaiah 14:12--Independence from God**

We don't know how long he did this. The book of Isaiah reveals to us that the time came when Satan decided he could do better on his own. He decided what many of us have decided subsequently--we can do better on our own without God. So, we have a brief glimpse into eternity past and what took place there. In Isaiah 14:12, the prophet Isaiah envisioned and saw what happened that brought Satan down from the place of authority over God's creation to the place where he was the open rebel in opposition to God: "How are you fallen from heaven, oh Lucifer, son of the morning? How are you cut down to the ground who did weaken the nations? For you have said in your heart, 'I will ascend into heaven. I will exalt my throne above the stars of God (the word "stars" there probably meaning the angels of God). I will sit also upon the mount of the congregation in the sides of the north. I will ascend above the heights of the clouds. I will be like the most high.'" And with that declaration, the secret mental attitude of Satan became open sinful rebellion against the creator God. Since that time, God has been showing all his rational creatures the consequences of independence from God. God has been showing all rational creatures the results of going it alone. That is the core ministry of Christian education--to teach people, from their earliest days, the consequences of independence from God. Today mankind is everywhere seeing the consequences of the sovereignty of man.

**Sovereignty**

Once in a while, American Opinion magazine publishes a survey of the status of all the nations of the world. It takes quite a while to read. It's a sobering picture in this last issue which denotes where mankind has come down the road of independence from God. A core expression of independence from God is, of course, atheism, and the concept that goes with atheism is the sovereignty of man. The concept that goes with the sovereignty of man is man making it without God through his social endeavors. Therefore, socialism is the next step. In Christian education, it is a serious thing when a person is taught there is no God, or if he is taught with God neglected in the course of the study. It is a serious thing, and it is what's happening in most of our universities, high schools, and lower levels of education. It is the first step in preparing the person for socialism and ultimately for Marxism / Leninism which is Satan's ace card. This is Satan's primary goal. This is his religious system--Marxism / Leninism--and all of our educational system today, under Satan's authority, is being directed to establish that concept of the sovereignty of man--achieving good through the method of socialism and of communism. Therefore, it is not a small thing when a school teaches that God is not there; that religious concepts have just evolved out of human thinking; and, that people can solve human problems on their own. When a student in college has been taught like that, and most of them are, he becomes a prime candidate for communism. That's where the communists come from on the intellectual level.

As you read through American Opinion magazine, you see how country after country has degenerated into socialism. You see the consequences to some nations, which were prospering nations until some idiots came in and imposed socialism upon the country, and the country then degenerated in spite of natural mineral wealth and other things. They had degenerated to where other countries like the United States have to support them. If I were to review just a few of the case histories, most of you would go out of here enraged over the thought of the kinds of people, the kinds of governments, that our nation is giving money to. There are welfare states all over the world that have come to that decrepit position as the result of their socialist concepts. We are supporting the welfare states--some of them to the extent that they could not exist if it was not for the financing of the United States. You say, "What madness is this?" It is the madness of people who think they can go it alone without God, and a country like the United States who feels out of some misguided human good that they should support that kind of thinking.

Here we have Satan, the rebel who squared off with God. Now what could God do at this point? At this point God could have dealt with Satan and Satan's grab at sovereign independence by simply annihilating the devil. God could have just wiped him out. As He created him with His Word, He could have destroyed him with His Word. Or, He could have snatched him and put him in prison. However, if God had done this--if God had annihilated the devil, or if God had simply put him in prison, there would have been a problem that had not been resolved, and this is the issue of the angelic conflict that is ultimately expressed in Christian education--resolving the issue of the angelic warfare. God could have come along and created another Lucifer. But what was to ensure that the same rebellion would not have broken out again? Nothing. And in all likelihood, it would have. God could have annihilated that one or imprisoned that one, and started again. The result would have been a whole string of failures and disasters who ended up the same way as Satan did, as long as there was choice available within the sovereignty of God. That's what Satan had. Satan could make decisions as long as God made creatures who could make decisions for or against God. The result would have been a trail of debris of rebellious creatures. Therefore, God decided against creating that kind of a string of disasters.

Instead, God said, "We're going to do it this way. Satan will not be annihilated. Satan will not be put in prison." Satan's authority over the world exists, and all the angels knew it. The demons were gleeful and I imagine they were looking forward to having some wonderful time in the gem of the universe, the planet of the earth. They were looking forward to that beautiful thing that God had created, and they were going to enjoy it in a very wonderful way. But God said we're going to put Satan's claim to independence to the test. We're going to settle this issue once and for all, whether a creature of God can go it alone--can go with sovereign independence of the authority of God.

