

Principles of Education

by
Prof. Herman Hanko



Hope Protestant Reformed
Christian School

PRINCIPLES OF EDUCATION

composed by:

REV. HERMAN HANKO

adopted by:

HOPE PROTESTANT REFORMED CHRISTIAN SCHOOL BOARD

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INTRODUCTION

A school is the character of instruction given in it. It is not the number of pupils, the size and quality of the physical plant, the number of books in its library, the scope or limitations of its curriculum; it is the instruction that is given.

A Christian School is Christian instruction.

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. This implies several fundamental principles:

1) This implies that the revelation of God in infallibly inspired Scripture is the sole rule of faith and life. The principle of all truth is to be found in the Word of God. Nothing which is contrary to Scripture and only that which meets the standard of Scripture is truth.

2) This truth has been developed throughout the ages by the Church of Jesus Christ as that Church has been led into the truth by the Spirit of Truth. Thus the truth of Scripture is the historically Reformed faith developed in the line of the Calvin Reformation and incorporated into the creeds of the Reformed Churches.

3) This truth contains the basic principles of every subject of knowledge. Although the "facts" of history, science, music, etc. can be discovered through a systematic study of God's creation, these facts remain bare facts until they are developed in connection with the truth of the Word of God. In fact, it may be said that they are not "Truth" until they are put into the total framework of Scripture. This does not mean that the Bible is an additional fact to many other facts. This does not mean that one simply adds to Scripture what is discovered in God's creation. This means rather that every fact of every subject must be based upon, incorporated into, permeated with, explained in the light of, the truth of God in Holy Writ. Scripture is the foundation, the basic structure, the pulse beat and life blood of all knowledge. Only when this is done is education "Christian".

It is to attempt a beginning at this important work that these principles are prepared.

This is to say that we consider this emphatically a beginning. Much work must still be done. Further development must still take place. But this is, we are convinced, the direction that such study should take.

If these principles make the work of our teachers a little easier in the attainment of their calling; if these principles aid our parents in striving towards a school that is truly Christian; if these principles inspire those from our fellowship to go on in this important work; then our efforts, under the blessing of our covenant God, will not have been in vain.

I. HISTORY

I. Definitions:

A. History is 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.

B. The study of history is the study of events that transpire in time and the interpretation of events from the viewpoint of the working out of God's counsel.

II. It stands to reason that God's counsel is of fundamental importance in any understanding of this subject.

A. The attributes of God's counsel:

1. It is eternal. This means that God's counsel is not affected in any way by time. It is transcendent above time and is not determined by succession of moments. All the moments in the counsel of God are eternally and consciously before God's mind.

2. It is sovereignly free. God alone determines His counsel and nothing at all can effect that determination except His own sovereign will.

3. It is unchangeable. Because God is Himself unchangeable, nothing in His counsel can ever change in any respect. It stands from eternity to eternity unchangeably the same.

4. It is all-comprehensive. It embraces all that takes place from the first moment of creation into all eternity in heaven. It includes both the history of heaven and hell as well as the history of the earth and the universe.

5. It is efficacious. The counsel is the living will of the living God. It is not a plan as an architect may draw up a plan for a building. But because it is God's living will, it is itself the cause of all the realization of it. The power of the unfolding of the counsel is the counsel itself.

6. It is infinitely wise. Each moment of that counsel, each part of it is perfectly related to every other part so that the whole may serve the realization of the purpose of God. It is, furthermore, the best possible way to achieve the purpose which God has determined.

B. This naturally brings us to a discussion of the purpose of the counsel of God. And in connection with this question, the question arises as to the order of God's decrees.

1. The purpose of the whole counsel of God is the glory of His name through the revelation of His own covenant life.

a. God seeks His own glory because He alone is God and worthy of all glory and praise.

b. God determines to achieve this glory through the highest possible revelation of Himself which is the revelation of the infinite blessedness of the covenant life which He lives as the triune God.

2. The decrees of the counsel of God are all perfectly adapted to achieve this highest purpose.

a. The infra-lapsarian position speaks of the order of decrees as follows:

1) The glory of God is the purpose of all things. God determined to glorify Himself by this means.

2) The creation of the world; the fall; the coming of Christ; election and reprobation; the realization of the new kingdom of righteousness.

b. The supra-lapsarian position is certainly to be preferred. Scripture itself in many places is supra. (Cf. Eph. 1, Col. 1, Prov. 8). But this position also avoids the dangers of alternate plans in God's counsel as well as introducing time into the eternal will of God.

1) God determines to reveal Himself and His own Covenant life in the highest possible sense of the Word. This is the revelation of God in Jesus Christ. In Christ, who is the full revelation of God (for He is the full effulgence of the glory of the Father and the express image of His substance, Heb. 1:3) the full life of God's covenant is revealed.

2) This possible, for in Christ the elect are drawn into the covenant life of God and given to experience the full blessedness of that life. Christ is the closest possible union between God and the elect, for in Him the human nature and the divine nature subsist in perfect unity of the divine person.

3) Election necessarily implies reprobation, for the choosing of a people in Christ implies the rejection sovereignly of others.

4) And this in turn implies the cross where election and reprobation were temporally realized.

5) And election and reprobation necessarily imply the fall which in turn implies a perfect original creation.

c. What is first in God's counsel is always last in time; and what is last in God's counsel is always first in time. Thus all things are subservient to the realization of the purpose of God.

III. From this point of view we must interpret history.

A. It follows from this, first of all, that the central point of all history is the incarnation of Jesus Christ. And this incarnation of Jesus Christ is the beginning of His work which He began when He entered into our flesh, and when He, through His suffering, death, and resurrection, ascended up into highest glory in heaven there to pour out His Spirit upon His church and to make all things ready in order that He may come again.

1. This incarnation of Christ and all the work which He performed on earth is called in Scripture the fullness of time. The fulness of time embraces these elements.

a. It is the moment in history when the last drop of all that God has purposed to do before Christ comes is put into the vessel of history.

b. It is the moment in the light of which all history must be explained and understood. Nothing which precedes the incarnation, nothing which follows it has any meaning whatsoever except as it is interpreted in the light of this central event. All history revolves around Bethlehem; all events come into focus and perspective as they shine through the prism of the manger.

c. Principally the period from Bethlehem to the outpouring of the Spirit is the end of time.

1) Many dispensations preceded that event. These dispensations 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.

2) But the birth of Christ marks, not a time of shedding more light upon the promise, but rather a time of the complete and final fulfillment of the promise. And when the promise is fulfilled, the end is also at hand.

3) Therefore, Pentecost with the outpouring of the Spirit marks the complete fulfillment of the promise which is fully realized when Christ comes again upon the clouds of heaven.

4) This dispensation is, therefore, the dispensation of the end because in Bethlehem; He came again on the day of Pentecost; He comes all the time to take His people to Himself and to hurry the events of history in order that all things may be made ready; His coming will be realized when this creation is destroyed and the new kingdom of peace and righteousness is ushered in, when heaven and earth will be one, and when the tabernacle of God will be with men, so that the elect in Christ and the new creation may enjoy forevermore the glories of God's covenant life.

2. The fullness of time is achieved at the incarnation principally, and fully at the end of time.

B. Several elements must further be considered.

1. The history of the church in the world is of foremost importance. All secular history is for the purpose of the church.

a. The church is gathered by the Word and Spirit of God from the beginning to the end of time, in the line of generations.

b. All else that takes place in the world takes place in order to serve the gathering of the church and the perfection of the body of Christ. Reprobation must serve election; secular history must serve sacred and church history.

c. There is also a history in heaven and in hell. And it is also true of the history of these two places that they are ultimately subservient to the purpose of God in the salvation of the church.

