

PERSPECTIVES IN COVENANT EDUCATION



ARTICLES

BASIC CHRISTIAN EDUCATION

Agatha Lubbers

THE MULTI-GRADE CLASSROOM

John Kalsbeek, Jr.

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**SCIENCE: A BASIC IN THE CHRISTIAN SCHOOL
CURRICULUM**

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THE NATURE OF GOD'S REVELATION IN HISTORY

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**THE SCHOOL'S CALLING TO TEACH THE CHILDREN
TO KEEP THE WAY OF THE LORD**

Rev. David Engelsma

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STATEMENT OF PURPOSE:

Perspectives in Covenant Education is a journal regulated and published semi-annually, in September and March, by the Protestant Reformed Teachers' Institute. The purpose of this magazine, in most general terms, is to advance the cause of distinctively Christian education as it is conceived in the Protestant Reformed community. More specifically, the magazine is intended to serve as an encouragement and an inducement toward individual scholarship, and a medium for the development of distinctive principles and methods of teaching. The journal is meant to be a vehicle of communication: a vehicle of communication, not only within the profession, but within the Protestant Reformed community and within the Christian community in general.

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EDITORIAL COMMENTS

Agatha Lubbers, editor-in-chief

The editor of a journal is always gratified when he or she knows the articles are appreciated. We do occasionally receive letters which express appreciation for *Perspectives in Covenant Education*. We are grateful for such response and believe that the Lord uses our feeble and sin-marred efforts to His glory. We believe there are many appreciative readers who do not add a note when they send their requests for subscriptions or submit their subscription fees. We continue to appreciate the many generous donations we have received from organizations and from individual patrons of the magazine. The following are excerpts from letters we have received.

* * * * *

From a Grand Rapids, Michigan, reader:- "I do appreciate your magazine *Perspectives* very much. Its contents are rich and provoking. We need so much to learn to discern between the true and false. It may have a lasting effect upon our later life."

* * * * *

From a reader in Brisbane, Queensland, Australia, comes the following letter. "I am interested in obtaining 20 sets of back issues, and perhaps another 12 of the Introductory Issue... Please continue indefinitely my subscription to your excellent journal, and I look forward to the Lord's prospering your work so that it will become possible for the issues to become much fatter and more frequent."

* * * * *

From a reader in Nicaragua, Central America:- "I want to let you know how much I enjoy your paper and hope that it may be used by our Sovereign God to bring reformation to all the Christian Day Schools in America."

* * * * *

Mr. John Kalsbeek, Jr., writes about the multi-grade classroom in this issue of *Perspectives*. He is the principal of the Hope Christian School of Redlands, California. He writes as follows in the article: "The multi-grade classroom is not, then, one of the new innovations of modern educators but rather a throwback to an old system which dates back many many years. It was a system that worked surprisingly well then and still works today."

* * * * *

Mr. Don Doezema, principal of Covenant Christian High School in Grand Rapids, (Walker) Michigan, writes the first in a series of three articles concerning the legitimacy of Career Education. He writes that "Career Education is something which encompasses both the vocational and the academic aspects of education."

* * * * *

Dr. Roderick Kreuzer, teacher of science, at Hope Protestant Reformed Christian School, Grand Rapids, Michigan, proposes an answer to the question concerning science as a basic in the Christian school curriculum. Science classes, he says, are "the study of God's created, physical world," and therefore should be part of the basic curriculum in the Christian school.

* * * * *

Mr. Calvin Kalsbeek, principal of the Adams Street Protestant Reformed Christian School, Grand Rapids, Michigan, writes about "The Nature of God's Revelation in History." This essay is one of those included in the recently published History Manual produced by a history workshop funded by the Federation of Protestant Reformed Christian School Societies. This teachers' manual for Ancient World History is prepared for the classroom teacher and contains teaching units, objectives, interpretive essays, extensive bibliographies, and valuable charts. It can help you teach all phases of Ancient and Sacred History more effectively.

* * * * *

Rev. David Engelsma, pastor of the Protestant Reformed Church of South Holland, Illinois, was the key-note speaker at the Teachers' Convention, October, 1977, sponsored by the P.R.T.I. This key-note address is published in this issue of the journal because we believe it received only a very limited exposure and will be appreciated by the readers of *Perspectives*.

Mrs. Antoinette Quenga deserves a hearty thank-you for having prepared the original manuscript from a tape-recording of this speech.

BASIC CHRISTIAN EDUCATION

Agatha Lubbers

Parents, are your children receiving a basic education?

Teachers, how can you help your students master what is basic?

Questions such as these are being asked currently by educators and theorists who are proposing panaceas for the

dilemma in education. The solution most often advocated in educational literature during 1977 has been a rather sporadic movement denominated by the phrase "back to the basics".

Enormous problems do exist in the monolith called U.S. education. Students destroy their schools. Students refuse to study and to be taught in the schools that have been created for that purpose. Between ten and twenty per cent of the students who graduate from high schools are reported to be functionally illiterate.

Time, November 14, 1977, reports that "the school's problems are compounded by broken homes, two-income families with no one to mind the children and—not least—less reverence for the written word." This means simply that students in the schools come from homes which are the root of the problem. The school in today's society cannot, therefore, correct the problem but is simply a reflection of the total problem in today's society.

We need not be smug and begin to extol our own successes in the schools that have been created in our Reformed Christian communities. Is the indictment of Harvard's David Riesman also evident in our schools? Listen to Riesman; "... public schools cater to teenagers' desire to be entertained. Consequently, homework and requirements have gone down, grades have gone up. Watered-down curriculums fail to challenge. The only places in schools today where people are really encouraged to perform up to capacity are in sports and the band."

I freely admit that the situation in our suburban schools and the Christian schools is not like that which prevails in the large city schools, but our affluent age makes decided demands upon our way of life. This is particularly true in the high schools. Frequently our jobs and other after-school activities take precedence over concerted study and faithful homework.

Basic Christian education makes demands upon a student in every area of his life. He must behave like a Christian in every thing that he does and this includes his activities in the school. The school not only expects behavior and attitudes which are good and according to the Scriptures, but the school is an instrument whereby the student is prepared for a life of good works here and now in the world. The goal of basic Christian education is holiness. The Christian student must consecrate himself and the entirety of his life to God in thankfulness.

The sad situation in the secular schools of the U.S. is that

they are schools without and against God and His word. The message of the vanity of all earthly life apart from God is unmistakably confirmed in the activities and results of the public school. Rev. D. Engelsma writes as follows in *Reformed Education*, p. 80-81.

... the message (of Ecclesiastes) is the vanity of all earthly life, absolutely all earthly life—kingship, farming, learning, book-making, even drunkenness—apart from fearing Jehovah and keeping His commandments.

Much as we applaud the desire of the proponents who want to see the schools get back to the basics, this will not improve or alter the errant schools of our country. Where the fear of God does not exist, there can be no hope of real improvement and no scholarship in the fear of God. God is not in all their thoughts.

The goal of Christian education is God-centered, and basic Christian education implies "true piety in organic relation with thorough knowledge and genuine culture." (H. Bavinck)

When believers presented their seed for Christian baptism, they committed themselves to the pious and religious education of their children. This means that parents and their children seek first the kingdom. Believers and their seed who are instructed in the schools are called to "... live in all righteousness, under our only King ... Jesus Christ; and manfully fight against and overcome sin, the devil and his whole dominion..."

Within the context of that kind of basic Christian education our youth must be taught to read and write. They must not be part of the 10-20% who are illiterate and unknowledgeable in the basics when they graduate from high school.

Your child must not feel as if he has been cheated when he graduates from high school.

Raymond English describes such a cheated young man in the *University Bookman*, Winter, 1978, "Back to Basics: A Chance for Educational Reform?". English writes as follows:

A young man of our acquaintance is in a highly nervous state. He entered university as a freshman this fall, and was informed (along with the other freshpersons) by the dean of students that statistics showed that one-third of the freshperson class would have flunked by Christmas, and that only a quarter of them would remain after the first year of study.

This is a mathematical prediction calculated to produce anxiety and adrenaline. However, its impact seemed enhanced when our young friend reviewed his senior year at high school. In the first

semester his schedule of study was: 1 period Art, 1 period Sociology, 1 period lunch, 1 period Mass Media, 2 periods Study Hall. In his second and final semester his program—a valediction (i.e. leave-taking) to old alma parent with a vengeance—was: 1 period Art, 1 period American History, 1 period lunch, 1 period Gym, 2 periods Study Hall.”

I can certainly understand the anxiety of our young senior friend when he surveys his last two semesters in high school and anticipates the rigors of academic scholarship in college. His preparation in the basics such as mathematics, English, speech, etc. have been woefully deficient.

The moral of the story is clear. Schools in America have descended to the slough of mediocrity.

As early as 1956 there was a group of citizens who believed that schools of the U.S. had become too much laboratories of socialization and too little centers of learning. They invented the term and founded an organization called the Council for Basic Education. Today this organization has a membership of over 5,000 (Cf. A. Graham Down, *The National Elementary Principal*, October, 1977, “Why Basic Education?”)

A. Graham Down writes as follows:

Basic education means more to the Council than simply the three R's. It means that all students except the severely retarded, should receive competent instruction in all the fundamental disciplines. Basic education means that before students graduate from high school they should at least be able to read at an eighth-grade level, write with grace and accuracy, possess computational skills, have historical knowledge, have some acquaintance with a foreign language and its culture, some knowledge and understanding of science, and an appreciation of the role of the arts in the history of man and contemporary life.”

How does your child and the school which your child attends score on this back-to-basics report card?

Are there deficiencies and gaps in your child's education?

Is the cause related to your home or the school which your child attends?

It's a Christian school, I presume. It most probably is a Reformed Christian School hiring Reformed Christian teachers.

Have the liberalizing influences and the affluence of our times caused your school and your child to be affected by plummeting performances in the neighborhood public schools? Have the evils of society and the tendency toward mediocrity

influenced your child and your expectations of his performance?

The desire on the part of some schools to return to the basics is heartening. The restoration of homework assignments, the generation of enthusiasm for quality and achievement are a healthy reaction against the wasteful trends of other years. Is this enough?

