

Issue 541

October 2008

£1.850 or \$3.50

Election and the Christian Life

Ian Hamilton

page 1

The Church of England in Crisis

Iain H. Murray

page 5

Book Review

page 10

News and Comment

page 11

The Fourth of July – The View from (Slightly!) Outside

Sinclair B. Ferguson

page 13

Paul: Collecting Money and Maintaining the Unity of the Spirit

Michael A. G. Haykin

page 15

Scottish Puritan Biographies Republished

Iain H. Murray

page 24

More about Education

Walter J. Chantry

page 28



THE BANNER OF TRUTH TRUST

THE GREY HOUSE

3 MURRAYFIELD ROAD

EDINBURGH

EH12 6EL U.K.

P.O. BOX 621

CARLISLE

PA 17013

U.S.A.

P.O. BOX 29

SYLVANIA SOUTHGATE

N.S.W. 2224

AUSTRALIA

MORE ABOUT EDUCATION

Walter J. Chantry

In the July issue of our magazine a second article on David Stow, a Scottish Christian educator of renown, was printed. Along with it was an editorial with some of the Editor's opinions on Christian education today. Never in my experience have we received so many written responses to magazine material. This month, in place of an editorial, we will print excerpts of readers' feedback. It is obvious that the education of children is close to the nerve of present-day Christian conviction, touching thought, emotion, and church polity.

Respondent 1: Thank you for your article on the teaching of youth. Perhaps you were unaware, but this arose as a controversy at the . . . General Assembly this year . . . The issue of patriarchalism was raised and some took offence . . . This was much needed and especially timely.

Respondent 2: The way I understood you to brush aside the home-schoolers and the family-integrated church model troubles me greatly . . . I am one of these Christians . . . to read this 'brush-off' without any biblical basis for calling it 'not biblical' seems to be at least unwise . . . When I read Scripture I see over and over that it is the father's responsibility to teach his children the biblical faith. I take this role very seriously and consider it to be something that I will answer for on judgment day.

Respondent 3: Your stereotypical snapshot of the shortcomings of home-schooled children was poorly focused and inadequately lighted. Each of your concerns—uneven academics, resistance to authority and poor socialization—must be honestly recognized in any school plan. Public, private and home schools all face these challenges . . . I have seen

parents succeed and succumb to these problems in public and private schools as well. I am sure that there are extremists in the home school movement, but they also exist in public and private schools. Nevertheless, home schooled children, as a group, outperform their peers both academically and socially when tested . . . Your article did not really show a way forward but a propensity for criticizing those who are moving forward as best they know how.

Respondent 4: I read your July, 2008 article, 'The Church Must not Be Derelict in Teaching Youth' and wanted to commend you for your fine article. I suspect you may receive negative responses, or perhaps I am misled there. However, my wife and I both were encouraged by it and wanted to say thank you. The section 'Home School Movement' may draw criticism, but we appreciated seeing this in print . . . articulating matters we have become concerned about.

Respondent 5 (one who is under the pressure toward family-integrated worship): We need a voice to stand up against a movement that is potentially destructive in our denomination . . . When we leave (moving to another city) that will probably be the end of children's Sunday School.

Respondent 6: Your most recent issue was a significant disappointment. Two of the major articles tried to give arguments for Christians leaving their children in the government schools . . . I do not appreciate the tone that was struck, and I do not appreciate the lack of biblical mooring in these articles . . . for every horror story you could tell about home-schooling gone wrong, I could tell several horror stories about public-schooled children who were antisocial, and who did not have even the most basic information on the subjects they had supposedly studied . . . I have a very simple, biblical argument for home schooling . . . God placed the responsibility for training my children on me (*Eph.* 6:4), not on the government. The government's task is to punish wrongdoers (*Rom.* 13). They have no business training children . . . Those who have blurred this biblical role distinction have done incalculable harm to the cause of Christ.