2. Along with and inherent in the history of the church is also the history of revelation.

a. This means:

1) In the Old Dispensation, the history of the church was the means which God used to reveal His promise. The flood was a revelation of the fact that the promise of God included the destruction of the wicked world and the inheritance of a new creation for the elect. The reign of David, although a historical fact, was typical of the kingdom of Jesus Christ which shall be realized at the end of time. Christ, as the fulfillment of the promise, was born in the history of the world, particularly the history of the church. As a part of that history He suffered and died and arose again to ascend into heaven. And so it always was. The history of the nation of Israel was the history of progressive revelation.

2) The same thing is true in the New Dispensation. Only in this dispensation revelation has been completed, and it is all contained on the pages of Holy Writ. But now the Spirit of Christ leads the church of this dispensation into an even clearer understanding of the truth of the Word of God. It is to learn this heritage of the truth which is given us by our fathers, and to develop it further which is the center of the life of the child of God in the world.

b. Concerning revelation itself we may note the following.

1) The revelation of God was given in its germinal form in the promise contained in Gen. 3:15. Throughout the ages of time, this germ of revelation grew into the mighty and glorious tree of the full knowledge of God as we shall finally have it in heaven. Cf. Lord's Day VI.

2) Because Christ is the full revelation of God, all revelation is revelation through Christ.

a) This is true of the Scriptures. All the Scriptures are the record of the revelation of Christ. Wherever the artery of Scripture is cut it flows with the blood of the Lamb.

b) This is true of creation.

c) In this connection, it is well to note that revelation, because it is through Christ, is only ever to the church. The knowledge of God is for the elect alone.

3. Then one can understand the history of the nations.

a. The principle of all history of the nations is:

1) The spirit of opposition to God--the spirit of the Anti-Christ.

2) But the fact that God uses even all this opposition against Him and His Church, by the powers of hell and the world, to achieve His purpose. The calling of the teacher is to demonstrate this truth in the class room.

b. God prevents the anti-christian kingdom from being realized before its time.

1) This explains the confusion of tongues at Babel when the world was divided into all the nations^s of the earth. It is because this fundamental breach is made that nations fight against each other and destroy each other. Each nation tries to realize the kingdom of Anti-Christ by means of world conquest, but always fails because the breach of Babel interferes. We have only to recall to mind the kingdoms of Egypt, Syria, Assyria, Babylon, Medo-Persia, Macedonia, and Rome to discover the truth of this.

2) When this breach is healed, then Anti-Christ will finally be realized.

c. In close connection with this must be explained the organic development of sin.

1) Man is totally depraved, and is consequently incapable of doing any good.

2) But God controls the development of sin by His providence. And sin develops in connection with the discovery of the powers of creation.

3) As man develops the creation, he subjects the powers that he finds to sin. It is probably correct to say that before the end comes all the powers of creation will be uncovered, and all will be subjected to the service of sin in the kingdom of Anti-Christ.

4) Then the cup of iniquity must be full, and the world will be ripe for judgment.

IV. The purpose of teaching history.

A. The covenant child is born into the stream of history, and in that stream he must live.

B. The fundamental purpose of teaching history is, therefore, that the covenant child may be able to interpret the events of history in the light of the purpose of God--the end of all

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things and the realization of God's kingdom. Until that time comes, he lives as redeeming the times and waiting patiently for the return of his Lord.

II. GEOGRAPHY

I. Introduction:

A. There is a close relationship between the study of history and the study of geography.

1. This is true because:

a. The creation is an organic unity. Man cannot be severed from the creation because he is a part of it, related to it, and dependent upon it. He is the highest of all God's creatures, but is nevertheless a creature.

b. God determines therefore, the history of man in connection with and related to the entire creation.

c. The creation as a whole is subservient to the realization of God's counsel in history.

2. This is evident from:

a. The fact that the organic development of sin is only possible because the powers of the creation are uncovered, and subjected to man's use.

b. The fact that this present world shall be destroyed and re-created to form the new heavens and the new earth in which righteousness shall dwell. This is the realization of the whole counsel of God.

B. Definitions.

1. The word "geography" comes from: Gr. - geographia; Lat. - geographia; Fr. - geographie. These words mean: description of the earth."

2. Geography is the study of God's creation in all its various forms together with man's place in it and relation to it, and how man is affected by it and rules over it as a steward in God's house, and how God's purpose is realized in all this.

3. Geography is later divided into the special branches of natural science: astronomy, mineralogy, biology, etc.

II. The creation as such must therefore be first of all understood.

A. Creation.

1. The meaning of creation.

a. Definition: It is that act of the Triune God whereby He gave existence to all the creatures in distinction from Himself.

1) It is not wholly correct to define creation as being "formation out of nothing".

2) Faith alone can understand the creation of the world. Heb. 11:3.

a) Faith alone can understand a beginning to creation.

Reason cannot find a beginning, as is obvious also from evolutionism.

b) Faith alone can believe the relationship between the eternal God and a temporal creation. Reason will always have to face this problem, but will never succeed in answering it.

b. The so-called period theory ought to be condemned on the following grounds:

1) It is based on a wrong exegesis of the Hebrew word for "day".

2) It attempts to explain Scripture in the light of science which may never be done.

3) The last three days were governed by the sun and moon and were therefore days of twenty-four hours.

4) It has inherent in it natural tendencies toward evolutionism.

5) Man's history is then very short in comparison with the history of the world. This would seem out of harmony with the wisdom of God since man is the highest creature of all.

6) The decalogue mentions "six days". It can hardly be argued that the seventh day of rest is the whole history of the world, for God rests eternally.

2. In general, the following ought to be noticed:

- a. The creation days can be studied individually, and the relation between each day and the things created in it determined.
- b. The whole creation is repeatedly pronounced by God as being "good"; that is, it was perfectly adapted to the purpose for which the Lord had created it.
- c. There is a symbolic significance in the first creation, for it points to the new heavens and earth of God which was also typified in the tabernacle and temple.
- d. It is impossible to determine the nature of the original creation in detail, for it was entirely different from the creation as we now know it. There was, for example, no curse.

B. The curse which came upon the creation because of the fall had a pronounced effect upon every creature, and the creation as a whole.

1. The essence of the curse is death. Death reigns supreme in the entire creation dragging it all down to destruction.
2. Certain it is however, that it is impossible to reason from scientific knowledge of today back to what once was and determine the origin and nature of the original creation by this means. This is the fundamental error of all evolutionism and those who propose a period theory.
3. The result is that the whole creation is thrown into turmoil, confusion and perpetual warfare. Man fights his fellowman; war continues between man and animals and among animals themselves; tornadoes, floods, hurricanes, earthquakes, volcanoes tear apart the whole creation almost as if destroying itself. There is no rest and peace in all this creation.

C. In this connection, the flood must also be taken into consideration.

1. It is quite possible that it was during the flood that the earth was tipped on its axis with the lasting result of the seasons and their profound effect upon the life of man. Gen. 8:21-22.
2. Certain it is that the whole crust of the earth was radically changed and was adapted in an entirely different way to man's existence. It is possible that even the curse was somewhat removed; and it was all in order that the counsel of God might be realized. Gen. 5:29; Gen. 8:21-22.
3. The earth was so greatly changed that although previously the earth was surrounded by water, it is now surrounded by fire. This would almost seem to indicate even a change in the structure of the universe. II Peter 3.

III. The earth is the ethical center of the entire universe.

A. Meaning.

1. It is on this planet that the counsel of God is unfolded with respect to God's purpose.
2. The earth becomes the stage for the drama of sin and grace.
3. The working out of the counsel of God is always in relation to the nature of the whole creation.

B. We may observe in this connection:

1. Man's original place in creation.

- a. The creation was the revelation of God.
 - 1) Man himself was part of that revelation.
 - 2) But man was also so created that he could understand the revelation of God and through it possess a true knowledge of God.

b. Man was created as king under God.

- 1) As the creation was an organic whole, man stood at the pinnacle. The entire creation was organically united, and it all was united to God through the perfect heart of Adam.