The most important need today, as I see it, is challenge. Every child in the Christian community must be challenged to reach the highest competence of which he or she is capable. Challenge to use one's talents to the best of his ability is the key to effective education.

The effective teacher and the effective school challenges the student. The effective teacher is enthusiastic, conscientious and is competent in his work. The effective teacher demands high standards and encourages discipline for God's sake.

According to Mark Van Doren the one intolerable thing in education is the absence of intellectual design.

According to the Scriptures the one intolerable thing in Christian education is aimless, Godless behavior.

When the goal for basic Christian education is the standard for performance and instruction, then that which is basic will be taught. The pious and religious education of the children of believers gives the teacher the proper incentive to teach. The student will have the incentive to learn and to study. The parent will have the incentive to support the instruction in the school.

"Wisdom is the principal thing;
therefore get wisdom:
and with all thy getting
get understanding." Proverbs 4:7.

The Multi-grade Classroom

John Kalsbeek, Jr.

Picture in your minds five year old kindergartners and nine or ten year old fourth graders in the same room with the same

teacher along with first, second, and third graders and you have a multi-grade classroom school. In some schools only two or three grades may be put together in a single classroom while in other schools there may be six or even nine grades. The little country school house of thirty-forty years ago with nine grades in one room is a prime example of the type of school being considered in this article.

The multi-grade classroom is not, then, one of the new innovations of modern educators but rather a throwback to an old system which dates back many many years. It was a system that worked surprisingly well then and still works today. It is becoming more and more evident that the demand for change from the old township school house with its limited curriculum to today's big consolidated schools with their catalog of different subjects for a curriculum, has not brought with it the desired academic improvement. Just the opposite seems to be occurring. Academic standards have had an embarrassing tendency to plummet from year to year much to the consternation of school communities, boards, faculties, and parents. Even the government is becoming more and more concerned and is naturally trying to correct the situation by becoming even more involved than it is already.

However, it is not going to be the burden of this article to promote one system over against and above another system. Neither will its goal be to point out advantages and disadvantages of one over another. In the first place, this is being done to avoid the pitfall of stepping on other educators' toes. Each system has its merits and also its demerits. In both you have to take the bad with the good while making every effort to correct the bad. In the second place, I am in no position to make such comparisons. My nine years from first grade through ninth grade in Hope Prot. Ref'd. Chr. School were in a multi-grade classroom and all the years I've taught have been in multi-grade classroom schools. I have very little background in a single grade situation and have very little experiential knowledge as to how to teach in such a situation. Therefore, obviously, I'm in no position to make judgments in regard to advantages of one over the other.

Rather in this article I will attempt to do three things: First of all I will show what is needed to make the multi-grade classroom work. Secondly, I will write about the things I like in the multi-grade classroom. Finally, I will point out some of the

problems that arise in this type of school.

* * * * *

MAKING THE MULTI-GRADE CLASSROOM WORK

In order for the multi-grade classroom to work so that God's covenant seed are adequately instructed, I wish to consider four fundamental and basic ideas. These are: discipline, organization, grouping of grades, and the cycling of subjects.

Discipline, obviously, is essential. Without it one has chaos and disorder. Students are forced to learn early that there are certain things they just cannot do in a multi-grade classroom. For example, when the teacher is busy with another class, they may not come up to the teacher, interrupt the class, and ask a question. Such action is rude and discourteous to teachers and classmates alike. If they have a question, they have to discipline themselves to go on to the next problem and ask the question later when the teacher is free. Unnecessary noises such as the rumpling of papers, the sharpening of pencils, the dropping of books, or whispering have to be discouraged and eventually students must be penalized if they are not able to learn by the verbal message. In this case, a word to the wise is usually sufficient. A few others usually need the assurance that actions speak louder than words. Unnecessary movement around the room must also be limited.

Without order in the classroom it would be impossible to teach or to learn. This type of order requires strict enforcement by the teacher. Give in just a little and soon it's out of hand.

Students need to have a clear concept of what they may and may not do. They have to know what their teacher expects of them. They must learn to use good judgment and self control. In the final analysis most rules are made by the students not by the teacher. If they persist in disruptive behavior, they force the teacher to enact rules to control them.

The multi-grade classroom forces teachers and students alike to be organized and orderly.

This implies, first of all, that a schedule of subject periods must be clearly defined and laid out. The teacher, and also the students, have to know what's going to happen each and every period of the day. To deviate from the known schedule frequently brings with it confusion, disorder and often consternation.

Varying or changing the schedule of the day may be thought to be the spice of life but I've found it all too often causes a certain degree of unneeded uncertainty and unwanted disorder.

Secondly, it is imperative that the students know what is expected of them. Are assignments collected every day or is it a hit and miss affair? If students think there is a possibility, even a remote possibility, that their work might not be collected, expect a decline in that pupil's performance and an increasing amount of unfinished work turned in each day. The student needs the discipline of knowing he'll be required to hand in his work every day without fail. Anything less brings disorder and confusion to his life and is harmful to his covenant wellbeing.

Also a teacher should be conscientious enough to mark the papers collected each day immediately before the next school day begins. Sometimes, because of other activities, he may be forced to mark them later, but woe to that poor teacher who allows them to pile up for a couple of days before he marks them. The stack soon becomes mountainous and an over-powering burden. Students begin asking about last week's history test or how did they do on last Friday's arithmetic assignment. To be consistent it is important that, not only must the student finish his daily quota of work, but also the teacher.

The grouping of grades consists of putting two, three, or more grades together for one particular subject.

An example of grade grouping would be to combine all the grades in a given room for one and the same Bible lesson. Naturally, grade and age differences have to be taken into consideration. It would be inconceivable that anyone would require a kindergartner to know as much and learn as fast as a fourth grader. One way to compensate for this difference is to prepare different tests for the different levels. Another way is to adjust the grading scale of a test for each separate grade. Many subjects can be taught to two or more grades grouped together while others, such as mathematics and reading, probably should not be used in this way because the necessary progression from one concept to the next has to be taught in the proper sequence. However, even in these subjects if two classes are working on decimal fractions or dictionary skills at the same time, grouping them is feasible and beneficial.

In order that fifth graders do not receive the same geography or science material when they reach the sixth grade the school is

forced to resort to cycling materials or alternating them from one year to the next. One year Western Hemisphere Geography may be taught while the next year the geography course will be on the Eastern Hemisphere. This can easily be done in Bible, social studies, science, even literature.

Obviously, class grouping practically necessitates the cycling of various subject materials. If one is incorporated the other must also be used. By using this approach, a teacher can give a more meaningful presentation to each class not only but also spend more time with each group.

It doesn't take a new teacher long, nor a school board, to see that the only way out of too many presentations and too little time for each grade is to group grades and begin cycling materials over two or three year periods.

Discipline, organization, grouping of grades and cycling of subjects all help to make a multi-grade classroom work efficiently and effectively. They are as essential to the running of a school as a motor is to an automobile.

* * * * *

WHAT I LIKE ABOUT TEACHING IN A MULTI-GRADE CLASSROOM SCHOOL.

First of all, I especially like and appreciate the close parent-teacher relationship that exists. Perhaps because the school is small, parents realizing their support is essential, are vitally concerned about the school. Parents are eager to work closely with the teacher and to help in any way they can at home. Parents I've worked with, have wholeheartedly backed the school and the teachers. This is a humbling experience for teachers because we often make mistakes, sometimes very serious ones. I am thankful to God for understanding parents who stand behind their teacher even in his mistakes. These are parents, who don't condone the mistakes or ignore them, but discuss them openly with the teacher and not openly in front of their children. You, the parents, make the schools you support what they are—institutions that give covenant instruction. Your enthusiasm is passed on to your children but so is an apathetic attitude. Your child soon learns that you will not tolerate any nonsense at school.

In the second place, I enjoy working with the same students

year after year. This is beneficial to the students but also to me. The student in his first year becomes acquainted with his teacher. He learns his teacher's likes and dislikes. These change very little from year to year. If the teacher dislikes gum chewing in the classroom one year, it's probable that he will also dislike it the next year and for years to come. The student can expect the same set of standards every year he has the same teacher. Students become used to a teacher's way of teaching, his vocabulary, his personality and habits. This removes the upsetting adjustment problems that sometimes occur because of a frequent change of teachers. It goes without saying that each teacher does have his own peculiarities and values.

The teacher also benefits by having the same basic group of students over a given number of years. He knows their personalities, habits, weaknesses, attitudes, likes and dislikes. He knows from one year to the next exactly what to expect from each student. He learns how to handle each one in his own individual way. With some, stern measures are needed and effective while with others a soft word or look is enough. Some, the teacher can joke with while others are easily offended. Some need constant encouragement because they have a low concept of themselves and of their ability, while others need a little toning down occasionally. The teacher does not have to find these things out about a whole new group of students each year in a multi-grade classroom.

In the third place, I am happy when I see older students and younger students participating in the same playground activity together. Because of the smallness of a small school, students are forced to engage in recess activities together. The grade distinction disappears in a large measure on the playground. Furthermore, not only young and old, but also girls and boys enjoy games together. Mixed teams are preferable while the girls against the boys concept should be discouraged. Being forced to depend on each other brings with it a mutual respect for each other. Problems arise infrequently but usually pass away with a new recess or a new day.

In the fourth place, I find teaching all the different subjects very stimulating. I, as a teacher, am learning along with the students. I will concede the probability that a teacher specializing in one subject area could and should do better work in that particular area. For this reason many schools are moving

in that direction. Yet I enjoy teaching mathematics, algebra, history, geography, science, German, literature and Bible. Teaching is a continuous growing process for me as a teacher in the many different subject areas.

In the fifth place, I believe students in a multi-grade classroom situation are forced to work alone without being fully dependent on the help of a teacher and this is good for them. They are forced to become independent in their work and study habits. They soon learn that they have to help themselves and not to expect the aid of a teacher for every little problem. A little of Thoreau's "self reliance" is by necessity forced upon each child. Most thrive on it and become good all around students. By being forced to work independently, study habits are being formed and activated. Paul's advice to Timothy was "to study to show thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed..." II Timothy 2:15. Such study is indeed learned, promoted, and practiced in a multi-grade classroom.

