

EDITORIALS

Our Own Christian High School

Time was, when Reformed Christians in our country all agreed that high school education must be based on specifically Christian principles.

Many there were in those days that could not concede the necessity of separate Christian schools for primary education and that strenuously opposed the movement for such an institution. But generally even these would agree that with respect to higher education the matter stood different, and few there were that would send their sons and daughters to a public institution to receive their secondary and higher education.

In those days comparatively few had the privilege to enjoy a high school education. The law did not compel anyone to pursue the path of learning beyond the stage of the eighth grade and in general it was those that intended to prepare themselves for one of the professions that entered high school.

And it was natural, considering that the ministry was the chief profession for which young men prepared themselves, that these special high schools were denominational in character. They were church schools. And the instruction was based on or supposed to be based on the confession of the church that supported the school.

But the situation has changed radically as far as high school education is concerned.

First of all the law is no longer satisfied with an eight grade education of our boys and girls, but compels them all to attend the high school, at least up to a certain age. It is no longer a question for the parents to decide whether or not the graduate from the grade school shall continue his studies. It is a matter of compulsion. In this respect the high school now stands on a level with the primary school, and the number of high school pupils is greatly increased.

And a second important change, resulting from the first, is that the church felt no longer obliged to furnish this education for boys and girls of high school age, and like the schools for primary instruction the high school became a society-school. The curriculum was expanded and besides the various academic courses commercial courses were offered to those that looked forward to a place in some office or in the business-world in general.

And again, the schools lost a good deal of their specifically denominational character and became just *Christian* high schools.

Members of churches of different denominations could join the society that supported the school.

Thus, at least, it was nominally.

And thus it must also be explained, that in Grand Rapids, when our people had been expelled from the fellowship of the Christian Reformed Churches, because they were convinced that these churches had departed from the Reformed truth by adopting the Three Points, and when they had organized the Protestant Reformed denomination, they continued to support the existing Christian High School in that city, to belong to the society that supported it and to send their children there.

Such is the situation at the present time.

It is at least ten years ago that we pointed out that this situation is by no means ideal and pleaded for a Christian High School of our own.

And in the course of these years our conviction that as a Protestant Reformed people in Grand Rapids and vicinity we need our own institution for secondary and, the Lord willing, for higher education, was gradually confirmed.

More than ever I am convinced that we should put forth all our efforts to establish such a school, and that, with God's help and blessing we shall surely see such efforts crowned with success.

Last spring a society was organized for this purpose; surely, a step in the right direction.

But the society hardly counts one hundred members; and the cause is not only worthy of the united efforts of all our people, but needs it,

And to bring this important matter to your attention and bind it upon your heart, to solicit your support and your prayers for this cause, we make this plea.

Why is it of great importance that we establish a high school of our own?

First of all, because Christian instruction must be as specific as possible, if it is to be a power for good. And this is especially true of secondary education. We do not mean to convey the notion that in the primary grades the instruction may be less specific, can safely assume a more general character. Far be it from us to suggest such a fallacious notion! But the age when our boys and girls attend high school is the period in their life when they begin to reflect, to think for themselves, when, more than in the years of their childhood, they are able to imbibe and understand definite principles and doctrines, when it is of utmost importance that, both with respect to their thinking and to their conduct they are guided in the right direction.

It is true, that the instruction and guidance they receive or ought to receive in the home, in church, in the catechetical classes, are of great influence.

But this does not mean that the instruction offered to them in the high school can be less specific.

A so-called *Christian* instruction in the general sense of the word, without emphasis on specific principles is not sufficient.

The instruction must be *Reformed*.

And for us this means *Protestant* Reformed.

Specific this instruction must be, not only with application to those courses that deal directly with bible-knowledge and doctrine or with the history of the Church, but the principles that are dear to us must permeate as much as possible all the branches of study, such as history, civil government, physics, chemistry, physiology, etc.