Respondent 7: I express my disappointment at Pastor Chantry's disparaging comments about the homeschooling movement . . . we would not suggest that parents ought instead to send their children to American government schools where they may be taught, starting at age five, that homosexuality is an approved and healthy lifestyle. While it's true that these radical leftist curricula are not taught at Christian schools, many parents have felt it necessary to avoid them, both for financial reasons and because the moral climate among the students of so-called Christian schools is often anything but Christian . . . This editorial grieves me deeply, coming from the quarter that it does. I hope the editorial board will take these comments into consideration and make amends in a future issue of the magazine.

Respondent 8: . . . just to let you know I enjoy your pieces in the *Banner*. But I especially enjoyed the recent one where you spoke of the impact of 'homeschooling'. I think you made points that most Pastors wrestle with. Personally, I think in some ways homeschooling is a hindrance to the church. It seems to me when one comes to faith in Jesus Christ one enters the family of God. I think homeschooling puts the emphasis on a tight family unit and often it is God's family that suffers as expressed in the local church.

Editor: One of the points made in the July editorial was the church's call and commission to teach the multitudes of unbelieving youth. This is much broader than teaching believers' children. Such efforts by the church are forcefully opposed by the family-integrated segment of the homeschool movement.

No responders made any reference to this concern. When Matthew 9:38 was called to their attention again, in correspondence, there were three reactions.

First Reaction: I am surprised to hear that 'many home-schoolers have become opposed to the church's teaching children'. I have never met even one . . . Most of the homeschoolers I know are pretty involved in their church's educational program.

Second Reaction: Another respondent listed the very significant efforts of his church to reach the children of non-Christian families.

Third Reaction: Two who are committed to family-integrated worship expressed only one method for reaching untaught children – evangelize their fathers so that the fathers will teach them.

Editor: Finally, I would like to share with you most of a particularly thoughtful letter sent in response to the articles on David Stow.

Respondent 9 (Comment on Middleton's Articles on David Stow):

Regarding Andrew Middleton's articles on David Stow, the emphasis on the Puritan principle of Christian involvement in a godless world is to be welcomed. There are lessons to be learnt from Stow's labours, but the focus on history and anecdote raises more questions than answers. The following are relevant.

1. What is the Biblical evidence for the assumption that the method and content of the Christian Education provided by David Stow is best achieved by state education with its secular objectives and humanistic curriculum? The secular agenda intends education to be multi-faith even in faith schools. In contrast the Bible teaches that the purpose of Christian education is to bring children up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord. Hodge comments: 'This whole process of education is to be religious, and not only religious, but Christian.'¹

2. What is the Biblical evidence for the assumption that Scripture assigns a role to the Church in the *control* of general education? No doubt elders have jurisdiction over the theological and moral instruction of the young but, according to Scripture, this is the limit of their control. They are not called or equipped to control the delivery of mathematics, physics or other general education subjects.

3. What is the Biblical evidence for the assumption that the establishment principle bestows any lawful power on the civil magistrate to *control* education as opposed to encouraging and supporting it? The

¹ Charles Hodge, *A Commentary on the Epistle to the Ephesians* (Banner of Truth), p. 360.

civil magistrate's role is security and justice, not the superintendence of all of life.² He is to maintain a just society within which families, voluntary societies and churches can flourish.³ Mr Middleton's reference to the SPCK shows that the Christian voluntary sector was at the leading edge of education. Such activity *supported* by Church and State is more in keeping with Scripture than the assumption of *control* by Church or State.

4. What is the Biblical evidence for the assumption that Christian parents ought to commit their children *in loco parentis* to organizations run by a secular state promoting antichristian theology (Christianity is not absolute truth) and antichristian morals (Jesus' teaching on marriage is morally inferior to that based on equality concepts)? Is it not to be expected that Christian consciences will be troubled about placing their children under such social engineering?