Finally, multi-grade classroom students are forced to concentrate and not to be distracted by other classroom activities. They have to shut out other classroom noises in order to do their own assignments. This has to be learned. At first it causes a new student from a single grade classroom quite an adjustment problem. In our age, with all the noises of modern society, who can measure how important it is for a person to be able to shut out some of these noises in order to concentrate?

Teaching in a multi-grade classroom is enjoyable. Ask others who teach under similar circumstances and they will no doubt add to the above list other reasons why they like teaching in these schools.

* * * * *

SOME PROBLEMS OF THE MULTI-GRADE CLASSROOM SCHOOL

First, it is important that teachers learn to put first things first. Often a teacher becomes so involved in teaching the material laid out for a particular day that he unintentionally forgets student needs. A real danger that needs to be avoided at all costs is that a teacher teaches subjects instead of students. The subject material becomes the primary goal while the covenant child is relegated to a position of secondary importance. Such an order is just backward. Subject material is important, no

doubt about it, but the students' needs and development must always be first. Consequently, a meaningless objective or goal is to finish the textbook before the end of the year. What good will come of teaching the entire mathematics book if not one of the students in the grade has learned and can use the material presented? The result is wasted effort. In a multi-grade classroom it is easy to put subject materials before students. As soon as one class presentation is finished the teacher immediately begins working with another class. The teacher can busy himself so much that he has no time to help individual students.

Another problem that a small school often faces is that purchasing needed equipment sometimes has to wait because of limited resources. The science program often suffers because expensive laboratory equipment just doesn't seem so very essential. As a result suggested experiments that actually show how the concept being taught works and that promotes student interest, are passed up because the necessary equipment isn't available. Sometimes it's such basic materials as wall maps, audio visual aids like overhead projectors, film strip projectors, and filmstrips and cassette recorders. It may even be duplicating equipment. Eventually these are purchased but usually after a lengthy time on the "want list".

A third problem is that in a small multi-grade classroom school it is almost impossible to carry on any kind of remedial program for the poorly motivated student and slow learner. To hire a full-time or even part-time remedial teacher for two or three remedial students just would not be feasible in most small schools. The conscientious teacher takes special pains to help such a student even if it requires some after school sessions.

Along with these problems are the regular everyday problems that every school faces: discipline, attitudes of students, poor work habits, arguments and fighting on the playground, dress codes, disrespect of teachers and authority. These are some of the everyday problems of sin that must be combated in the school and on the playground by the concerned and often frustrated teachers and administrators.

The wonder of it all is that such a system works as well as it does. I'm convinced that these schools are doing the work they are called upon to do and that the students on the whole do not suffer because of the system. Generally, children taught in the small multi-grade classroom are adequately equipped academic-

ally and spiritually to face the challenges of high school instruction. In truth, many of them excel on the high school level.

I believe that in most cases a child who has difficulty in a multi-grade classroom would have similar problems in a single grade classroom.

These schools work not because the teachers are the world's best thinkers and instructors; not because you parents are the most dedicated parents in existence; nor because our students are the cream of the crop; but because they have God's continued blessing and support from day to day and from year to year. They are His gift to you as parents, students and teachers. He will give grace to covenant parents and teachers to maintain these schools to His glory and as a means to fulfil the covenant obligations and responsibilities of instructing His covenant seed.

CAREER EDUCATION: A LEGITIMATE EMPHASIS?

Don Doezema

There is a self-evident need, in my judgment, radically to reform an education which has become non-utilitarian and, in the words of the young people, "irrelevant" to such a large part of our clientele. Fully a third of our high school students leave school before graduation, with no skills, no marketable resources, and no intention or competence to enter college.

There can be no doubt that it is that sort of assessment of the American educational scene which gave impetus to what has become a movement of no little importance in the schools of our country: Career Education. The indictment was made by Sydney P. Marland, the then HEW Assistant Secretary for Education, in a speech made at a 1972 meeting of the Board of Directors and the staff of the Council for Basic Education. The remedy, as he saw it, was an all-pervasive Career Education, ranging from the early elementary grades all the way through secondary and post-secondary education. Marland could speak as a representa-

tive of Uncle Sam, which fact could not have hurt the cause of Career Education at all, since the support of the federal government is translated into dollars and cents. And, needless to say, school systems throughout the country make every effort to secure for themselves as large a share of Federal funds as they possibly can. As James D. Koerner, another speaker at that same CBE meeting put it, the overwhelming support given by educators to the notion of Career Education "may have less to do with commitment than currency." He went on to suggest that "a hundred million dollars or a couple of hundred million Federal dollars is a powerful proselytizer. It represents a pot of money big enough to produce instant converts to almost anything." However that may be, the fact is that Career Education is a force to be reckoned with, and we do well to consider and evaluate what its advocates have to say about it.

One ought really to begin an examination of this sort with a definition of terms. In this case however a definition is a bit hard to come by, at least if one aims to discover what Career Education means to its proponents, for few have ventured to define exactly what Career Education is. The critic mentioned above, in fact, complained that Career Education means a hundred things to a hundred different spokesmen, "who themselves seem unwilling or unable to reduce the obscurity that surrounds the subject." At the very least, though, we can point out that its supporters are quite insistent that Career Education must be distinguished from Vocational Education. The latter is no more than job training—that is, training for the purpose of acquiring entry level skills in a particular trade. It includes courses such as auto mechanics, commercial art, electronics, and welding. It does not include courses like business law, consumerism, mechanical drawing, and typing, which are part of a general, as opposed to vocational, education. To elaborate a bit more on this, we could say that there are really two major divisions in high school curriculum: vocational and academic. The academic in turn is often subdivided into two tracks, the one leading to college and the other intended to end in high school, but both properly including the elements of a good liberal arts education.

Now then, how does Career Education fit into that scheme? Perhaps it can be described as an attempt somehow to consummate a marriage between the general and the vocational.

Proponents, we might point out, prefer not to speak of Career Education as a particular *kind* of education. Writes Dr. McMurrin (U.S. Commissioner of Education, 1973),

All education, in addition to whatever else it may be, should be Career Education. "Career" added to "education" may well be employed to explain or emphasize a characteristic or facet of any or all education whatever... . Anything worthy to be called "education" must be relevant to the cultivation of those capabilities and qualities that make possible or in various ways enhance a career.

And he goes on to say that "we should no longer separate liberal education from Career Education and set them against one another, either in our thinking or in curriculum structures."

The executive director of examinations of the College Entrance Examinations Board, T. Anne Cleary, concurs. She writes that "it (i.e., Career Education) is best viewed as an attempt to reorganize the entire school program around a dominant idea that will affect all levels and all major disciplines in the schools."

That "dominant idea" is one's *career*, of course. And with that we are getting close to a definition, too. Stephen Bailey, Chairman of the Policy Institute of the Syracuse University Research Corporation, goes to Webster in his search for the elusive definition. He writes,

One dictionary definition of career is "one's progress through life." Perhaps as useful a definition of Career Education as any might be an education that pays special attention to personal growth in terms of occupational, avocational, and personal skills friendly to "one's progress through life."

Career Education, therefore, is something which encompasses both the vocational and the academic aspects of education. Which of the two should receive the emphasis is apparently a moot question with many of the advocates of Career Education. Or, rather, it's probably the case that they prefer not to speak of a dominance at all. Both intellectual development and the acquisition of technical skills needed for employment, they will insist, are indispensable to the student's preparation for his career.

The goal of Career Education, it is clear, is that "all educational experiences, curriculum, instruction, and counseling, should begin the preparation for economic independence and an appreciation of the dignity of work" (from a briefing paper put

out by the Office of Education). That's quite an order. In fact, one may well ask how in the world that could ever be implemented throughout the grades. Supporters of Career Education are, it seems, as little agreed on that as they are with respect to the definition. Sydney Marland takes what seems to be a more moderate position. He suggests that Career Education in the elementary school should consist in making the child aware of an eventual need for a career, giving him some idea of what a career is all about and what the economic world is like. In high school, he says,

the career aspect of the curriculum would be intensified and sharpened, enabling the young person not only to arrive intelligently at a number of career possibilities he would like to explore but to get some hands-on feeling for them, certainly never closing out other choices.

And he adds, interestingly, that

at this age he (the student) would rarely say I'm going to be this, or this, or this. Having a wide range of career information on which to draw, he would at some point be prepared to leave the system...ready to go to work.

That, we said, appears to be a more moderate set of objectives. Anne Cleary has more ambitious plans. She proposes that work-study opportunities be "vigorously developed." Every student, to her way of thinking, should be "pressed to select a vocational field and begin specific preparation for it during the secondary years." She goes on to describe one of the model programs submitted by the U.S. Office of Education. According to this model, all possible occupations would be grouped into fifteen clusters. These clusters would be studied in the lower grades. In junior high school the student would be expected to select three of the clusters for more intensive exploration. And in senior high he would narrow the field to one cluster and then proceed to develop sufficient skill in a single occupation within that cluster in order to qualify for a job in it. All students would be required, in addition, to have some actual work experience while still in school, but, Cleary adds, "they would retain options to change vocational objectives or go on to higher education." How sporting can one be!

Cleary goes on to state that Career *guidance* would begin early and would be highly efficient and specific. Quoting, I think, from the Office of Education report, she notes that counselors

would "become job market analysts with a touch of clairvoyance. They (would) need to know what job opportunities are likely to be available locally, statewide, and nationwide 5 to 10 years hence in order to steer youngsters into promising fields."

And, as if all that were not already quite enough, she adds that, finally, "schools would establish placement services to find jobs for graduates and would be responsible for adult education and the retraining of older workers to a greater degree than they are now."

One cannot help but wonder, along with Koerner, "how compelling the whole idea of Career Education would prove to be if it had to make its way in the schools solely on its merits"—that is, without the aid of Federal currency.