2. This was possible because man was a steward over the possessions of his Lord. It was his calling to subject the creation to the service of God and use it to love the Lord his God with all his heart.
2. But man fell.
- a. The revelation in creation was obscured by the curse so that the speech of God could no more distinctly be heard.
 - b. Man himself became darkened in his understanding, and alienated in his heart so that he could no longer see the revelation of God, nor use the creation to serve Him. Because man's heart was separated from God by sin, so also was the whole creation brought under the curse in separation from God.
 - c. Man remained king of the creation; but he was no longer a king in the service of God.
 - 1) He became a rebel and a thief. He took the possessions of God and used them for himself to serve sin and the powers of darkness.
 - 2) It is in harmony with the particular place in which a man or a nation lives, in harmony with the climate and the seasons, in harmony with the possessions and powers of the earth at his disposal, in harmony with the formation of the earth and the sea that a man or nation develops in sin according to the purpose of God.
 - a) An individual man or a nation is dependent upon the environment in which God has sovereignly placed him, and consequently lives his life and develops his life in connection with his place in the creation.
 - b) E.g., the nations of Africa have an entirely different history and place in history from the nations of Europe. This is to a considerable extent due to the climate, the country with its resources and geographical situation of each group of nations.
 - c) E.g., the nation of Egypt has an altogether different history from the nation of America. This is due to the particular time they were called into being as a nation in the history of the world. Egypt could not live America's life; America cannot live Egypt's life.
 - 3) He constantly labors under the curse and lives his life in vanity. There is no true culture possible under sin.
3. What has been lost through sin is restored in Christ.
- a. The original creation and the original stewardship of God were not restored through grace; nor is this original stewardship maintained through "common grace".
 - b. A much higher purpose of God is realized in Christ, a purpose to which also the original creation and stewardship of Adam were subservient.
 - 1) The meaning is not that Christ restored what Adam lost as if Christ restored the original creation; but rather this purpose is expressed in the words of Christ, "I have overcome the world".
 - 2) Christ could come into this creation with the curse of it upon His mighty shoulders and nevertheless by His perfect obedience and stewardship to the Father rise up above this creation through His cross and resurrection.
 - 3) This means that Christ took also the creation sighing under the curse and redeemed it and restored it in such a way that it could all be reunited in the heart of Christ who is Lord over all. Christ is the second Adam, and becomes the real and only steward over the whole of God's creation.

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- 4) This present world shall therefore be destroyed in order to make way for the new creation in the kingdom of our Father.
4. The place of the elect in the world.
- a. He is a citizen of the kingdom of heaven.
- 1) Principally also he has overcome the world by faith, for faith is the victory that overcomes the world.
- 2) He therefore awaits the day when he shall enter into the new creation.
- b. But on this earth he is a steward over God's possessions.
- 1) He must use that which is entrusted to his care as a faithful servant in the house of the Lord subjecting the creation which is at his disposal to His God in love.
- 2) But he must use all that is given to him for the purpose of seeking the kingdom of heaven and its righteousness.
- a) He knows that he is a pilgrim and a stranger in a wicked world, and that his home is above.
- b) He knows that the wicked gradually subject all the creation to themselves and deprive even the elect of their place in the world.
- c) But God uses this creation to further the cause of His kingdom while it is still the time before Christ comes. In a sense, the kingdom of Christ is dependent upon the things of this creation until the end.
- d) The kingdom of Christ is revealed on this earth in the church of Jesus Christ which is gathered and established on this earth.
- 3) Thus the life of the Christian steward revolves around his life in the church. He seeks the kingdom of heaven and its righteousness by seeking the well being and the extension of the church. He subjects all his life to the service of the church and uses all that God gives him, his talents, his possessions, his family, his whole life to the service of the church of which he is a member.
5. Thus geography serves history; the nature of this creation serves the purpose of God: the history of man in connection with the creation in which he lives is subservient to the history of the church. The elect shall finally inherit the earth.

III. CIVICS

I. Definitions

A. Civics - the study of the origin, history and philosophy of government as an institution of God, and its purpose in this world.

B. Citizenship - the study of the relationship in which men stand to their governments, and their obligations and duties over against them, for God's sake.

C. In a broader sense of the word, under this general subject would be included a study of all the institutions of society to which we stand related, and our relationship to them. This would include such subjects as economics, sociology, etc. But since these principles are for grade schools only, they are limited in their scope to the study of government only.

II. Origin of Governments.

A. Historically.

1. Governments are institutions of authority, and this authority is their chief characteristic.

2. The institution of government arose from the institution of the family, and the authority of government arose from the authority of a father in the home.

a. All the institutions of life arose historically from the family.

1) The family was the only institution directly created by God when Adam and Eve were created and given to each other to live in the relationship of marriage.

2) All other institutions of life arose from this one fundamental relationship.

b. These institutions are:

1) The home.

2) The school.

3) The employer-employee relationship in the shop.

4) The government.

5) In a certain sense this is also true of the church, for the church is the gathering of believers and their seed. Yet the church was created by grace through Christ although based on the home.

c. In ancient times, the father was the head of the family, he was prophet, priest, and king. The family was the center of life, socially, politically, educationally, and ecclesiastically. All of life revolved around the family.

d. Gradually the family expanded into the tribe. But it was always the oldest man who was the ruler of the tribe. He was the social, political, economic, ecclesiastical head.

3. Therefore the home is of central importance; and the authority of the father in the home is regulative and normative for the authority found in every institution of life. It is on this basis that the fifth commandment is written, and that the Heidelberg Catechism interprets this commandment as meaning, "That I show all honor, love and fidelity, to my father and mother, and all in authority over me. . ." Q. and A. 104.

B. Doctrinally.

1. There are several views which must be considered in this connection.

a. The Ceasaro-papal view of Constantine the Great.

1) All authority is vested in Christ.

2) Christ confers this authority upon the civil magistrate who is sovereign in both church and state. The temporal ruler of the state stands above both the civil and ecclesiastical rulers.

- b. The Romish View.
 - 1) All authority is conferred by God upon Christ.
 - 2) Christ confers His authority upon the ecclesiastical ruler who is the pope and who stands in the direct line of the apostles.
 - 3) The pope confers this authority in turn upon both civil and ecclesiastical rulers.
- c. The view of Dr. A. Kuyper.
 - 1) The authority of the officebearers in the church comes from Christ.
 - 2) The authority of civil magistrates comes directly from God apart from Christ. They receive from God not only the authority to rule, but also the grace (common) which is necessary to function as rulers in God's name.
- 2. The Scriptural and reformed view.
 - a. What is authority?
 - 1) It is the right to determine the lives of others by means of law; and the right to demand obedience to that law; and the right to punish law-breakers.
 - 2) It is a right not based on might or strength, or the will of the majority, but a right by virtue of the office which one holds. It is not the power to rule, but the right to rule.
 - b. All authority is in God alone.
 - 1) He is the Creator and Sustainer of all things. Because of this, He is absolutely independent of His creatures, while they are dependent upon Him.
 - 2) Because He is Creator, He is also sovereign. He possesses the right, as Creator, to determine all things including how His creatures shall live and what shall be the purpose of their existence.
 - 3) He also has the power to rule, and His right to rule is therefore based upon His almighty and eternal power.
 - c. God confers authority on Christ in order that Christ may rule in God's name.
 - 1) Christ must not be considered as the second person of the Holy Trinity, apart from His human nature, but as the Mediator. He, as Mediator, occupies an exalted position in glory because of all the work which He performed on earth in obedience to His Father.
 - 2) As the exalted Christ He rules over all the works of the Father in such a way that the Father's purpose is accomplished. Through Christ, God sustains the entire creation and guides it to its eternal destination. Through Christ, God sustains all men leading the elect to the celestial kingdom, and the reprobate to their eternal destruction.
 - 3) Cf. Mt. 28:18, Phil. 2:9-11, Dan. 7:13, 14 and many other like passages.
 - 4) Christ rules sovereignly in the name of the Father in the strictest possible universal sense.
 - d. Christ confers His authority in turn upon others.
 - 1) This is due to two reasons:
 - a) Christ is in heaven and we are on earth. We cannot, therefore see Christ in His glory and exaltation.
 - b) Christ rules over the entire life of men in all their spheres of activity.
 - c) This shall cease in heaven when Christ is Lord over all in His own kingdom.
 - 2) These others upon whom Christ confers authority rule here

upon earth in Christ's name and for His sake. This is true of parents, officebearers, civil magistrates, teachers, employers, e. A distinction must be made, however, between the authority of Christ over His church, and the authority which He exercises over the world.