And if we cannot be satisfied with a little general Christianity, if the instruction of our boys and girls of high school age is to be of a specifically Reformed character, it cannot be denied that the question of common grace must enter in immediately. It certainly constitutes a fundamental difference in the basis of your education whether you proceed from the principle of common grace or from the tenet that God is gracious to His people only; whether you believe that there is a general influence of grace through the Spirit of God restraining sin and improving men, or whether you insist **that** the natural man is actually totally depraved; whether you view the natural man as being able to perform much good in this world, or whether you adhere to the truth that all his works are at all times only sin outside of the regenerating grace of the Spirit of Christ.

Now we certainly agree on this, *that we do not want the principle-s of common grace inculcated into our boys and girls!*

And we do not want a high school education that is based upon and permeated by these principles!

Our ideal, our purpose is specific instruction!

But if we are serious about **this** and want to reach this ideal, strive for it, realize this purpose, there is only one way: a school of our own.

This article is not written to criticise the existing Christian High School in Grand Rapids. Mere opposition to an existing institution is negative and cannot very well constitute the basis for a new movement. We wish to be positive.

But so much must be said, that in as far as the Christian High School of Grand Rapids is specific, it is Christian Reformed, and it is based on the principle of common grace.

We could easily prove this statement, not only from personal contact with catechumens that attend this school, but also by quotations from text-books used.

The theory of common grace is certainly upheld and inculcated there.

We do not write this as an indictment against the school.

The overwhelming majority of the society-membership that support the school is Christian Reformed.

The membership of the Board is almost entirely Christian Reformed.

And the same is true of the teaching-staff.

How could such a school be blamed for teaching specifically Christian Reformed tenets? And how could it be asked to refrain from inculcating the theory of common grace, a doctrine considered so important by the Christian Reformed Churches that because of its denial they expelled their brethren of the Protestant Reformed Churches from their fellowship?

In the light of these facts one hardly feels justified to protest when these principles are inculcated also into our boys and girls that attend the school.

Once more, in this we do not blame the school. The more specific it will be on its own basis, the more we will respect it for the courage of its conviction.

But on our part we are convinced that no specific Christian instruction can stand on the basis of the theory of Common Grace.

There is only one way, only one course' for us to pursue, if we would strive for the ideal: a Christian High School of our own!

Besides, if we will unite our efforts to realize this purpose, it will create a new interest in the cause of Christian Instruction among us.

There are not a few of us, who send their children to the Christian Primary School, but when graduation day is past, do not hesitate to entrust them to the instruction of the public high school. The reason given is frequently that the Christian High is little better and that they refuse to have the teaching of common grace inculcated into their children. Whether or not this is always the real motive we leave to their own conscience. We never did, and we do not now justify this course of procedure. We believe that as long as as we have no school of our own, the existing Christian High is the institution they should attend. But surely the reason given cannot be gainsaid. And this paralyzes our action in favor of Christian High School instruction as such. Who feels like fighting for a cause and speak of principle, when he knows in his heart that there is little or no specific principle at stake?

A Christian High of our own, a school based on specifically Protestant Reformed principles, is worth fighting for, deserves our enthusiasm, will create a new interest in the cause of Christian Instruction among us.

But why start with a Christian *High* School, you probably ask.

First of all, because both in view of the important period of the high school age in the life of our boys and girls and with a view to existing conditions, I think that the need of a Christian High School is most urgent.

Secondly, there is no reason, why in a city like

Grand Rapids there should be only one Christian High School. There are thousands of families perhaps that do or could support this school. The school is crowded. Before long more room will have to be created, new buildings erected. But there is no reason why in a city like Grand Rapids there should not be more than one high school, just as there are several grade schools. Why, then, not build a school of our own?

Thirdly, a high school, where all the children of Protestant Reformed parents of high school age from Grand Rapids and vicinity can attend is more easily realized than a grade school. There will be fewer children, we will need fewer teachers, and the children are of such an age that they can easily travel a few miles to attend a centrally located high school of our own.

You object that it will prove to be impossible?