There was a period of time that we call eternity past, and there's a period of time which is in the future which we call eternity future. Between those two periods we have time. There is no time in eternity past and no time in eternity future. Time is something that God has created. There's a small spectrum in God's plan which is called time. You and I are living in it today. It is that period during which God is going to resolve this issue that Satan brought into the universe.

The first thing that God did in dealing with the question of independence from God was that God demonstrated his wrath against the evil of Satan. God had to defend his own integrity and he had to respond to the evil that was thrown up at him. The way God did it was to blast the original creation which was ruled by Satan. He blasted that creation into a chaotic state. Can you imagine the humiliation and the embarrassment to Satan and the demons who thought they were riding high, and who probably had some wonderful plans for some good times they were going to have down on planet earth? Then suddenly they saw the whole thing torn to shreds--into chaos. Water covered everything. A blanket of darkness descended so the sun was no longer seen; the stars were no longer seen; and, the moon was no longer seen. Everything was just shattered.

The demons all looked up to the head person, Satan--Lucifer, saying, "What are you going to do about this?" At that point Satan bit the dust. It was the first of many times of humiliation because he couldn't do a thing about it. You can imagine him trying to imitate God who brought that light forth in the first place. Genesis 1:1 tells us how God created the heavens and the earth. You can almost hear Satan saying, "Let there be light," but all he gets back is the hollow echo of his voice, ""Let there be light, ...light, ...light." That's all he got. Now that's humiliation. It was the first indication that this mighty angel, with all of his wisdom, did not have omniscience. This mighty angel with all of his power did not have omnipotence. How many school children know that the devil, who has authority over this world, does not have omnipotence and does not have omniscience? How many know that those who follow a line of independence from God are cutting themselves off with the only source of omnipotence and the only source of omniscience. That's what Christian education is all about--teaching children the real source of omnipotence. It's about teaching children the real source of omniscience so that they do not play the role of the fool as have so many demons; as has Satan; and, have so many other people before them.

**Isaiah 45:18**

We know that this is basically the picture because Isaiah 45:18 reveals to us that when God created the universe, and particularly the planet earth, He did not create it in a chaotic state. Isaiah 45:18 says, "For thus said the Lord who created the heavens; God himself who formed the earth and made it; He has established it; He created it not in vain." The word "vain" is the same Hebrew word which is used in Genesis 1:2 where it says, "The earth was without form and void ("to-hu wa-bo-hu"). Here Isaiah says God did not create it in a chaotic state, and that's a good phrase--"in chaos." He formed it to be inhabited. I am the Lord and there is none else. So to Isaiah it was revealed that Genesis 1:1 tells about God creating the heavens and the earth in a way that only God could create. Because God is perfect, whatever He does is perfect. The only kind of world God could have created is a perfect world. That's what's so pathetic and inane about the Christians who try to play the role of theistic evolutionists, and who say that God is the Creator but He created through a chaotic condition--that God created chaos first and then out of chaos brought a perfect creation. That is an insult. It is a statement of blasphemy that God creates in that way. It is clear from Scripture that that was not the kind of creation that God made.

**Jeremiah 4:23**

Yet, something happened in the book of Jeremiah. The prophet Jeremiah is given a vision of the world after something happened to the world described in Isaiah. Jeremiah 4:23 says, "I beheld the earth and lo it was without form and void." These are the same words that we had back in Genesis 1:2. "And the heavens and they had no light. And I beheld the mountains and though they trembled in all the hills moved lightly. I beheld and lo there was no man, and all the birds of the heavens were fled. I beheld and lo the fruitful places of wilderness, and all its cities were broken down at the presence of the Lord, and by His fierce anger." We have a description here in Jeremiah of an earth that is in a chaotic state. It is described here in somewhat poetic language to convey how God just shredded the earth with earthquakes and volcanoes, and He just leveled out the land areas, water gushed in everywhere, and the whole thing was a total mess.

The thing to remember about this is that Satan was totally helpless to counter what God had done to the creation. Satan was in charge of this creation and when he rebelled against God, that authority was never taken from him. He was still in charge of it. So we read in Genesis 1:2 "And the earth was," or probably more correctly translated in the Hebrew, "and the earth became without form and void, and darkness was upon the face of the deep." The earth became this condition from the perfect condition that you have in Genesis 1:1. Now we have some time spans here that the Bible does not define for us. We do have very definitive events that it describes that took place here.