* * * * *

It would be manifestly impossible for our small school system to develop a full-blown vocational education program. We simply do not have the resources to provide the facilities and personnel required to give the hands-on training which will equip a student with the kind of entry level skills, in a wide variety of areas of interest, which will enable him "to leave the system, ready to go to work." A single room in the Kent Skills Center in Grand Rapids houses equipment, the purchase price of which exceeds the cost of the construction of one of our smaller schools. But we cannot conclude from this that none of the objectives of career education are available to us. Our high school can, for example, give a student classroom credit for satisfactory performance in course work at the local skills centers, attended on a part-time basis. And, too, our schools could make the matter of careers to be that "dominant idea" around which the curriculum at all levels is organized. We can therefore well face the question of whether or not we want to have any part in the goals and methodology of the career enthusiasts.

It's to be expected, I think, that anyone with any kind of appreciation for the Reformed concept of the purpose of education will reject out of hand the main tenets of Career Education. The fact is that the placing of orientation to economic life at the center of the school program is crass materialism. And the sad fact is, further, that the American public today *embraces* that materialistically utilitarian approach to education. Vocational

competence is seen as *the* reason for having schools. A recent Gallup Poll of American attitudes toward education reports that in a national sample of 1614 adults who were asked to name the principal reason why children should attend school, 44 percent responded "to get a better job," and 38 percent "to make more money." Leonard Kriegel, in an article entitled "Culture and the Classroom," makes this very telling indictment against the emphasis of Career Education:

Career training is grounded in efficiency and productivity; it is "hands-on" education which eschews abstraction and value judgments, creating by its nature a value vacuum in which the student is concerned primarily—sometimes obsessively—with perfecting skill which will get him a job which will provide the money to purchase the things necessary for the good life.

Advocates of Career Education would be quick, I'm sure to challenge the correctness of that statement, but the fact is that, in their system, any course which cannot be related somehow to the acquisition of employable skills must be of doubtful value in the program. Students betray a tendency toward that sort of value system when they ask questions like, "What is the 'use' of an English literature course to me; I'm going to be an automobile mechanic?"

There are, in addition, objections of a more practical nature which can be brought against Career Education, or at least against the vocational training which seems to be an integral part of it. One of these objections is the probability of a student's spending a considerable amount of time and effort in preparing himself for a job which, in the end, does not become his life's work. A study conducted by the American Institute of Research showed that only 30% of vocational graduates were employed in jobs for which they had been trained. Surveys show, too, that an individual who does in fact enter the occupation for which he was trained is more likely than not to *change* jobs during his working career—and often more than once. Such change often comes about as a result of a redirection of one's interest. But what is perhaps an even more important element involved in the expected attrition rate is the fact that, in our technological society, *jobs* change, leaving workers with skills for jobs that no longer exist. There is, of course, a certain amount of stability in some areas; but in others, certain kinds of work may become obsolete before one completes his training for it. Besides, jobs

requiring new and different skills arise, as it were, overnight. It's been estimated, according to an article in a recent issue of the *National Association of Secondary School Principals*, that 70 % of the jobs that will exist in 15 years do not exist now. R. Baird Shuman, editor, of *Clearing House*, addresses himself to this problem in a short article entitled "Vocational Oversell," in the March, 1977, issue of his magazine. He writes that

In almost every secondary school we find large numbers of students enrolled in career oriented programs that prepare them for jobs which may not exist. In a rush to equip students with "career" skills, we actually may be decreasing students' "marketability." In many programs, students become so specialized that they may well lack the necessary flexibility to adjust to a constantly changing job picture.

Closely related to this is the matter of career counseling. Career guidance, I think, must be taken for granted in the program, for, as the Career Education advocates suggest, students must be encouraged early to begin narrowing down their career choices. And a school that will insist on that must be prepared to give *guidance*. But the question is, how is it possible for counselors to give that kind of direction? How will they be able to determine what is best for an individual student, so that they can confidently enroll him in specific career oriented classes. Are vocational aptitude tests the answer? There's no doubt but that these tests can be of assistance in counseling; for they can, for example, reveal a student's proficiency in the verbal and mathematical skills which are essential for certain kinds of occupations. On the basis of such test scores, a counselor can safely advise a student who has no end of difficulty with mathematics, that he ought not to consider a career in engineering. But, beyond that, a guidance counselor, even when armed with a battery of scores from differential aptitude tests, will find himself in no position to steer a student toward a specific career choice. He can *advise*—we have no quarrel with that. Fact is, we perhaps ought to pay more attention to vocational counseling, particularly at the high school level. But the problem, as we see it, with the concept of Career Education is that that advice must be translated into class assignment, designed to provide a student with entry level skills in a particular occupation. And what we're suggesting is that there might be something to be said for that kind of specialization in high

school...if there were some way of determining what would eventually be the work for which the student would need preparation. We'll have more to say about this later, but suffice it to say for now that, in the absence of an infallible guide to making that determination, a student is much better advised to concentrate on the basics.

There is a related problem, incidentally, in that, even if school counselors were indeed able to determine the particular careers for which their students are best suited, it would be impossible to provide "hands-on" experience for everyone—since, as one worrier put it, "the world of work ranges from the dishwasher to the Nobel physicist."

But, needless to say, proponents of Career Education have a ready response for such objections. They will insist, first of all, that the difficulty of settling on a specific occupation for which to train serves exactly to point out the necessity of making the vocational planning process a long one, beginning already in the elementary grades. In addition, that same difficulty underscores the importance of each student's having an opportunity, in school, to *explore a variety* of vocational possibilities. And, finally, they're not at all disturbed by the fact that there are some 23,000 different jobs available in the United States, and by the fact that changes in occupations occur with predictable regularity in the world of work. This presents no problem, they say, because Career Education is not designed to prepare a student for only *one specific occupation*. Rather, he's encouraged to learn about work in one of the fifteen clusters into which the 23,000 different jobs have been reduced. The "cluster" concept, therefore, broadens the base of vocational education, for when a student is equipped with a wide range of information about various jobs in a particular cluster, he will be able to move into and out of the jobs in that cluster much more easily.

One is inclined to wonder, is he not, how young people ever managed to obtain jobs before the days of Career Education. But they did—and still do. The Superintendent of a rather large city public school system recently reported to the city's Board of Education that all except about 200 of the previous year's graduates had either found jobs or were involved in additional training. He apparently felt that was, in a school system so large, a very good record. Yet, he was not entirely pleased, for, he said, "In most cases, however, this was by accident rather than as a

result of anything we as a school system did to bring it about." I had the distinct impression that he was disappointed that it had just *happened*. He was disappointed that he could not report that it had come about as the result of a concentrated effort on the part of the school to *prepare* students for entering the career of their choice. Perhaps he ought rather to have concluded from the success of his former students in finding employment that all the current emphasis on Career Education is quite unnecessary.

Detractors are indeed convinced that that's the case. Shuman, for example, writes that

American education could be making a colossal mistake in its vocational oversell.... Instead of herding American students into job preparation that may not be needed because the job is no longer available when a student graduates, let us make our case for helping students obtain certain skills needed for human communication and social integration. Then we can be certain students will possess the basic skills upon which any career should and can be built.

The fact is, of course, that preparation, properly understood, for his life's work is of central importance in one's education—from kindergarten through graduate school. The question, however, is this: Is a strong liberal arts education, as Shuman suggests, a better preparation for that work than is a program that stresses vocational training? Related to that: are the two mutually exclusive? And, finally, is there something we can learn from Career Education? We would like to "make our case" for the liberal arts, of course, and we want also to speak a bit to the related questions; but that will have to wait for another issue of this magazine.

With the coming of metrics, we must relearn some common expressions, as for example: It hit me like 907 kilograms of bricks.... 28.35 grams of prevention is worth 453.59 grams of cure.... Give him 2.54 centimeters and he will take 1.609 kilometers.... Peter Piper picked 8.81 liters of pickled peppers. —From *Georgia School Boards Association Bulletin* and *The Education Digest*.

SCIENCE: A BASIC IN THE CHRISTIAN SCHOOL CURRICULUM

Roderick Kreuzer, Ph.D.

In recent months much dissatisfaction has been expressed with respect to education in America. It is claimed that schools are failing to perform their task. Various factors are cited to support this claim.

One such factor is that of low test scores on a nation-wide basis. Results of various indicators such as the American College Testing Program, the Scholastic Aptitude Test, and the National Assessment Program have shown a definite and persistent decline in mathematics achievement of entering college freshmen. Specific examples will point out the situation more clearly. James J. Gallagher, Director of the Science and Mathematics Teaching Center at Michigan State University, stated in a recent article "On the basis of their performance on placement tests this year, 773 freshmen (11.5%) at Michigan State University were required to enroll in a remedial arithmetic course equivalent to the junior high school level. Also, 2822 freshmen (42.1%) were unable to demonstrate competence in high school algebra."¹ In this same article one is informed that each year for the past ten years, the proportion of students who were required to enroll in remedial mathematics programs has increased even though the standards have not increased. One might conclude that these students represent only underprivileged or minority groups. This is not the case. The article states that "students needing remediation come from nearly every high school, public, private, urban, suburban, rural, affluent, and poor."² A similar problem exists on nearly every college or university campus states Gallagher.

This problem goes beyond the field of mathematics. Gallagher continues "As with mathematics, increasing numbers

of students (11.4% of the entering class) require remedial work in reading and writing before they are able to proceed with their college work."³

The preceding facts clearly indicate that reading, writing, and mathematical skills, beyond question fundamental skills, are not being developed as they should be in the schools of the land.

Another reason for dissatisfaction with education is the excessive cost most of which is borne by the American taxpayer. Voters all too often are asked to approve millage increases with threats of cutbacks and curtailed programs if such proposed increases are not passed. Large expenditures for unproven innovative programs, busing, food programs which in some instances even include breakfast, large swimming pools, and lighted tennis courts have irritated various segments of society. In short, the taxpayer may get large, well-equipped, up-to-date facilities and costly programs, but not necessarily better education for the students.

A third reason for discontent is that the curriculum in American schools encompasses too many frills, too much that is nonessential, and that which is objectionable from a moral standpoint.

Rising out of this dissatisfaction is the call for a return to the basics of education.

What should be included in the basics or fundamentals of education is a question which then arises. This article seeks to answer that question with respect to the inclusion of science in the Christian school curriculum. (The term "science" as used in this article refers to the natural sciences.)