1) In His church Christ rules by His Word and Spirit in the hearts of His elect people. The result is that they become His willing subjects who do His bidding. They live in every sphere of their life as citizens of the kingdom of heaven; therefore as pilgrims and strangers here below; who live beneath the shadow of the cross of Calvary. This is true of those in authority and subject to authority.

2) But in the world, those in authority and those under authority are consciously and actively opposed to Christ and to His kingdom.

a) Nevertheless Christ rules over them and confers authority upon them.

b) Because of Christ's sovereign rule, they serve Christ's purpose and accomplish His ends, even in their rebellion.

Cf. e.g., Psalm 2.

III. The Purpose of Government.

A. Introduction.

1. Is there only one form of government which is approved by God?

a. There are various types of governments.

1) Such as :

- a) Monarchy
- b) Oligarchy
- c) Democracy

2) It should be noticed:

a) There are various shades between the three main kinds listed above. E.g., there is representative democracy, parliamentary democracy, etc. (Democracy in the pure sense of the word would be a government in which the people in mass meetings determined all the laws by majority vote.)

b) Communism is not a form of government, but an economic theory. Communism usually takes the form of a dictatorship. However, the government itself cannot help but be concerned about the economic theory of its country, and cannot help but determine what form of the various economies a country shall assume.

b. It is perhaps impossible to say whether any one form of government has divine sanction. Scripture simply speaks of our obligation to any government under which we live.

1) Perhaps, had not sin entered the world, government would have been monarchical. Israel's sin was not in that they wanted a king, but in that they wanted a king like the other nations. The patriarchal form of government would probably have developed into a monarchy.

2) But a monarchy would be a theocracy. A theocracy is a government where those in authority and those subject to authority worship and serve God alone.

2. Is democracy a legitimate form of government?

a. There is a certain ground to answer this question in the negative.

1) It is highly questionable whether the will of God can be determined by majority vote. This becomes the more questionable when we reckon with the reality of sin.

2) In a democracy, the ultimate power of ruling rests in the majority. The subjects are at the same time rulers.

- b. But on the other hand.
 - 1) It is quite possible that God may use the people to put rulers in power through whom He then rules.
 - 2) And this is undoubtedly the case in our country. God rules through those who enact legislation, and they assume their responsibility before God. But evidently, the electorate also has some responsibility in our country as to whom they vote into office.
- B. The sphere of government.
 - 1. Introduction.
 - a. There has been in the past, and still is today considerable discussion concerning this question.
 - b. The Belgic Confession enters into this question in Article XXXVI. The pertinent part of the article reads, "For this purpose he (God) hath invested the magistracy with the sword, for the punishment of evildoers, and for the protection of them that do well. And their office is, not only to have regard unto, and watch for the welfare of the civil state; but also that they protect the sacred ministry; and thus may remove and prevent all idolatry and false worship; that the kingdom of anti-christ may be thus destroyed and the kingdom of Christ promoted. They must therefore countenance the preaching of the Word of the gospel everywhere, that God may be honored and worshipped by everyone, as He commands in His Word." This article plainly teaches that the state has a responsibility towards the church and the ministry of the gospel.
 - c. In 1910 the Synod of the Christian Reformed Church added a footnote. After an introduction which discussed the separation between church and state, the footnote reads, "The Christian Reformed Church of America, being in full accord with this view of separation of church and state, feels constrained to declare that it does not conceive of the office of the magistracy in this sense that it be in duty bound to also exercise political authority in the sphere of religion, by establishing and maintaining a state church, and to oppose, to persecute and to destroy by means of the sword all the other churches as being false religions; and to also declare that it does positively hold that, within its own secular sphere, the magistracy has a divine duty toward the first table of the law as well as towards the second; and furthermore that both church and state as institutions of God and Christ have mutual rights and duties appointed them from on high, and therefore have a very sacred reciprocal obligation to meet through the Holy Spirit, who proceeds from Father and Son. They may not, however, encroach upon each other's territory. The church has rights of sovereignty in its own sphere as well as the state.
 - d. The question is really therefore, 'does the state have a calling before God to protect the sacred ministry and remove and prevent all idolatry and false worship?' And in connection with this, 'does the state have the right to determine what the true religion is?'
 - 2. The proper sphere of government, in general.
 - a. The sphere of the government is the state. Their proper limit of authority is all that pertains to the civil aspect of men over which they rule. They have power and authority over the citizens of the state, and over their subjects as citizens.
 - b. They have one fundamental calling before Christ -- they must punish evildoers and praise those that do well.
 - c. Two things are implied in this:

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- 1) They may not encroach upon other spheres of life or extend their authority beyond the scope of civil right and power. The governments in our day often do, but to their own hurt.
 - 2) The calling to punish evildoers and praise those that do well finally means that they punish unbelievers and praise believers. Yet, of course, the government is in no position to determine what lies in a man's heart. They can govern only external deeds.
 3. The sphere of government in relation to the sphere of the church.
 - a. That there are two spheres, and that there is sovereignty within each sphere cannot be denied.
 - b. Furthermore, it goes without saying that the two tables of the law must be enforced without doubt by the government.
 - 1) But in enforcing the first table of the law, the government has a calling to prevent idolatry, promote the true religion, punish those who take God's name in vain, and enforce proper observance of the Sabbath.
 - 2) But, if the question arises, does this mean that the state has a calling to "remove and prevent idolatry and false worship?" The answer must be that indeed it does.
 - 3) However, there is one important limitation; and that is, the government can and may do this only in its own sphere. It cannot enforce its laws within the sphere of the home and the church. If a man swears in his home, he cannot be punished by the government; if he swears on the street, he can and must.
 - 4) This distinction is not always so easy to maintain and apply but this is indeed the principle.
 - c. The power of the state and of the church is different.
 - 1) The state has a temporal power; the church has only spiritual power. The state bears the sword; the church carries the keys of the kingdom of heaven.
 - 2) This does not mean, however, that the church punishes for one kind of sin, and the state for another. Those offenses punishable by the church ought also to be punished by the civil magistrate. And those punishable by the state ought also to be a reason for the censure of the church. But the church forgives upon confession of sin; the magistrate punishes whether a sin is confessed, or whether it is not.
- IV. Our Relation to Government.
- A. To the state we must always be in subjection.
 1. In subjecting ourselves to the state, we subject ourselves to Christ who is pleased to rule over us in our Father's name.
 2. This subjection does not imply only bare observance of laws made, but "I must show all honor, love and fidelity, to all in authority over me, and submit myself to their good instruction and correction, with due obedience; and also patiently bear with their weaknesses and infirmities since it pleases God to govern us by their hand." H.C.XXXIX, 104.
 - B. There is however, one important limitation to this subjection.
 1. We need not submit to those in authority if they demand of us something contrary to the will of God.
 - a. The government must reflect the will of God in all that it demands. When they demand something evidently contrary to the will of God, then we need not and may not submit. At that point, and with respect to that point, the government ceases to function in the name of Christ.
 - b. This does not however, condone the overthrow of government by means of force. Refusal to obey is different from active rebellion. The latter we may never engage in. We may have to

suffer for this, but such is our calling nonetheless.

2. By submitting in this way, we reveal that we are principally citizens of the kingdom of heaven, and that our allegiance is first of all to Christ.

C. In conclusion, it is well to bear in mind that we live in an age of lawlessness. This is not only due to the fact that citizens do not submit to their governments, but also because those in authority refuse to assume the authority that is given them, and abuse what authority they have. If there be yet some outward conformity to law it is only because of fear of punishment, not because of submission to authority. Children rebel against their parents and teachers; men against their employers and governments. These influences affect our lives also, for we live in the world. It is highly incumbent upon us in our home and schools and churches to instill into the minds of the covenant seed the necessity of bowing before God-ordained authority lest we find ourselves actively engaged in rebelling against God and refusing to submit to the authority of our Lord Jesus Christ.