So, Satan's vast intelligence was unable to restore a devastated earth. The demons shared Satan's helpless humiliation, and you know what happened. They raged in their arrogance. This is the same thing that happens when you and I don't like what God is doing. We try to strike out against Him in our arrogance and in our rage. So, the earth degenerated into a place of darkness, and with a condition of darkness came the vast expanses of an ice age. Here you have the gem of God's creation--one big dark deep freeze. God says Satan if you want to go without me, here is the world that you want to go with. He gave him the inside of an ice box to live in. Satan is trying to find a bulb to screw in someplace and nothing will work. He's trying to create a little heat and nothing will work--total humiliation.

All of those who are in Christian education should remember that they are performing the divine calling of letting those children, and through them their parents, know that those who wish to be independent of God and of His revealed will, which is only known through bible doctrine, should take note of Satan's tragic example. They will be no more successful than was he. There is no satisfaction outside of the truth of Scripture--only emptiness, inability, frustration, and failure. Do you see why Christian education is so important? Without those of you who are making that possible, and without those of you who are caring for the torch of divine viewpoint enlightenment, there is nothing but emptiness in the lives of people. There is nothing but inabilities in dealing with human problems. There is nothing but frustration on every side. There is nothing but failure. The devil is the prime example.

Now there's no record in the Bible of how long the earth was in this darkness in the deep freeze. The Bible does not indicate that the universe was put into a chaotic state. It only indicates that the earth was hit by the Word of God in this way. Satan, all this while, was brooding in hatred against the God who exposed his limited powers. In any case, God let this condition continue long enough so there was no doubt of the failure of Satan's policy. Remember that Satan's policy is evil. At the heart of that evil is independence from God expressed as arrogance on the part of the rebel. God let this go on long enough to leave no doubt of the total inability of Satan--his total incapacity when he rejected divine viewpoint.

**Man**

Although Satan didn't know it, God was getting ready to resolve this issue of rebellion against God in such a way that it could never happen again. God was going to resolve the angelic warfare in such a way that creatures who could make a choice would live with that choice and would never use it against God. So, God brought in a new element into the picture to resolve this angelic rebellion. That new element was man--human beings made lower than angels because of limited capacities in time and space, while angels are not limited to gravity and so on. Man was a little lower in capacity than angels but made in the image and likeness of God, at the heart of which image and likeness was free choice. God was going to create and bring into being a race of creatures who would have capacity to rebel against God, but who would never do it. His plan would permit the choice of volition to be exercised but not to be exercised to one's self destruction. His plan would demonstrate how just God was for ultimately sending Satan to the lake of fire forever for his evil.

**Creation**

One day, as Satan was going about his brooding and his antagonism against God, something suddenly happened. Out of the clear blue, light exploded all over the earth. No doubt Satan and his hosts heard the voice of God resounding through the universe as God said, "Let there be light." The earth exploded in illumination. Satan's interest was immediately peeked, and he whipped in close to see what was happening on planet earth. He had been roaming around out in the interstellar spaces, the realms of his primary activity, and here something was happening. Over a series of five days, Satan watched as dry land appeared suddenly out of the waters; as the sea was suddenly confined by a thousand different shores; and, as trees, flowers, and grass sprouted forth and brought beauty to the once devastated planet Earth. The sun, the moon, and the stars again became visible in the sky. The sea began swarming with unnumbered creatures of all kinds. The air was once more filled with the flapping of the wings of birds and the song of birds. The land began to evidence the movement of animals of all kinds. What is going on? Satan's mind is spinning in all directions wondering what God is up to as the devastated earth is being restored.

But so far, from what Satan saw, there wasn't anything to get too excited about. As Satan, the god of this world, looked over the creatures that God had created, he saw that there was none to challenge him. None of the animals in the sea, on the land, or in the air was a potential danger to him because they all lacked in common one thing. They did not have a spirit which enabled them to communicate with God. Satan had such a spirit. That immediately made him superior to all that creation. But in none of this was there a creature with the spirit to communicate with God and the capacity to make decisions. There were only instinct creatures--no rational beings.