In secular education there are various arguments given to support the idea that science is one of the basics of the curriculum. Let us take a look at some of these arguments.

The first argument stresses that we live in an age in which science exerts profound influence in the world. The present age has been called by such names as the atomic age, the nuclear age, the space age, and also the electronic age. These all point to the fact that we live in what has been called the scientific age. Scientific knowledge has increased at an exponential rate in recent decades. Although presently declining in popularity, science still enjoys a position of great prominence. People continue to look to science to supply the answers to the problems and ills besetting mankind. Scientific and technological

advancements have had an effect on all mankind throughout the world. The development of nuclear weapons with the threat of a nuclear holocaust is just one example of this effect. With science playing such a prominent role in today's world, science education emphasizes the goal of scientific literacy. Scientific literacy may be defined as the acquisition of basic scientific knowledge, development of scientific skills, and cultivation of a positive attitude toward science and the natural world. In light of the above, surely science should be considered as a basic subject in the curriculum.

A second argument for the inclusion of science in the curriculum is that it is intensely practical. Science deals with that which is found in the natural world and it is in that world that we live. Everyday our senses are stimulated by the natural world. That which is all around us, that which we sense in myriad ways should surely be an object of our study in the school.

A third argument deals with the development of inquiry skills. The development of these skills has been emphasized by the Science Education Referent Committee (SERC) of the state of Michigan. This committee has among its purposes the providing of counsel and recommendations to the State Board of Education regarding the status and needs of science education in Michigan and the encouragement of the study and examination of issues in science education by Michigan school and college personnel. In its first major position paper entitled "Science Education--Its Use and Usefulness in the Elementary School Curriculum" SERC concludes, among other things, that "we must provide an appropriate emphasis on inquiry skills along with our present focus on basic communication skills."⁴ As an important beginning point for the development of inquiry skills, SERC suggested a strong science activity centered curriculum.

A fourth argument used for the right of science to occupy a place in the curriculum is with a view toward career preparation. A strong science background is necessary for many careers and an asset for others. For those high school students who desire to pursue one of those careers, science in the curriculum is either a necessity or of great value. However, many individuals do not decide on a specific career until after graduation from high school. By providing them with a strong science background, the number of career options will be increased for them.

The arguments given in the preceding paragraphs, as was

stated earlier, are those given in the realm of secular education. These arguments are pragmatic in nature, that is, they are based on a practical approach.

Should these arguments constitute the basis for including science in the curriculum of our Christian schools?

It is my position that science should be considered one of the basics of the Christian school curriculum on both the elementary and secondary levels, but not on the basis of the arguments just discussed. We must look at this matter from the perspective of Christian instruction, not from the perspective of pragmatism. Professor Herman Hanko has written "Christian instruction means several things, although it means essentially one thing. This one thing is instruction that is based entirely upon the truth of the Word of God."⁵ In writing further upon this matter, Professor Hanko states, "Scripture is the foundation, the basic structure, the pulse beat and life blood of all knowledge. Only when this is done is education 'Christian'."⁶

How can one apply this to science? Scripture throughout declares the truth that God is the sovereign Creator of the heaven and the earth and all that they contain. In the Old Testament in Psalm 33:6 we read "By the word of the Lord were the heavens made; and all the host of them by the breath of his mouth." In the New Testament Hebrews 11:3 states "Through faith we understand that the worlds were framed by the word of God, so that things which are seen were not made of things which do appear."

In the science classes which I teach, I like to look at science as the study of God's created, physical world.

In this creation God has revealed Himself. "The heavens declare the glory of God; and the firmament sheweth his handiwork." (Psalm 19:1)

The matter of how God has revealed himself unto us is dealt with in the Belgic Confession in Article II--"By what means God is made known unto us. We know him by two means: first, by the creation, preservation and government of the universe; which is before our eyes as a most elegant book, wherein all creatures, great and small, are as so many characters leading us to contemplate the invisible things of God, namely, his power and divinity, as the apostle Paul saith, Romans 1:20. ('For the invisible things of him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even his

eternal power and Godhead; so that they are without excuse.') All which things are sufficient to convince men, and leave them without excuse. Secondly, he makes himself more clearly and fully known to us by his holy and divine Word, that is to say, as far as it is necessary for us to know in this life, to his glory and our salvation."

It is the creation, preservation, and government of the universe which our church fathers have said is "as a most elegant book" and it is the created universe in particular that we study in science. The redeemed child of God studying this universe in its various aspects is led "to contemplate the invisible things of God, namely, his power and divinity..."

This contemplation leads the Christian to see the greatness of His God in creation and to praise Him for it. In the words of the songwriter we sing this praise when we sing from our Psalters the versification of Psalm 19 entitled "Nature's Tribute to God," the first two verses of which are as follows:

The spacious heav'ns declare
The glory of our God,
The firmament displays
His handiwork abroad;
Day unto day proclaims His might
And night His wisdom tells to night.

Aloud they do not speak,
They utter forth no word,
Nor into language break,
Their voice is never heard;
Yet through the world the truth they bear
And their Creator's pow'r declare.

Here then we have a basis for including science as a fundamental in the curriculum of our Christian schools. This world is the work of God's hands. He reveals Himself in it and as the believer investigates and studies the handiwork of the sovereign Creator, he marvels at these works and praises His God.

Again, in the words of the songwriter we sing the following words of the Psalter number entitled "The Greatness of God in Nature" which number is based on Psalm 104:

My soul, bless the Lord! the Lord is most great;
With glory arrayed, majestic His state;

The light is His garment, the skies are His shade,
And over the waters His courts He has laid.

He rides on the clouds, the wings of the storm,
The lightning and wind His mission perform;
The earth He has founded her station to keep,
And wrapped as a vesture about her the deep.

Having given a basis for including science in the curriculum of our Christian schools, which treatment of the matter in this article is by no means to be considered exhaustive, let us look briefly at some specific items from the field of science. These items reveal the greatness and the power of our Creator and lead one to say with the psalmist, "For thou are great, and doest wondrous things: thou art God alone." (Psalm 86:10)

From the science of astronomy we learn that the universe stretches out in distances so vast that it staggers the imagination. Astronomers measure those distances, in light years. A light year is the distance that light travels in one year. Light travels at a speed of 186,000 miles per second. Therefore, in one year light travels a distance of about six trillion miles. The Milky Way galaxy, the disc-shaped galaxy to which the earth belongs, is estimated to be 100,000 light years in diameter and 10,000 light years thick. These distances, however, are relatively small. Astronomers using the Hale Telescope at Mount Palomar Observatory, which is located northeast of San Diego, California, have photographed stars outside our galaxy that are about 1,600 million light-years away. Furthermore, some galaxies are believed to be at least three billion light years away. Just as one stands in awe with respect to the distances in our universe, likewise he stands in awe with respect to the number of heavenly bodies. A galaxy is an astronomical system composed of billions of stars. It is estimated that the Milky Way contains about 100 billion stars. Besides the Milky Way, however, astronomers have found that there are millions of other galaxies which exist. When one begins to calculate the number of stars using the preceding information, he comes up with numbers which are incomprehensibly great.

Another item is the atom, a particle of utmost importance in all branches of natural science. All the natural world is composed of tiny atoms. The atom is the fundamental unit of matter. As the distances and the numbers in the preceding paragraph are

inconceivably great, so the size of the atom is inconceivably small. So small are atoms that it would require a million average sized atoms placed side by side to equal the thickness of the paper on which this page is printed. Yet those tiny particles themselves are composed of electrons, protons, and neutrons. One of these particles, the electron, spins around the core or nucleus of the atom at the incredible speed of 186,000 miles per second. Furthermore, it is from the minute nuclei of atoms that we obtain nuclear energy, enormous in quantity.

The preceding items serve to point out the boundless handiwork of our infinite Creator. He has made the vast universe. He has made the tiny atom. Indeed, day by day we as a covenant people see our Father's handiwork all around us. Should not our covenant youth spend time studying, to the glory of God's name, that which their Heavenly Father has created?

¹James J. Gallagher, "Science and Math Preparation for Post-Secondary Education," *MSTA News Letter*, XXIII, No. 5, (October, 1977).

²*Ibid.*

³*Ibid.*

⁴"SERC Position Paper Stresses Importance of Science Education," *MSTA News Letter*, XXII, No. 1 (September, 1975).

⁵Herman Hanko, "*Principles of Education*," booklet of principles adopted by Hope Protestant Reformed Christian School, 1963.

⁶*Ibid.*

"Think what deadly injury you are doing if you be negligent and fail to bring up your child to usefulness and piety, and how you bring upon yourself all sin and wrath meriting hell even, in your dealings with your own children, even though you be otherwise ever so pious and holy. And because this is disregarded, God fearfully punishes the world so that there is no discipline, government, or peace, of which we all complain. But do you not see that it is our fault, for as we train them, we have spoiled them and they became disobedient children and subjects." —Martin Luther, *Large Catechism*.

THE NATURE OF GOD'S REVELATION IN HISTORY

Calvin Kalsbeek

All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: that the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works. II Timothy 3:16-17

To be "thoroughly furnished unto all good works" the child of God does not turn to the vain philosophies of men, but he looks instead to the infallible Word of God. This must be true of the child of God in his study of history (defined by Prof. H. Hanko on page 2 of *Principles of Education* as "the temporal revelation of the counsel of God with respect to all things beginning with creation and ending with the realization of God's purpose in the new heavens and earth.")). Repeatedly the child of God must ask himself, "How must I understand this event in the light of God's word?" The key to the understanding of history, then, is God's Word.

On this basis we will examine the promise which God announced to Adam and Eve after their fall and the implications of this promise upon all subsequent history. Also, this paper will demonstrate the progression in the revelation of that promise during the antediluvian period. And finally, in this connection I will show how the wicked in their very rebellion against God serve the promise and its revelation.

I. THE PROMISE AND ITS IMPLICATIONS ON SUBSEQUENT HISTORY

Adam and Eve, who were made by God perfectly righteous, fell into sin. The fall, however, was not something outside of God's plan for the human race; but rather, it was the means by which God's love, grace, and mercy could be revealed through the gift of His Son. That this is the case is seen immediately after

the fall when God proclaims in Genesis 3:15 this beautiful prophecy:

And I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed: it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel.