IV. SCIENCE TYPE SUBJECTS

I. Introduction:

A. This paper includes:

1. General principles underlying the study of the natural sciences.
2. Although the social sciences (sociology and psychology) would perhaps enter into the general subject, this paper does not treat these subjects.
3. This paper is intended to be a basis for the study of the natural sciences as taught in the grade school where the sciences are not completely differentiated.

B. There is included therefore:

1. A discussion of the relation between the special and general revelation.
2. Some points with respect to the study of the creation.
3. A discussion of the scientific method.
4. Applications to the teaching of this subject.

II. The relation between special and general revelation.

A. This subject is treated here because:

1. The basic premise of the Christian pedagogue is that the knowledge of God is above all else important. Or, to put it a little more exactly, the knowledge of God is the only true knowledge that there is.

a. By the knowledge of God is meant that true and saving knowledge of God which is life eternal.

b. Not to possess this knowledge of God always ends in eternal misery and punishment.

2. This basic premise brings with it some questions that need to be answered.

a. Is there a revelation of God through the creation which is the object of study in the natural sciences?

b. Is it possible to know God through the things that are made? To come to the saving knowledge of God Whom to know is life eternal?

c. If this is not possible, what purpose is there in a study of the creation in all the branches of the natural sciences, and why should a Christian engage in such a study?

B. The original means of revelation was through creation.

1. Adam, in the state of rectitude, knew God through this creation in which he stood; and, seeing God in the handiwork of creation, he loved God with all his heart, and the full strength of his being.

2. This knowledge of God through the things that are made was lost through the fall.

a. For a more detailed discussion of this point, cf. the paper on language arts.

b. It is sufficient for our purposes here to point out that the curse came upon the creation so that no longer was any speech of God heard but the speech of the curse. Besides, man himself retains only a few remnants of his former powers with which he was endowed at his creation, and has lost, to a considerable extent, the powers to investigate God's handiwork.

3. This does not mean, however, that man lost all the knowledge of God.

a. He can, through the things that are made, know that there is a God, that this God is the sovereign of the universe and that this God ought to be served. Cf. Romans 1:18ff.

b. However, this truth even, as limited as it is, wicked man holds under in unrighteousness. He willingly and consciously corrupts this truth, changes the glory of the incorruptible God

into an image like to corruptible man and, by doing so, is without excuse.

c. The conclusion of the matter is therefore that man can never come to a saving knowledge of God through the creation.

1) He cannot construct a natural theology from limitations of the knowledge of God through the works of God. He cannot develop any truth concerning God because of his sin.

2) His worship of idols and ignorant superstitions are not an expression of his sighing and longing after God corrupted by ignorance; rather, all his idols, all his philosophical systems are so many conscious and deliberate attempts to corrupt the truth of God and change His glory to the likeness of the creature.

4. Therefore, although one may speak of a revelation of God through the creation, this must not be construed to mean that man can arrive at any knowledge of God which will lead him to confess that God is the only Lord of heaven and earth who ought to be and is actually served.

C. Considering this, is it possible for the wicked to know anything at all about the creation itself? Can a wicked man come to any conclusions about the nature of the creation about him?

1. In order to answer this question, it is first of all necessary to make a distinction between what may be called "formal knowledge" and "transcendent knowledge".

a. Formal knowledge--This is the purely intellectual knowledge of the bare facts of creation.

b. Transcendent knowledge--This is a knowledge of the creation which involves not only the intellect, but also the will and the heart, which sees and understands the creation, not merely as an aggregate of facts, but as the handiwork of God and which leads to a deep sense of humility before the majesty of the Most High.

2. The wicked man, apart from regeneration, can come to a formal knowledge of the creation.

a. This means that he is in a position as a rational and moral creature to ascertain facts concerning the creation. He is able to discover the laws which are in the creation and the powers of the creation about him. He is able to determine the way in which trees grow, the laws according to which planets move in their courses, the means of the formation of snow, etc. He is even able to harness the creation's powers and put them to his own use.

b. But in spite of this,

1) Man, apart from grace, cannot see nor believe God's hand in creation.

2) Even his formal knowledge of creation is more limited than it would have been had man continued to stand in a state of rectitude.

3) That this knowledge which he is able to gain is itself vanity for it has not the true content of the knowledge of God. Presently this creation shall be destroyed with man, and his knowledge of the creation shall perish with him.

4) That even though man is able to harness the creation's powers for his own use, he uses these powers of God's world for sin and to establish his own kingdom of darkness, thus filling the cup of iniquity and becoming ripe for judgment.

D. Is it possible for the regenerated child of God to know the creation?

1. This is certainly the case.

- a. In the sense of the formal knowledge of the creation, he is in as good a position as the unbeliever to examine the creation and make it the object of his study, and learn its facts.
 - b. But also in the sense of transcendent knowledge of creation--the revelation of God through creation--he is also able to see this revelation and respond to it in praise.
2. In this connection, we must notice however:
- a. The entire creation, already in Paradise, and even today, was formed by God as a picture of the heavenly. For this reason, there are many signs in creation which are pictures and patterns of the heavenly creation; for this reason our Lord could teach in parables: "The kingdom of heaven is like unto..."
 - b. This transcendent knowledge of the creation is possible only through Scripture. The Scriptures come to the people of God as the Word of God through Jesus Christ. This Word of God is put into the hearts of God's people by Christ's spirit. It is only therefore, when the believer stands on the pinnacle of Scripture and surveys the world about him that he can see the handiwork of God which day unto day uttereth speech and night unto night showeth forth knowledge.
 - c. Even then, the revelation of God in creation is to us different from the revelation of God through creation to Adam.
 - 1) Adam was perfect; the creation was free from the curse. We are imperfect; we see only a cursed world.
 - 2) Adam could not know of the fall and salvation in Christ. This can only be revealed against the background of sin and the curse.
 - 3) But for us who see creation through the spectacles of Scripture, even the material universe speaks to us of the wonder of grace whereby this creation and God's people with it at its head are redeemed and brought into the new creation of heaven.
 - 4) This can be illustrated in many ways:
 - a) The transformation of a caterpillar to a moth in a cocoon speaks of the wonder of the resurrection through the grave.
 - b) The barren winter speaks of the curse; the glorious budding of spring speaks of the regeneration of the brute creation.
 - c) The brilliantly colored sunset gives hope at the dying of the day of another day that shall come---the dawning of an eternal day.
 - d) Standing on the brink of the colorful Grand Canyon in Arizona, one cannot help but be astonished at the power of the curse that tears the earth open to its bowels. But in the glorious array of color especially in the light of the setting sun, there is the unmistakable language of the power of grace that delivers this sin-cursed world from the bondage of corruption.
3. In conclusion: as far as the formal knowledge of creation is concerned, the worldly scientist is as well equipped or better equipped to investigate the mysteries of creation as the child of God. But he cannot come to the deeper and true knowledge of God through the things that are made.
- III. Concerning the creation itself as an object of investigation, there are several points of importance.
- A. The creation is an organic unity.
 1. The character of this unity.
 - a. The creation was originally formed by the hand of God with

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each part of it united to, dependent upon and related with each other part. There was an interrelationship and interdependence in the entire creation between every creature.

b. This was true especially because there were various levels of existence and life.

1) The inorganic creation is the lowest form of existence.

2) The entire world of plants is a higher form of existence, is in fact a form of life. Yet plants are dependent upon and related to the inorganic creation, for they must be connected to the earth in order to live.

3) A higher form of life is to be found in the animal world including fish, fowl, creeping things, insects and animals. It possesses a higher form because it is capable of moving about on the face of the earth because, especially in the higher forms, it possesses a measure of intelligent life. Yet the whole world of animals is dependent upon the earth through the world of plants.