**The Creation of Man**

However, on the sixth day, Satan's worst fears were realized. Suddenly on that day God made a totally different creature. This was a creature who carried upon him the image and likeness of God. This was a creature who had within him a human spirit with which he was able to communicate with the Creator God. As Genesis 5:1-2 tells us, Satan, in shock, watched the fact of the creation of Adam: "This is the book of the generations of Adam. In the day that God created man, in the likeness of God made He him; male and female created He them; and blessed them, and called their name Adam, in the day when they were created." Worse than that: Genesis 1:28 tells us what God's plan was for this new creature who had a volition--a new creature who could make choices, and a creature which could communicate because of his spirit with the living God. Genesis 1:28: "And God blessed them (that is, Adam and Eve), and God said unto them, 'Be fruitful, and multiply, and fill the earth, and subdue it, and have dominion over the fish of the sea, over the foul of the air, and over every living thing that moves upon the earth.'" When Satan heard that, he went into shock. God had put a creature on the face of the earth to whom the sovereignty that once Satan possessed was now transferred. Now man was in charge of God's creation. Now man was supreme over all of God's creation under God's divine sovereignty. It became very quickly evident to the devil that this creature that God had created was not only a rival to Satan, but he was to be God's ultimate weapon for Satan's defeat in the angelic warfare.

Further down the line Satan put two and two together. He remembered what God had said in the Garden of Eden, recorded in Genesis 3:15, that God was going to send a solution for human sin; and, that God was going to send a Savior who would change man's inclination to rebel against God to where man would never rebel against God. Immediately Satan spotted in man the instrument by which God was going to execute that promise. And indeed in time through the human race came that Savior and the Man who was to replace Satan's authority. Certain people of the human race were going to be used to proclaim the defeat of Satan. In Ephesians 3:10, we have this little reference here to God, through human beings, demonstrating the defeat of Satan. Ephesians 3:10: "To the intent that now into the principalities and powers (that is, demonic forces) in heavenly places might be known through the church the manifold wisdom of God." Then he goes on to describe the eternal purpose of God which he purposed in Christ Jesus. This verse tells us that the demons were going to be shown through the human race what God was going to do to resolve this rebellion against God's will.

The Bible tells us that man was created a little lower than the angels. Satan, of course, recognized this right away and therefore he held a certain contempt. However, man was different from the other creatures. Man did have a communication line with God. Satan and his angels were intensely interested in what was happening. Satan who could not remove the earth's chaos was now confronted with a rival who was going to bring about his defeat. So, you know what he did. He said, "I can't outmaneuver God, but I can certainly take care of this guy who isn't even on the same scale of creation as I am." So, he went after the man, through his wife, and brought the first human beings into sin. Through that evil, Satan was able to strike out against God. Satan wanted man's allegiance. Satan wanted man in rebellion against God. He accomplished that exactly.

Now what's going to happen? Satan thought that he had achieved the goal. Satan thought that he had won out. He had frustrated God's plans. Unbeknownst to himself, he did not realize that through that very sin, that Savior was going to come--a Savior who was going to die for the sins of the world. This Savior, who when believed in and received, would so transform a human being, ultimately completely in his own image, so that every human being that receives Christ as Savior would be a free volition human being who would exercise his volition exactly as Jesus Christ exercised His. Does He exercise his volition in rebellion against God? Not for a moment. And so here was the key. The Savior would come through this human line to die for the sins of the world so that those who would receive this provision of salvation would be authorized to be transformed into the image and likeness of God in terms of that reflected by Jesus Christ. Suddenly, Satan was confronted with millions of human beings who were going to reside in this universe, who can make choices against God, and they never will because they are in the image of the Savior. Satan has delayed the consequences of this act of God in one way or another.

Christian education is an attempt to point out what has happened. That's why Genesis chapter 3 is a major point of attack by liberalism today. The devil knows that Genesis 3 exposes his doom. Therefore, that chapter is attacked again and again. They seek to bring into disrepute the record of Genesis. However, the Bible tells us that the Lord Jesus said, "If you do not believe Moses, you can't be saved," because people who do not believe what Moses has written are people who will not believe what Jesus Christ said. Remember that when you deal with these religious people--these people are striking out now against the rising tide of a sense of morality in our country and against the efforts of groups to win a popular consensus for certain moral positions which are held in the Bible. Many of these people are preachers. I saw a whole line of them on television the other day striking out against the efforts of the Moral Majority. One of them was speaking, and I know by just listening to that man, and what I could see of his denominational background, that if I were to ask him, "Do you believe what Moses wrote was the truth?" that he would have said, "No I don't. I believe there are a lot of mistakes in the book of Genesis, and chapter 3 is one of them." And I would know about this man, on the basis of what Jesus Christ says, that he sits on television in his nice suit representing a God that he has no connection with and that this man is going to spend eternity with the other loser, the devil.