To this I answer:

First, that there are some six hundred Protestant Reformed families in Grand Rapids only. If we unite and put our shoulder to the wheel there is no reason why we could not establish and support one high school.

Secondly, if you are agreed on the principle you will surely also agree that it is worth all our effort to try.

No attempt was ever made.

Join our society.

And let us have your much needed support!

H. H.

NOTICE

The Annual Meeting of the R. F. P. A., will be held Thursday, September 23, at 7:45 o'clock, in the basement of the First Protestant Reformed Church, corner Fuller Ave., and Franklin St. Agents will be on hand at 7:45 to receive membership fees and subscriptions. The board made the following nomination for Board members:

Rev. R. Veldman, (Roosevelt Park)

Mr. M. Gritters, (Creston)

Mr. Ralph Schaafsma

Mr. Al Wychers

Mr. B. Woudenberg

Mr. F. Pipe

The Board has asked Rev. H. Hoeksema to give us a short speech.

Sec'y.

Zwier Verstaat Het Nog Niet

Zoo dachten we, toen we lazen wat Ds. Zwier schreef in enkele nummers van De Wachter over de verkondiging des evangelies in verband met het eerste der Drie Punten.

We waren een beetje ten achter gekomen met het lezen van zijn artikelenreeks onder het opschrift: "Goddelijke Souvereiniteit en Menschelijke Verantwoordelijkheid". Enkele weken mochten we aan de kust van de Atlantische Oceaan doorbrengen, een kleine duizend mijlen van huis en arbeid, om dagelijks te genieten van zeelucht en zeebad, en om ook zoover verwijderd te zijn van allen arbeid, lieten we alle correspondentie en bladen eenvoudig thuis.

En nu na we zes weken van niets doen dan wandelen en zwemmen weer thuis zijn gekomen moesten we wel eerst door den "rijstenbrijberg" heen eer we eenige bijzondere aandacht konden wijden aan de bovengenoemde artikelen van Ds. Zwier, die wel niet veel nieuws schrijft, maar op wien het toch goed is de vermaning toe te passen, dat we acht hebben op elkander.

Thans zijn we weer op dreef.

En ofschoon we een beetje laat komen, kunnen we toch niet nalaten een enkele opmerking te maken over hetgeen Zwier schreef.

Het is opmerkelijk, dat hij in zijn artikelenreeks zooveel aandacht wijdt aan de Drie Punten. En we geven hem crediet, dat hij een manmoedige, zij het ook nog zoo wanhopige poging doet, om aan te toonen, dat er geen conflict is tusschen de leer der punten en de Gereformeerde waarheid. Onzerzijds mogen we dat wel. De praktijk van doodzwijgen, door de leiders der Christelijke Gereformeerde Kerken gevolgd, hebben we altijd gelaakt en betreurd. En bovendien komt het door zulk eene bespreking hoe langer zoo meer aan het licht, met name voor hen, die niet slechts "ons kerkelijk blad De Wachter", maar ook de Standard Bearer lezen, hoe onmogelijk het is om de Drie Punten te verdedigen op Gereformeerd standpunt en dat de Christelijke Gereformeerde Kerken in 1924 wel waarlijk een verbond gesloten hebben met Arminius en zijn aanhang.

Het is daarbij echter jammer, dat Zwier keer op keer in gebreke blijft op het eigenlijke punt in te gaan. Hij beschuldigt zijn tegenstanders soms wel van sophisterij en van het draaien van een rad voor de oogen der menschen, hij kan soms ook heel aardig spotten en een toon aanslaan van iemand, die het met zijn tegenstanders niet zoo ernstig neemt, maar feit is, dat hij zelf de zaak verkeerd voorstelt en dat het hem slechts in den weg van verkeerde voorstelling gelukt om den indruk te laten, dat het er met die Drie Punten nog niet zoo slecht bijstaat.

Dat verraadt een zwak.

We willen natuurlijk niet beweren, dat Ds. Zwier