4) At the pinnacle of creation, united to the things about him and dependent upon them, yet king over them, stood man. His life is a higher life than all, for he possesses a rational moral nature capable of bearing the image of God.

2. This entire unity was disrupted through sin and the consequent curse.

a. The entire creation once stood in harmony with itself and in fellowship with God united to God through the heart of man. But because man through the fall, was separated from God, the whole creation was separated from God with him and fell under the curse.

b. Thus there is turmoil and confusion in the creation, strife, and warfare, so that only a remnant of the original unity remains.

3. This unity is restored in a much higher sense of the word through Jesus Christ who is the head over all things and unites all things together in perfect harmony in Himself in the new creation to the eternal glory of God.

B. In this connection we must notice that this is all true because of the law of God.

1. The law of God is the will of God which is the full expression of the place which each creature shall occupy in the midst of the creation, how that creature shall be related to the rest of the creation, and through its proper place, how each creature shall serve the purpose of God and glorify its Maker.

2. Each creature is given a nature that is in perfect harmony with the law for it, that because of its nature it can keep the law, occupy its proper place in God's world, and thus fulfill its purpose.

3. Thus,

a. The law for the fish is that he swims in the sea.

b. The law for the bird is that it flies in the heavens.

c. The law for the tree is that it be planted in the soil.

d. The law for man is that he eat and drink and breathe in this creation to live, that as image bearer, he love the Lord his God with all his strength and being.

4. Every violation of this law means death. This is true for man not only, but for every other creature. Take a fish out of the water and put him in the air and he will die.

5. Death means therefore that the creature no longer fulfills the purpose of its creation and must be banished by God from the midst of God's world.

C. It is in connection with God's law that a discussion of mathe-

atics enters in.

1. Mathematics in all its forms is basically a means to define and render intelligible the various relationships between creatures.
2. All mathematics therefore:
 - a. Define and describe the characteristics of each creature.
 - b. Define and describe the relation in which each creature stands toward every other.
3. The fundamental relationships between the creatures are the relationships of time and space. Although difficult to define, the following is the closest we can come.
 - a. Space--The relationship between creatures characterized by distance.
 - b. Time--The relationship between creatures characterized by succession of moments.
4. Our mathematical units and units of measurements are arbitrary standards adopted universally in order to define these relationships in some intelligible way. It is however, quite possible that there is inherent in the creation itself an objective standard of measurement, that the closer one comes to this standard, the more accurately one can describe the creature and his relationships, and the more intelligible the creation becomes.

IV. The Scientific Method.

- A. The scientific method itself is a means to determine facts by the observation of and experimentation with various phenomena through the use of which are formed hypotheses, theories and finally laws.
- B. This scientific method is undoubtedly a legitimate tool in the investigation of facts provided that the following limitations are admitted:
 1. It can only determine formal truth concerning the creation, never transcendent truth.
 2. It is not a method which must be used without bias and prejudice. This is the high sounding plea of the worldly scientist, but it is a figment of the imagination impossible both in theory or in practice. The scientific method is itself based upon various accepted truths which determine and govern its use.
 3. There are truths concerning the creation which cannot be ascertained by means of this method.
- C. The limitations of the scientific method.
 1. There are basic presuppositions which are recorded in Scripture and which are accepted by faith. These presuppositions determine the who of scientific investigation.
 2. Some examples of these presuppositions are:
 - a. That all creation is formed by the Word of God, upheld by this same Word and guided through that Word to its inevitable and final destination.
 - b. That this Word of God is principally Christ through whom all things were created and by whom all things shall be saved and restored in the coming of His kingdom.
 - c. That upon this creation and upon man lies the heavy hand of the curse affecting both the subject and the object of scientific investigation.
 - d. That upon this creation has come the flood which seriously and profoundly changed the entire world so that things do not continue as they were from the beginning of time.
 - e. That this creation is the scene of the drama of sin and grace enacted according to God's eternal purpose and sovereignly controlled by Him.
 3. Thus the scientific method is never a tool by means of which

one can explain the origin of the universe, its relation to God and its final purpose.

a. This is important to remember for it is exactly when this is forgotten that science claims as its legitimate right and by means of the scientific method to determine the origin of things. This inevitably leads to the myriad forms of evolutionism including the so-called period theory.

b. Scripture alone can give us information concerning the origin of creation, its purpose and destination. It is not by means of the scientific method that we learn the origin of the world or the character of creation; it is only "By faith we understand that the worlds were formed by the Word of God so that things which are seen were not made from things which do appear". Hebrews 11:3.

c. Thus the "period theory" must be discarded because,

1) It is based upon the proposition that all things continue as they were from the beginning of creation until now. On the contrary, Scripture teaches us that the curse and the flood wrought changes in this creation of such magnitude that we cannot even form an adequate conception of the character of the creation prior to these catastrophes.

2) It is and must be an outright denial of the creation narrative of Genesis 1.

3) It necessarily leads to a denial of the infallible inspiration of Scripture because it relegates Scripture to a place of subordinate importance. Science is then the ultimate standard of truth, and even Scripture must be measured by the standards of science.

d. We must ever be aware that we do not fall victim to the character of the times. Science is exalted to a place of utmost preeminence; the scientist is worshipped as being almost super-human; the truth is sacrificed on the altar of science to the idol of modern technology and scientific advancement. Our schools must maintain their distinctively reformed heritage and resist all attempts to destroy it.

V. The purpose of the study of science.

1. Through an investigation of the revelation of God in the things that are made the believer can come to a greater appreciation of the infinite and splendid wonders of the power and majesty of the Most High. Viewing the handiwork of his Creator, he is forced to prostrate himself before the most high majesty of God and utter in sublime wonder the eternal truth, "How great Thou art."

2. The believer must exercise his calling as King under Christ in using this creation and all its powers in the service of God. The one fundamental truth that must be impressed upon the minds and hearts of the covenant seed is the truth that God's people live to serve their Maker.

3. Because the believer knows that presently this creation shall be destroyed, that therefore the kingdom of heaven is the only reality that shall endure the cataclysm of the end of the ages, he must learn to use all things also in this world for the promotion and extension of this kingdom of Jesus Christ. This kingdom is manifested on this earth in this present age in the church. His life therefore centers in his church, and he has not begun to fulfill his calling until he has learned that all that he does in all God's world must be for the benefit of his church, for in this way he lives to the praise and honor and glory of Him who is Lord over all and who is blessed forever.

V. THE LANGUAGE ARTS

I. Definitions:

A. The language arts include the following subjects: Reading, Spelling, Grammar, Composition, Penmanship, Literature, Foreign Languages.

B. Definitions:

1. Language--the means of communication either spoken or written.
2. Reading--the instruction in the ability to recognize the written word and comprehend the thought conveyed.
3. Spelling--instruction in the use of the correct combination of the symbols of a language to form words.
4. Grammar--instruction in the art of formulating sentences in harmony with rules inherent in a language..
5. Composition--instruction in the art of expressing concisely and accurately thoughts meant to be communicated.
6. Penmanship--instruction in legible writing.
7. Literature--a study of other compositions for the purpose of learning to comprehend another's ideas as well as learning to write oneself. Literature takes on many forms:
 - a. Essay
 - b. Novel
 - c. Poetry
 - d. Drama
 - e. Short Story
 - f. A composition of a technical subject either in science, philosophy, theology, etc.
8. Foreign languages--instruction in the use of languages other than one's own as a means of communication by mastery of grammatical rules and vocabulary.

II. The basis for language.

A. All things were created by the Word of God.

1. All things, being created by the Word of God and being upheld by that same Word are themselves so many words which God spoke and continues to speak which spell out together the glorious name of the Most High.
2. This was and is the means which God uses to reveal Himself--through the creative Word He speaks concerning Himself to the creature.
3. This can be proved from many passages of Scripture: Gen. 1:3, Ps. 19:1-3, Ps. 33:6, Ps. 139, Job 38-41.