In the highest sense the conquering seed of the woman spoken of in this prophecy is Christ. It is the revelation of Christ, who is the focal point of history. Although Christ is the fulfillment, we must not fail to see that every child of God is represented in the seed of the woman; Christ and His people are one. Thus, the prophecy in Genesis 3:15 has tremendous implications for all subsequent history. On page 260 in *Reformed Dogmatics* Rev. Herman Hoeksema writes:

All the rest of the history of God's people in the world is plainly the realization of this prophecy. This prophecy is called the protevangel. It is called this because it is the beginning of the gospel of salvation; and all the rest of the revelation of the gospel in Christ may be conceived as only a further unfolding and expansion of this promise.

This means that Genesis 3:15 reveals in a nutshell what *all* history is--the struggle between the seed of the woman and the seed of the serpent.

The protevangel, therefore, certainly has something to say to the history teacher about his presentation of historical facts to the class. These facts must be, and can only be, understood correctly if they are interpreted in the light of the protevangel. From this perspective, for example, the history of Israel in Egypt can be understood. We see Israel as the seed of the woman whose heel is bruised while Israel is in bondage, and we observe the bruising of the head of the serpent when Israel is delivered and the Egyptians are drowned in the Red Sea. The history teacher must also make clear that the outcome of this "Battle of the Ages" between the seed of the woman and the seed of the serpent is never in question. Although many times it appears that the serpent's seed is victorious, especially, when God's people endure persecution at the hands of wicked men, yet the victory is always theirs. Persecution, too, is used by God as a means to that glorious victory. This is a victory which we must credit to the

conquering Christ, who crushed the head of the serpent, when He overcame sin and death for His people by His perfect sacrifice on the cross.

We, who live about six thousand years after the pronouncement of the protevangel and acknowledge the finished work of Christ on the cross, have little difficulty seeing Christ as the fulfillment of the protevangel; but could the people of that period in history see what we now see? Could they know and understand the implications of the protevangel as we do? The obvious answer is no. They didn't have all the Old Testament prophecies, the words of Christ, nor the testimony of the Apostles. Throughout Old Testament history God chose to reveal to His people in a progressive manner the meaning of the protevangel. In this connection Prof. H. Hanko on page three of *Principles of Education* writes that the dispensations before Christ "were all periods of time in which God progressively shed more light on the promise which He had made to our first parents in paradise." Rev. G. M. Ophoff in Volume one of his *Old Testament History*, p. 66, informs us that, "the Bible from Genesis to Revelation is a progressive revelation of what the triune Jehovah in His sovereign good pleasure purposed to accomplish in His Christ, namely, the salvation of the elect to His everlasting credit and glory." About this the Heidelberg Catechism has something to say. Lord's Day VI points out our need for a Mediator that is in one person both God and man. It goes on to say that *Christ* is that mediator, "who of God is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification and redemption" (I Corinthians 1:30). Then, question and answer number 19 illustrates the progression of which we are writing:

Q. 19. Whence knowest thou this?

A. From the holy gospel, which God himself first revealed in Paradise; and afterwards published by the patriarchs and prophets, and represented by the sacrifices and other ceremonies of the law; and lastly, has fulfilled it by His only begotten Son.

II. PROGRESSION OF THE PROMISE DURING THE ANTEDILUVIAN PERIOD

Evidence for this progressive revelation can be seen throughout the various periods of Old Testament history, but for our purposes let us concentrate our efforts on the time before the

flood.

- A. Already only moments after the pronouncement of the protevangel, God made for Adam and Eve coats of skins (Genesis 3:21). God shed innocent blood to cover their physical shame. This certainly typified the shed blood of Christ for their sins. God had determined for His people the way of sin and grace, and already here He begins to reveal it. Of course, Adam and Eve could not see the complete meaning of this covering by God, but certainly the shed blood and covering with skins did not come without instruction which pointed to Christ (I would speculate that they were at this time instructed as to the nature of the sacrifices they were to offer.)
- B. The sacrifices of Cain and Abel reveal the antithetical relationship of the seed of the woman to the seed of the serpent which was spoken of in the protevangel.
- C. The murder of Abel by Cain demonstrates the "Battle of the Ages" pointed to in the protevangel. Furthermore, Cain exposes himself as being the seed of the serpent. It is evident therefore that the seed of the protevangel is not a physical seed but a spiritual seed.
- D. Enoch's walking with God demonstrated the covenant relationship which God had established with His people, and it pointed ahead to the perfect realization of that covenant relationship in Christ.
- E. The translation of Enoch by God revealed that the protevangel's promise of deliverance meant more than mere physical deliverance. In addition it pointed to a "better country." This translation, which resulted because of the persecution the "sons of God" were experiencing at that time (Hebrews 11:5, Jude 14-15), reaffirmed to an even stronger degree the bruising of the woman's seed.
- F. The prophecy of Genesis 3:15 speaks of the victory of the seed of the woman, but as time passed it must have become more and more obvious that that victory could never be accomplished by man. The seed of the woman grew smaller as the "sons of God saw the daughters of men that they were fair; and they took them wives of all which they chose" (Genesis 6:2). From a physical point of view the seed of the woman was no match for the seed of the serpent. Was it possible for the seed of the woman to

be victorious when they numbered just a few souls in contrast to the millions which constituted the seed of the serpent? It is this state of helplessness and hopelessness that God uses to shed more light on the promise made to Adam and Eve. Their deliverance must come from outside of themselves. God must deliver them. Although the Flood itself provided a temporal deliverance, this temporal bruising of the serpent's head was at this time the clearest revelation of the Spiritual Deliverer to which the protevangel pointed. That the flood was only a temporary deliverance became clear to Noah shortly after the flood when he saw a duplication of the wickedness which was prevalent before the flood. Certainly Noah could see that this life held no hope for the seed of the woman. The flood must open the eyes of God's people a little bit more with respect to the protevangel. The victory of which Genesis 3:15 speaks is a *complete* victory, but a victory which in the complete sense this earth cannot afford. The flood and all of the temporal bruising of the serpent's head point to a final *spiritual* victory.

III. THE WICKED SERVE THE PROMISE AND ITS REVELATION

These temporal bruising, both of the seed of the serpent and of the woman, must be made clear in our history instruction. In addition, we must be able to demonstrate in this instruction that the seed of the serpent *serves* the seed of the woman. The serpent in rebellion against God attempts to destroy the church throughout history, yet this very rebellion is God's means to accomplish the temporal victories which the church experiences and also the final victory at the return of Christ. Think of the events of the antediluvian period used to demonstrate a progressive revelation of the protevangel's promise. It isn't difficult to see in these events that even the works of the wicked contributed to the revelation of that promise and the salvation of the church. Cain, for instance, when he murdered the righteous Abel participated in the "Battle of the Ages" which is prophesied in the protevangel. By this act he was the very means whereby Abel was delivered from this bondage of corruption. Although Cain meant it for evil, God used it for good. Thus, wicked Cain was a tool in God's hand to reveal to God's people the meaning of

the promise of Genesis 3:15. Think, too, of the rapid development of sin during the time before the flood. It was unquestionably direct rebellion against God and a result of the attempt of the serpent to overthrow the seed of the woman, but this rebellion against God merely serves the protevangel's promise of victory and is another step in its revelation. The result of this rebellion is the flood which consumes all mankind except for God's people. Not only did this destruction of the world constitute a temporal victory for the woman's seed, but it also served to provide the most beautiful typical revelation of the Final Deliverer that God's people had yet received.

This subjection of the serpent's seed does not stop at the flood. Throughout history the seed of the serpent must bow before the seed of the woman. Although the subservience of the serpent's seed to that of the woman's is sometimes difficult to see, especially for the child of God in the midst of the "battle"; yet the Word of God in Isaiah 45:4 sounds forth comfort to the child of God throughout the ages.

For Jacob my servant's sake and Israel mine elect, I have even called thee (Cyrus) by thy name: I have surnamed thee, though thou hast not known me.

The School's Calling to Teach the Children to Keep the Way of the Lord

Rev. David Engelsma

It was my privilege to receive my grade school education from the third grade on in a Protestant Reformed School. The memories of this training are overwhelmingly favorable, but I also have certain bad memories concerning this training. All of these bad memories have to do with what I consider to have been a shortcoming in the school, a shortcoming as regards teaching

the children to live a Christian life. I all too distinctly remember, for example, that almost all of us children in the upper grades at one time carried on a campaign of cruelty against a certain child, a campaign that went on and on, as I remember, and that consisted of ostracizing that child and constantly referring to that child, to that child's face, in such terms as "stinky", meanwhile holding our noses. I also recall with sorrow that we boys in the upper grades would engage in fist fights, not an infrequent blow-up that you can expect from boys of that age, but a regular thing. Those fist fights often resulted in bloody noses and even broken hands. They would occur on the playground, and they would even occur in the classroom during the lunch hour.

I do not intend to criticize the teachers concerning these things because they were our sins, part of the sins of youth that often we have prayed God not to remember against us. Nor do I mean to indicate that the teachers tolerated this evil behavior. I remember very well how angry a certain teacher was when she caught us fist-fighting on the playground (to this day I can see her blazing eyes) and that she chastised us for that sin by making us stay in and write lines. What troubles me, however, is that no matter how I search my memory I can not recall that there ever was any warning to us boys that by this behavior we were guilty of murder in breaking the sixth commandment of the law of God, or that there was ever any exhortation of us to love each other as fellow citizens of the kingdom of our Lord Jesus Christ. Nor do I remember that anyone ever addressed us, singly or collectively, concerning our destruction of that student whom we were attacking, perhaps even by applying the words of I Corinthians 12:23ff. to the situation, words, you will remember, that have to do with bestowing more abundant honor upon members of the body of Christ which we think to be less honorable, and words that conclude that there should be no schism in the body but that the members should have the same care one for another.