The situation of the Christian educator and the Christian parent is different. For Christian educators the issue is a *personal* one concerning the most useful context in which to use their God-given gifts. For Christian parents the issue is a *moral* one concerning the eleven-year window (5 to 16 years) during which each God-given child is still to be brought up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord. Obedience in this is a considerable challenge these days. Surely *the* lesson from our Evangelical forbears is that voluntary-sector educational activity can work to promote a Christian worldview among the young? Such activity is consistent with the proper jurisdictions of Church and State and the scriptural definition of the establishment principle, which excludes totalitarian control.⁴

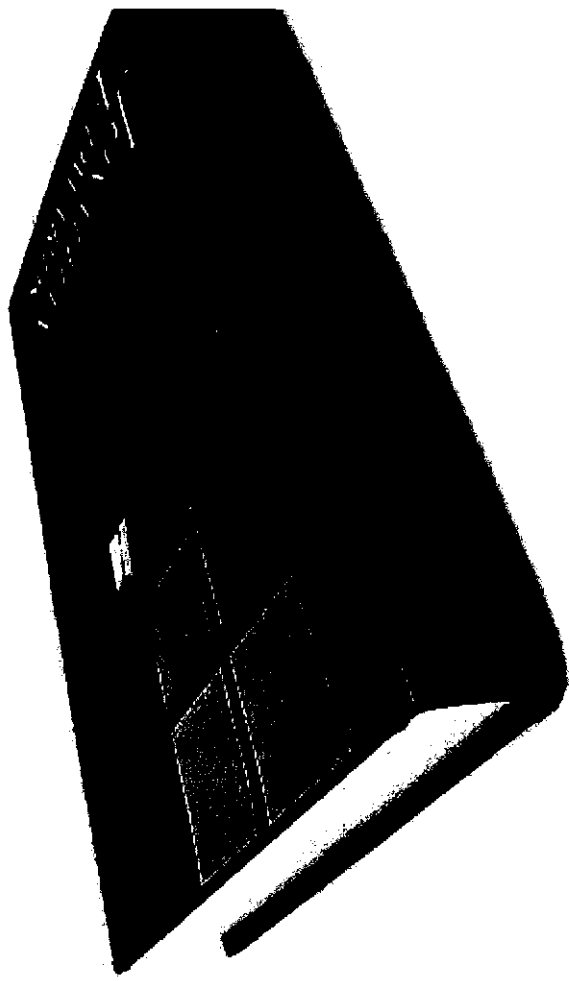
ROY MOHON
Minister, Presbyterian Reformed Church, Stockton-on-Tees

Editor: We would only add that the church has a clear biblical call and commission for preaching and teaching the gospel to all the children of the world. How will she proceed?

¹ Rom. 13:1-7.

² 2 Tim. 2:1-2.

⁴ See proof texts in *Westminster Confession* 23.1-4.



The Preaching of Jonathan Edwards

John Carrick

I would argue Jonathan Edwards is the greatest theologian in American history. Whether you agree or not, at some level we can all admit he was a unique theologian with few rivals. But Edwards the preacher? Was he dynamic? Did he read from his sermon notes in a drab monotone? Were his sermons as complex as his books? For a man so widely respected for his theology, there remain many questions about the nature of his preaching.

With the completion of the Yale edition of the *Works of Jonathan Edwards*, scholars are set to take Edwards research to a new level. John Carrick, a professor at Greenville Presbyterian Theological Seminary, was one of the first to jump at the opportunity. Carrick's new book *The Preaching of Jonathan Edwards* (Banner of Truth, 2008), helps answer a number of these questions about Edwards the preacher. But the book reaches far beyond the style of Edwards as Carrick explores the theology, application, content, style, structure, motive, delivery, literary features, logic, and legacy of Edwards preaching. Whew. And Carrick includes a load of direct quotes from Edwards' manuscripts to illustrate his conclusions.

The Banner of Truth has published another gem in 2008! John Carrick's *The Preaching of Jonathan Edwards* will finish the year as one of our top 10 books of the year.

(Comment and image above reproduced with thanks from *Miscellanies*, the weblog of Tony Reinke)