B. Man was created in such a way that he could know God through His Word.

1. He also was created as a word of God.
2. But as he stood in the midst of God's creation, he himself was not only a word of God, but he was created in such a way that he could hear and understand the Word of God in the creation about him.
 - a. This creation entered into the mind of Adam through his senses.
 - b. But he could see it and understand it as the revelation of God so that he could see and know God through the things that were made.
 - c. There was contact between the Word of God in Adam and the Word of God outside of Adam. This contact which enabled Adam to hear God's Word was by means of the Spirit in his heart. And in this way Adam was capable of knowing God as he stood as God's friendservant and image-bearer with the love of God controlling all that he did.

3. But there was an additional wonder, for Adam could not only hear the Word of God in creation, but he could speak it. He was capable of saying what God said. This was a most astonishing thing.

a. Human speech, as we know it now, is but an agitation of the air by means of the activity of the organs of speech--the throat, the larynx, the tongue, the lips. But this purely human speech was nevertheless an echo of the speech of God in the creation. The words that Adam spoke were words which sounded the same as the Words which God spoke. It is true of course, that there was a difference, for God is the Creator and Adam was but a creature; God spoke causally; this Adam could not do. Nevertheless, when Adam spoke, there was an echo of the Word of God.

b. This made it possible for Adam to name the animals. Gen. 2:18-20. Adam could see and hear the Word of God in each animal and he could give that animal a name which exactly fit because it was an echo of the Word of God in that creature.

c. This speech of Adam was a continual doxology of praise and honor which Adam returned to God. God revealed Himself to Adam; Adam responded with praise.

d. Further, Adam had no need of learning patiently and through rote memory certain symbols to speak a language. There was evidently present in the creation revelation by means of which Adam not only gave names to various objects, but also described the nature of these objects and expressed accurately their actions and relationships to other creatures. This language was perfect for it was gained from the creation itself.

e. It is evident further that this language was altogether different from any language which has since existed. It was gradually lost through sin.

f. This communication between God and Adam was at the very basis of the fellowship of God's covenant. God talked with Adam and they had fellowship together in blessed communion.

III. The effect of sin.

A. The effect of sin upon the entire creation changed all this. Another speech of God was heard in the creation other than the speech in Paradise. This was the speech of God's curse which obscured and drowned out, silenced with harsh and raucous notes the speech which Adam had previously heard.

B. Besides, sin also had its effect upon man.

1. He lost, through sin, the ability to see and hear and perceive the Word of God in creation, so that, as far as the revelation of God was concerned, the world was all but a closed book. Only a remnant of God's revelation remains but even that remnant is the revelation of God's righteous judgment. Romans 1:18-20

2. Besides, man lost the ability to speak this Word of God. He was spiritually severed from the creation so that there was no longer contact between the Word of God in creation and in man. The result is that in all languages since used by man words are mere arbitrary symbols.

IV. The effect of grace.

A. God, however, caused another speech to be heard. This speech is the Word of God become flesh--our Lord Jesus Christ. Concerning this we may note:

1. It was the speech of God concerning salvation.

a. The salvation of the elect in the blood of the cross.

b. The salvation of the entire creation restored in Christ and united again to God in Him who is the second Adam.

2. This speech of God in Jesus Christ is the fullest and highest,

the most perfect revelation of God which is conceivable.

3. This speech of God is recorded on the pages of Holy Writ which is the written record of the Word Who is Christ.

4. Yet already in this present creation the Word of God through Christ is also dimly seen. There are figures in the creation of the wonder of grace wrought through Jesus. Thus Christ could speak in parables.

B. But the revelation of God through Christ is not capable of being seen either without the Spirit of Christ.

1. The natural man can never see and understand this revelation of God, for his darkness--the darkness of his sin blinds his mind and heart. "Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God." John 3:3.

2. God comes into the hearts of His elect people and restores them by the Spirit of Christ so that the image of God is renewed in them. He enlightens their minds and cleanses their hearts in order that once again they are placed in contact with the Word of God.

3. This revelation of God comes to them while they are on earth through the preaching of the gospel. It is then that God speaks to them through Christ so that they hear His Word once again. And in the light of the preaching of the Word, they are capable of standing in contact with God's revelation on the pages of Holy Writ as well as in the world about them.

C. Concerning this revelation, we may notice that it is a great wonder.

1. The infinite God who is highly exalted above all that He creates nevertheless reveals Himself in such a way that we can understand it.

2. Revelation is after all, finite, of this creation; but it is an accurate and correct revelation of the infinite and eternal God.

3. Yet while it gives us all we need to know concerning God for our salvation, it points beyond itself to infinite depths in God which can never be understood by one who is a mere man. There is sufficient in Scripture to overwhelm the humble student of God's Word; but there are yet beyond that depths in God which shall never be fathomed into all eternity.

4. But the very possibility of God adapting His speech to the finite understanding of man is astonishing. Scripture is altogether unique. Other books we read once and lay aside for we finish them. But the more one reads Scripture and studies it, the more it unfolds before our wondering eyes the glorious truth of our God.

D. In this connection also a word may be said concerning the confusion of tongues at Babel.

1. The negative purpose of Babel in the confusion of tongues was in order that the Lord might prevent the realization of the Anti-Christian kingdom prematurely. It is the language barrier that has, throughout the centuries of time, prevented the nations from forming one vast Anti-Christian kingdom.

2. Before Anti-christ will finally be realized this barrier must and will be overcome. It is the healing of the wound of the beast spoken of in Rev. 13:3.

3. Yet positively, Babel serves the purpose of the multiformity of the church of Jesus Christ. The wound of Babel is healed through grace by the universal language of the everlasting gospel of our salvation. This shall be perfected in glory where we shall all speak a new and heavenly language.

E. In conclusion we may notice:

1. All revelation is through Jesus Christ. For that reason, there is no absolute distinction between what is sometimes called general and special revelation.

2. There is no revelation of God to the natural man. He knows, through the things that are made, and through the preaching which he hears, sufficient to leave him without excuse. But this is always the revelation of wrath. He never learns sufficient concerning God to construct a natural theology, for he always holds the truth under in unrighteousness.

3. In heaven there shall be no more need of the preaching of the gospel. There all things, including the redeemed church of all ages, shall eternally reflect the glories of God through His Word—Jesus Christ. There also shall radiate throughout all things the highest possible revelation of God which man can know. There we ourselves shall receive a new name which shall exactly express the place which we occupy in the new creation according to God's eternal purpose. And there we shall speak a new and heavenly language which is capable of expressing the glory and praise of God in the best possible way.

V. The application of this to the language arts.

A. To language in general.

1. Language is the means which God uses to convey to us His revelation.

2. Language is the means which we use to praise God. We do this in speech concerning God, in writing concerning His truth, in prayer, in song, in instruction, etc.

3. Language is the means by which we receive from others what they have learned, and by which we communicate to others what we have learned.

4. As a means of communication;

a. Language must always be used to speak of the truth as it is in God. There is no other proper subject to discuss in speaking, in writing, in singing, in any other way in which we use language than the truth of God. This truth which forms the only subject of all language is found principally in Scripture, but also in creation and in history.

b. The world also uses (or better, misuses) language. For they always, in all they say and write and sing speak the lie. They always corrupt the truth of God and try to destroy it in all that they do with the language which they possess; even when they are least conscious of it, in every day conversation e.g., they lie.

B. To the language arts in particular.

1. Reading and composition are fundamental.

a. By means of reading we stand in contact with the written revelation of God on the pages of Scripture.

b. By means of reading we have access to what the saints who lived before us and who are our contemporaries have said concerning the truth of God. For it is through the written word that we receive the heritage of the truth as it has come down to us from distant ages as the Spirit of Christ has led the church of the past to develop the truth.

c. By means of reading we come into contact with all that all men have said concerning every subject which they have taken the pains to discuss. With spiritually enlightened minds and consecrated hearts we can benefit even from what others have

written and said although they may be correct only in a formal sense.

d. In learning the art of composition we learn to communicate in turn to others what we have acquired through our study. In writing or in conversation we learn to express ourselves to others.