Looking back, I wonder whether there was much emphasis on teaching the children to live a Christian life. I wonder whether the school rather was not viewed as a place where subjects were taught and where all of the emphasis lay upon the fact that those subjects had to be taught in harmony with the faith that we hold dear, the Reformed faith. Perhaps, I am wrong. Perhaps, my memory is faulty. Perhaps, these admonitions were given, but we did not let them make any impression on us. I hope I am wrong.

But if it were the case that there was not this emphasis on living the Christian life, there was a serious lack in the education itself, for the Christian school has the calling to teach the children to walk in the way of the Lord.

It is my conviction that the Christian school has an important role in teaching the children to live a responsible Christian life. You may describe this calling in different ways. You may use the terminology of the topic assigned to me this morning: "Teaching the children to live a responsible Christian life." You might also speak of teaching the children to keep God's commandments which is how Psalm 78 puts it. I prefer to use the words of Genesis 18:19 "...teaching the children to keep the way of the Lord." God speaks to Abraham here and says, "For I know him (that is, Abraham), that he will command his children and his household after him and they shall keep the way of the Lord, to do justice and judgment; that the Lord may bring upon Abraham that which he has spoken of him."

Not only is the teaching of the children to keep the way of the Lord a role that the school plays, but I contend that it is a solemn, important, divine calling upon the Christian school and upon every teacher in our Christian schools. That this is so should be plain, first of all, from the fact that it is simply impossible for the school to refrain from teaching the children to keep the way of the Lord. There is evidence of that impossibility. For one thing there will be instruction concerning Christian living in the very example that the teacher himself sets personally. The teacher will display, and cannot help but display, love for God and obedience unto God's law--for example, his faithfulness to his task, his fairness, his kindness to the students, especially to those who are in some kind of distress, his godly speech, and the like. In his life among the students, the Christian school teacher will display these characteristics, and they will be instructive for the children regarding their own life. Also, there will be such instruction in the formal aspects of the education. I refer to such things as the fact that students are expected to be on time; the fact that the students are required to do their assignments and to do them in the allotted time; the fact that they are forbidden to interfere with the work of the other students; and the fact that they are required to obey the ordinary commands of the teacher, even such a command as "take out your books now." The very structure of the teaching itself teaches the children to keep the way of the

Lord. In addition, there will be such instruction in the unavoidable discipline that goes on in the school. The teacher rebukes, warns, and chastises. In every rebuke there is an implied judgment on certain behavior that that behavior is evil and an implied judgment on other behavior that that behavior is good. This all by itself teaches the children to keep the way of the Lord. Besides, teaching the children to keep the ways of God is an integral part of the actual teaching of the subject material. Unavoidably, you will be teaching the children to keep the way of the Lord. You cannot possibly teach history without condemning revolution and the idolatry of Greece and Rome. You cannot possibly teach literature without saying something about the deification of man, about despair and hope, about vengeance, and about guilt.

Such is the impossibility of the schools not teaching the children to keep the way of the Lord that the alternative is that the teaching teaches them to despise the way of the Lord. It is either/or. Either the school teaches them to keep the way of the Lord or the school must necessarily teach them to despise the way of the Lord. That is after all what goes on day after day, year in and year out, in the public schools of our land. We should remember this if we are inclined for some reason to minimize or to remove the teaching of the children to keep Jehovah's way. This then cannot be the issue—whether it is possible not to teach the children to keep the ways of the Lord. It is simply impossible not to do this in the Christian school.

Is such teaching merely an unavoidable but completely secondary aspect of the work of the school? Is this instruction a sort of accidental by-product of the school's labor? Or is it the case that this teaching itself is an important part of the school's, that is the teacher's, task? Is it even the case that this is the teacher's calling from God? Could it be that teaching the children to keep the way of the Lord is the main purpose for which the school has been established, and that every other aspect of the work of the school, including the teaching of the subjects and the development of the child's natural abilities, are subservient to this spiritual-ethical, practical instruction?

How we answer these questions will make all the difference in the world as to what kind of schools we have and as to what kind of work the teachers give themselves to do. If our answer is the former, that is, if our answer is that teaching the children to

keep the way of Jehovah is merely an accidental, secondary aspect of the school's calling, we will not concern ourselves overly much that there is a student who is called "Stinky," as long as all of the students, and "Stinky," get good grades in all of the subjects of the curriculum. We will not make much of it that "glorious" Greece was an abominable pest house of idolatry and homosexuality. Indeed a student may never even hear, much less have impressed upon him, that this was the truth about "glorious" Greece, for the only concern of the teacher will be that the student knows all of the Greek city states, the names of all of the philosophers and orators, and the names of all of the gods in Greece's pantheon.

But if the answer to our questions is the latter, that is, if we maintain that one of the main aspects of the calling of the teacher in the Christian school is to teach the children to keep the way of the Lord, that this, in fact, is the main calling of the Christian school, then we will stop all the wheels of the machinery of education, if necessary, until the students confess their sin of hatred of the neighbor and be reconciled to "Stinky." The teaching of the history of Greece and Rome will, without sacrificing any knowledge of the facts, impress upon the students the judgment of God on the ungodliness and unrighteousness of those men, which teaching, implicitly or explicitly, will be accompanied by instruction of the covenant children how themselves to live uprightly in the world before the face of God.

Our answer, in the Protestant Reformed Christian schools—genuine Christian schools, must be that the school has a calling to teach the children to keep the way of Jehovah, indeed that this is the main calling of the school. This is the task to which all of the other admittedly important tasks are subservient. The main task of you teachers then is not academic and intellectual. The main task is spiritual-ethical and practical in nature.

The proof of this is, first of all, the history of Christian day-school education. The Christian school did not begin with us. It has a long and honorable history. The testimony of that history without exception is that the Christian school must teach the children to keep the way of Jehovah. The Christian school must teach the children to live responsible Christian lives in the world. Because I am going to be a student of brevity this morning, believe it or not, I will bring up only one instance from history that substantiates this assertion. That instance is the original

version of Art. 21 of the church order of Dordt. You will remember that the present version of that article reads as follows: "The consistory shall see to it that there are good Christian schools in which the parents have their children instructed according to the demands of the covenant." That was not how the article originally read; originally the article said this: "Everywhere consistories shall see to it that there are good schoolmasters who shall not only instruct the children in reading, writing, languages, and the liberal arts, but likewise in godliness and the Catechism!" Ah, there you have it—"but likewise in godliness and the Catechism!" That article was worded in such a way as to ward off a very real danger. That very real danger is that only the subjects be taught and that the schoolmaster only concern himself with the development of the natural abilities of the students. That article was worded in such a way as to place strong emphasis on godliness and the Heidelberg Catechism; godliness and the Catechism are mentioned last in the article. Now, this perfectly captures the spirit of the entire history of Christian education. I admit that we no longer have this version of the church order. It has been changed. However, the reason for that change was not opposition to the parochialism that was implied in that original version—the consistory shall see to it that there are good schoolmasters. That went in the direction of parochialism. Because of our clearer insight that Christian school education must be parental, this version was changed somewhat. Nevertheless our present version of this article really incorporates that same insistence on the teaching of godliness, for our present version speaks of good Christian schools *according to the demand of the covenant*. The demand of the covenant is the demand for teaching the children to keep the way of Jehovah. This is plain in every passage of Scripture that calls the parents to teach their children. This is plain, therefore, in every passage of Scripture on which our Christian schools are founded. Every passage not only mentions this as an element of the instruction that parents must give their children, but also maintains that this shall be the content and purpose of all of the instruction that parents give their children. The content and purpose of the instruction that covenant parents give their children must be this, that we teach them to live rightly.

Let me briefly illustrate this from several representative passages of Holy Scripture. First of all, this is evident in the

well-known sixth chapter of Deuteronomy, verses four and following. This passage calls parents in Israel to teach their children diligently. We read that parents must teach "them" diligently to their children, namely, "these words of verse six, which words are these: 'The Lord our God is one Lord, and thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thine heart and with all thy mind and with all thy strength.'" That is what the parents in Israel must teach diligently to their children. They must teach their children: "Jehovah our God is one Jehovah, and you must love him with all that you are." Negatively, the purpose of this teaching, according to later verses in Deuteronomy 6, is that we and our children not forget Jehovah—not forget Jehovah when we are solidly established in our land flowing with milk and honey, in the midst of our flourishing farms and industries, and then, inevitably, go after the other gods. This is the purpose of the instruction of our children.

This is also evident from the Psalm which was read this morning, Psalm 78, the first eight verses. This, of course, is a grand covenant Psalm. We have sung it so many times at baptisms, at confessions of faith, and at convocations and graduations of the Christian schools. This Psalm insists that fathers must teach the Lord's praises to their children with the purpose, according to vs. 7, "that they might set their hope in God and not forget the works of God, but keep his commandments."

Of the book of Proverbs, nothing has to be said, because the practical nature of the instruction that the believing father gives to his child is simply there to be seen by anyone.

Also Genesis 18:19 brings out clearly that we must instruct our children to keep the way of the Lord. "For I know him," God says there, "that he will command his children and his household after him, and they shall keep the way of the Lord." Abraham's total command of his children and household has the nature and purpose to teach his household to keep the way of Jehovah, which is then further defined as doing justice and judgment.

These passages are applicable to the Christian school. They constitute the very basis of our schools. We may not adopt this basis and then elide the unique content and purpose of the instruction that is proposed in this basis. True, the calling in these passages is directed to parents. The parents must see to it that the children keep God's commandments. However, the

Christian school represents the parents' delegating the carrying out of this calling in certain respects to teachers who come to stand in their place. When the parents do this, when they give over this calling in certain respects to the Christian school, the parents cannot change the nature and purpose of the calling. That calling is laid down forever with finality by God, and that calling is: "Teach the children to keep My way."

This kind of instruction is desperately needed. It is needed by our children. Of course, I do not mean that they need this instruction in the school in place of instruction in the home and the church, but I mean that they need this in the school along side of that same instruction which they get in the home and in the church. That is due to the sinful nature of our children. The need for this is sharpened by the times in which we live. On every hand, by every means, our children are tempted to depart from the way of the Lord. The world is a gigantic school. It attempts to teach our children to depart from God's way in every form of ungodliness and unrighteousness. In the midst of it stands a school that teaches them to keep Jehovah's way.