This record in Genesis 3 is the beginning of the wisdom and the knowledge of God. This is the beginning of where it all happened. This is the reason for Christian education. This is what we're trying to alert people to, in order to prepare them to be able to reject Satan's sovereignty; reject the concept of human sovereignty; and, turn with humility under the authority of God. How do you do that? You do it because of the Word of God. You do it by subject to that which God has said. That's the basis of human conduct. That's the basis of morality. That's the thing that the devil strikes out against. We have lost the image because of sin. Jesus Christ came, and He's making it possible for it to be restored. The time is coming when you and I are going to have the image of Jesus Christ so completely transformed into us that we will, like the obedient angels, have a will that can be exercised, but we will exercise it like the Lord did. We will be able to say with Him, "I do always the things that please my father."

Now you and I, as teachers in Christian education, need to get children to grasp that, and to understand that the best of life is for those who can say, "I always do that which pleases my Father. I am always on positive volition to what the Word of God has to say." Then you will have prepared people who will be forces of powerful influence in this world. You will be preparing people who will be the great ones of this world who will influence our world and our country for blessing and for power and for greatness. Without those people who know how to exercise their volition and not fight against God, we are doomed. And that's what's happened. I don't know if we're ever going to return. We have come to the brink in this nation of being ruled by people who have followed Satan's mistaken notions. They think they can make it without God. What is the welfare state all about? It covers the world. It is Satan's system, and people think that this is wisdom, not realizing that it is the greatest deception of the arch enemy of the human race.

So we would encourage you to realize that whatever your choices have been and whatever your lifestyle is, God wants to give you a mind that is recreated in the mind of Jesus Christ. In Colossians 3:10, we read a good verse for teachers in Christian schools and for Christian schools. Colossians 3:10 says, "And have put on the new man that is renewed in knowledge." And there we have the Greek word "epignosis"--that knowledge which is positive volition received, and it's stored in the human spirit. "Have put on the new man (the Christ Jesus man), renewed in ("epignosis") knowledge after the image of Him that created him.

That's what Christian education is all about--to fill the minds and the human spirits of our students with that knowledge of God that is compatible with the integrity of God. We want to fill those students with the full knowledge of God that transforms us back into the image and likeness of the God in Whom we were created.

So whose child are you this morning? Are you the child of that decrepit loser, Satan, who is trying to tell us that his sovereignty is better than God's sovereignty? Or have you become smart enough to say, "The world is all around me. It is hard for me to spot it. However, to the extent that I am devoted to the study of the Word of God, I get the perspective I need to know when the devil is trying to have me exercise my volition as if I were sovereign instead of exercising my volition under the sovereignty of the God of grace."

It's a choice that we all have to make. Most children will never have the information that they need to make that choice--the choice that enables them to choose to be obedient to God, and to know that that is the greatest thing in the life of any human being. It's very important to have a Christian school. It is understandable why Satan has so confused churches that they don't get into Christian education. He has so alerted them to the sacrifice and the cost. The devil has made it clear. He says, "If you as a church get into it or if you as individuals get into it, I'm going to give you all hell for it. I'm going to give you misery. I'm going to make you work under disadvantages. I'm going to put pressures upon you. I'm going to force you to the wall. I want you to stay away from Christian education and alerting people to my humiliation." He knows that God has created a puny little bumpkin called man, lower than the angels. He knows that this man is going to be God's answer to resolving the angelic warfare, and God's going to demonstrate that a human being can say, "Yes, Yes, Yes," to God so that there is nothing but prospering and blessing that the devil is going to give you misery for.

That's what Christian education is all about. It's not just teaching kids how to add numbers. You are at the heart of undermining the error that Satan interjected into the human race at Eden. God has been one step ahead of him, and you happen to be the agents that God is using to execute that final blow. Consider yourself chosen and an elite part of the royal family of God. Consider yourself chosen as a church to have a Christian school, and as individuals to be part of it.

Through the Word of God, we get perspective on all of the effort that we invest in Christian education. This effort sometimes borders on bringing discouragement because of the demands in the world. We need to periodically pause and review the issues that are involved in why we're doing this--where the problem began, and what is the Gordian knot of enslavement to evil that we are slicing apart with one blow through the efforts of Christian education that directs children to use their free wills, their choice ability, in such a way that it is compatible with God's holiness. We thank God for this high and noble calling, and we pray in Christ's name that we shall execute it this year in a unique and marvelous way.

Dr. John E. Danish

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