We may briefly answer the question, How does the teacher do this? In the first place, this calling to teach the children to keep God's way must frame the teacher's view of his task. How does the teacher look at his task? What is his perspective when he steps back and looks at himself and what he is doing? He must conceive his task to be teaching the children not only to *know* God's way, but also to *keep* God's way. This is the word Jehovah used in Genesis 18:19: "*keep*". The teacher must see himself and his relationship to the child more as a master in relationship to the master's disciples than as a lecturer to his audience. And even that does not say enough. He must view himself as the parent in whose place he stands, bringing up these children to keep the ways of the Lord.

Having this view of his task, the Christian school teacher will teach obedience of life, first, in and with the subjects of the curriculum. When I say that it is calling of the teacher to do this spiritual-ethical, practical work, I do not, of course, intend that he dispense with the subjects and replace them with courses in ethics. I do not even mean that the Christian school should add a course in Christian living. Not at all. The school must teach the subjects. Yes, but it must teach the subjects so, that every thought of the child is in captivity to Christ and thus the child

keeps the way of Jehovah with his mind. Keeping the way of Jehovah is not something that is only done with the body or even primarily done with the body. After all, Deuteronomy 6 demands that the child love the Lord his God with his *mind*. This is basic to any child's keeping the way of Jehovah with his body. What are his thoughts? On what way is he walking with his soul? That will determine how he behaves himself with his body. To keep the way of the Lord is taught by teaching every subject in the light of Holy Scripture and to the end that God be glorified. In and with the teaching of the subjects, there may be no hesitation to draw out for the students such practical implication as the good and bad use of music—what music to listen to and what music not to listen to; what kind of books to read and what kind of books and magazines to avoid; and the like.

Having the right view of his task, the Christian school teacher will teach the children to obey God's commandments, secondly, by godly discipline. I mean here not only discipline in the narrower sense of chastisement, but also discipline in the broader sense of an ordering of the child's life. It includes such a thing as seeing to it that a tall girl does not slump, but confidently maintains her posture. The teacher must see the necessity to rebuke and chasten not as some extraneous matter to be gotten out of the way as quickly as possible so that he can go on with the main course of teaching the subjects, but as an essential aspect of his task, as the reason why he is there, as the reason why the child is there. He will handle all matters of discipline, then, wisely and carefully. The teacher will rebuke in love; he will condemn error in terms of God's law and in light of the covenant standing of the children. When he calls them to obedience, whether the obedience of taking out their books or the obedience of loving one another on the playground, he will do so in terms of their gratitude toward their covenant God for bringing them out of the bondage of sin and death through Jesus Christ. Certainly, there will be some matters that will need to be given over to the parents. Maybe, there will be matters that have to be referred to the pastor of the church, with the consent of the parents. But it is impossible to turn all disciplinary matters which arise in school over to parents and pastors. Even if this were possible, it would not be preferable; for the simple fact is, as every parent knows, that there are many things that must be dealt with when they occur, and, if they are not dealt with when

they occur, it is really impossible later on to deal with them at all. This is an awesome responsibility. But what else do we mean when we say that the Christian school teacher stands in the place of the parent? To say that is to acknowledge the awesome responsibility of every teacher in the Christian school. He is responsible for nothing less than rearing the covenant child to walk in God's way and not to depart from it. Like the parent, the teacher who takes this seriously trembles at his calling.

Thirdly, as I have already indicated, you teach the children to keep the Lord's way by your own example. The love of God has to be on your forehead, as it has to be on the forehead of the parent in whose place you stand.

The school, then, is not only preparatory for life in the future, but it is the place of living, the place where the child lives today. The school, then, is not a think tank for brains, but a place of the rearing of the whole covenant child.

If this be so, if the school has this calling, teachers are required who themselves know, love, and walk in the way of Jehovah. Required are teachers who are one with us parents in our regard for this ultimate goal of all of the upbringing of the children. It is not so important to me what kind of a person you are, if you are only going to be teaching my children how much 2 and 2 is; but if you are going to be teaching my children to keep the way of the Lord, then I care a great deal what kind of a person you are. I care a great deal about your spiritual qualifications, whether you are one with me in your knowledge of the way of the Lord, whether you stand with me in the warnings and prohibitions and exhortation that I give my children concerning the Christian life. I will not stand for it that you and I work at cross purposes in this vital matter.

It is striking that the requirement in Scripture for those who teach covenant children is that they themselves are keeping the way of the Lord. Think of Deuteronomy 6 once more. How does that begin? "And these words shall be in thine heart." Only then does it add: "thou shalt teach them diligently unto thy children." How does Genesis 18 begin? "And I know him" This is what Jehovah says about Abraham, "I know Abraham." This does not mean that God knows that Abraham is going to command his children so that they will keep the way of the Lord. The text does not speak of God knowing *something*, but it speaks of God knowing *someone*. God knows *Abraham*, knows him with the

personal knowledge of electing love. Only as someone known by God can and will Abraham then go on to command his household so that they do justice and judgment.

To carry out the high calling of commanding the children to keep Jehovah's way, one must himself be keeping the way of Jehovah. So, the Christian school teacher must have spiritual qualifications as well as academic qualifications. I have no hesitation to say that the spiritual qualifications are the primary qualifications as far as the Christian school teacher is concerned. The primary qualification is that he be a godly man, or that she be a godly woman. What we need, and, thank God, what we have, are good school masters and good school marms, good because they have been born again and because they are indwelt by the good and Holy Spirit of Jesus Christ. This godliness must be exercised, must be daily exercised, by the Christian school teacher who keeps himself, by the grace of God, in Jehovah's way. Thus, he can teach the children to keep the way of the Lord.

I thank you.

"I would have no one chosen for a preacher who has not previously been a school-teacher. But at the present time our young men want to become preachers at once, and to avoid the labor of school-keeping. When one has taught about ten years, then he can give it up with a good conscience; for the labor is too heavy and the appreciation is small. Yet a school-master is as important to a city as a pastor is. We can do without mayors, princes, and noblemen, but not without schools; for these must rule the world. We see today that there is no potentate or lord who is not ruled by a jurist or theologian; for they are ignorant themselves, and are ashamed to learn. Therefore schools are indispensable. And if I were not a preacher, there is no other calling on earth I would rather have." —Martin Luther



SLOTHFULNESS

A sloth is a mammal, created by God to live its life in relative inactivity. The encyclopedia says it is known for its proverbial sluggishness.

Man was created by God to live an active life of service as king of God's creation. God's children are accountable stewards of all that God gives them — time-wise and talent-wise also. This is not an easy thing for a student in school to hold constantly in his consciousness as he does his assigned work in the allotted time.

And what a variety of natures and abilities there are in one classroom. There is the child who attacks his work with vigor as soon as an assignment is given, does it quickly and carefully, and is ready for the next assignment. But many times the element of pride preempts that of faithful stewardship. There is also the slow, methodical worker who needs those few extra minutes in order to turn in his best, and doesn't always find them. Every classroom contains a few quick careless workers who just want to get the work done no matter how — who never check the assignment over, and more often than not omit important parts. Much like them is the person who begins slowly and carefully but soon tires of that laborious work and quickly finishes the assignment with answers that are completely irrelevant to the questions. If required to do the work over under the watchful eye of an insistent teacher, the previously "evasive" answers are found without too much difficulty, and the student at least feels a sense of accomplishment. The teacher worries about that type of student. Will that child ever realize that he must put forth that extra effort the first time he is given the task to do? Why must he always have to be forced to do that?

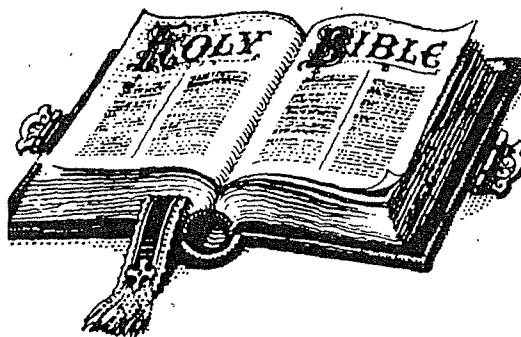
How can a parent and a teacher apply the yardstick of God's Word to these few but time-demanding slothful workers? One must begin in the early formative years and never let up. The Bible (and especially the book of Proverbs) is replete with admonitions to unprofitable sluggards. Much of the philosophy and attitude of the world today is in direct contrast to this scriptural teaching. There is a definite and necessary place for

praise and encouragement, but it must be subservient to the demand of God for complete commitment to His service. As adults we also need this constant reminder. In our affluent age less and less work-time is required of children and of adults. More and more time is available for fun and recreation. This becomes an insidious enervating trend — and we can see the children following in the footsteps of their parents.

How quickly an older student becomes accustomed to doing much less than his best. When reproved, he has several excuses handy. He can't be expected to do as well as others because he was not given superior abilities; or he never has enough time to do better; or what difference does it really make anyway!

It makes all the difference in the world when one labors in gratitude to a loving Father, anticipating His response: "Well done, good and faithful servant, enter into the rest of Thy Lord."

Miss W. Koole
Hope Protestant Reformed Christian School



The following is a list of the manuals for teachers that have been produced by teachers at summer workshops sponsored by the Federation of Protestant Reformed Christian Schools. A few copies of each of these are available.

Literature Studies Guide (1970)

Biblical Perspectives in the Social Sciences (1971)

A Writing Program for the Covenant Child (1972)

Music Curriculum Guide (1973)

Teacher's Manual for Ancient World History

The Church of God in all the ages of the history of this world has been called to battle scoffers and heretics but especially in these days when Modernism and Scientism abound the Church of the twentieth century is called to educate her sons and daughters in the Truth. Evolutionists, false philosophers, and sophists pervert the truth in the name of science and intellectual integrity. They are the children of their father, the Devil, who is the liar from the beginning."

by Agatha Lubbers

"Prologue," *Teacher's Manual for Ancient World History*

Perspectives needs manuscripts or articles from teachers, parents, or any other interested persons. We will also print any pertinent letters regarding our publication.