1) This is of essential importance, for no one can take his proper place in his home, his church, his church society, his calling in life without learning the art of communication.

2) The better he learns this, the better he will be able to fulfill his calling before God.

3) This truth must be impressed upon the minds of the covenant seed.

2. Subservient to this are the following subjects:

a. Spelling.

b. Grammar---Three things may be noticed:

1) It is more than likely that a proper grammar of a language is inherent in the language itself. This was no doubt true of the original language that Adam spoke, and will be true of the language in heaven. However, the more exact a grammar is, the more easily communication is accomplished.

2) As far as vocabulary is concerned, the greater the vocabulary of a language, the more concisely one is able to express himself. However, words take on additional meanings and shades of meanings through lengthy use over the years.

3) The importance of grammar for the covenant seed of the church lies in the fact that they must learn to express themselves adequately and correctly to enable them to assume the responsibilities of their calling before God. Grammar is a tool. The better one's grammar, the better one can communicate.

c. Penmanship.

3. Foreign languages. It is expressly for the purpose of communicating with the saints that are gathered from every nation, and for the purpose of having access to all that all men have said and written that the study of languages becomes important. Languages are not only mental disciplines.

C. Literature. A few words must be said about literature.

1. Every form of literature is a legitimate tool of communication.

a. There certainly must be and is a place for the Christian novel, short story, poem, essay, and written drama.

b. It is the calling of Christian school teachers to encourage and enable our children, with their unique heritage of the truth to produce Christian literature in these various fields.

2. The use of literature in the school.

a. As much as possible, Christian literature must be used.

Much however that passes under the name of Christian literature is sentimental---neither Christian nor good literature.

b. However, the question arises, may non-Christian literature also be used? May it be read by our children and our parents?

1) There is much that may not. All kinds of trash in magazines and evil books ought not to be seen in our schools and homes. It is a sad commentary on the spiritual life of the church that often times this worthless and sinful stuff is present and read. Paul speaks of things so vile they ought not even to be mentioned among us.

2) This does not mean that all literature produced by unbelievers must be ignored. It may be read with the positive

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purpose of instruction in the school, and of our own personal instruction.

3) Yet a note of warning must be sounded.

a) It is extremely difficult to read a worldly novel or piece of literature which communicates the lie without being affected by it for evil. Only a mature Christian, faithful in his pursuit of the knowledge of God should read these things, and then always critically.

b) The teacher has an extremely important calling to be highly critical of all her class reads, pointing out to them the errors, substituting the truth for it. If the teacher does not do this, it is discarded altogether. But for this reason also our teachers must have a firm grasp of and love for the truth of the Word of God.

D. In conclusion,,it is not difficult to see how important the language-arts are. They are fundamental to the whole instruction in the school, yes, fundamental to the whole of life itself and the calling of the Christian.

IV. APPRECIATION TYPE SUBJECTS

I. Introduction

A. The name.

1. The name "appreciation type subjects" is inadequate and incorrect.

a. The subjects treated under this general heading are not correctly defined as to their main idea by the word "appreciation".

1) It would seem that the word "appreciation" expresses the purpose of these subjects as being merely aesthetic enjoyment of the beautiful.

2) Yet the purpose of all art is more correctly characterized as the communication of ideas. And a study of these subjects is concerned with the evaluation of the effectiveness of the communication of ideas.

b. The difficulty is:

1) The concept "beauty" itself requires definition.

2) It is hardly true that anything in the creation is for the mere purpose of some "mystical" delight in that which is ethereal and intangible.

2. This general subject includes:

a. Art study--in painting, drawing, sculpture, architecture.

b. Music--instrumental and vocal.

c. Literature.

1) This subject is treated extensively in "The Language Arts". It is briefly discussed here only inasmuch as it is a form of art.

2) This includes writing and reading of novels, poems, biographies, autobiographies, short stories, technical works, dramas and essays.

B. The difficulty of this subject is evident from the following considerations:

1. The subject requires a clear and correct definition of the concept "beauty" which has evaded men's grasp for centuries.

2. The subject requires at least a passing acquaintance with the branch of philosophy known as aesthetics.

3. The proposition that the arts are mainly concerned with the communication of ideas requires a rather radical departure from the main stream of opinion current today.

II. The meaning of the concept "beauty".

A. Negatively.

1. Beauty has been variously defined by philosophers, musicians, artists and common people.

a. Some hold that something is beautiful only when it pleases the senses.

b. Others are inclined to maintain the proposition that beauty is determined by majority vote. That is beautiful which most agree upon.

c. Still others find beauty only in that which is functional and of pragmatic use.

d. There are also the incurable optimists who can see beauty in a dump, or, as one author expressed it, "glory in a radiator".

2. These definitions immediately strike one as being inadequate.

a. The mere idea of that being beautiful which pleases the sense is too subjective and offers no objective standard. Subjectivism must, also in this respect, lead to agnosticism.

b. Common consent cannot always be trusted and is also subjective. It proceeds on the assumption that the majority must

necessarily be correct---an assumption contrary to the truth of the Scripture that the world is steeped in iniquity.

c. That which is functional can indeed be beautiful; but it is not yet beautiful because it is functional.

d. If there is beauty in everything, obviously there is no curse upon the creation nor sin in the heart of man, for the curse and sin can never be beautiful.

B. Positively.

1. The word for "beauty" in Scripture is the same word which is often translated "grace".

a. Fundamental to this is the fact that God is the only gracious One; therefore, the only beautiful One.

b. Scripture emphatically teaches that this beauty of the grace of God is His own ethical and moral perfection which is infinite and eternal.

2. Pursuing this line of thought, we come to the conclusion that, in the creation, that only is beautiful which reveals and reflects this ethical perfection of God. Beauty is holiness.

a. A man is beautiful, strictly speaking, only when he lives a life from within that is perfectly conformable with God's holiness. A physically attractive prostitute is not beautiful except in the eyes of a lustful degenerate.

b. In the creation, there is beauty only when there is a revelation of the absolute perfection of God.

1) This was originally true of the creation before the fall; but this beauty has been ruined through the curse that came upon the creation because of the sin of man.

2) This does not mean that there is no more beauty left. God has caused the present curse-stricken creation to be filled with signs of the redeemed creation. In these signs there is beauty--in the budding trees, the startling colors of a sunset, the emergence of a moth from a cocoon. In fact all creation points to a perfect world and in this has yet its beauty.

3) But the creation possesses its everlasting and true beauty only when it is redeemed from under the curse and restored in glory. That beauty is incomprehensible; but it is the full revelation of the glory of God.

III. The principles of this subject in general.

A. The main purpose of the arts is the communication of thought and idea.

1. This purpose being accomplished, a work of art forms a bridge between the creator and the viewer (or listener or reader).

2. Where this bridge is built by means of paintings, musical compositions, writings, etc., the thoughts in the soul of the artist are communicated to his audience.

3. The contents of this communication must have at its center and heart the revelation of God and the truth concerning Him. Art must always be idealistic in the sense that it must convey the truth of God.

4. The concept of beauty as defined above plays an integral role in the creation of any work of art. To learn to be an artist means to have something meaningful and worth while to communicate; means also to communicate effectively.

B. The implication of this.

1. Any work of art is necessarily idealistic in the sense that it points to things as they should be and shall be when redeemed and restored in Jesus Christ. This does not mean that art cannot

face the realities of life and be what is called "realistic"; but this can only serve as background to emphasize the truth of God as this is revealed in every aspect of life.

2. Fundamental to all this and following from it is the important truth that there is an objective standard which must serve as the criterion for any work of art. Art is not formless and freedom from rules; it is based on rules and is in conformity with principles inherent in the very nature of the subject.

a. Anything which does not conform to the rules of art cannot, by any stretch of the imagination, be termed art.

b. Technical skill is requisite to all art; yet technical skill alone will never produce art. One must have something to say.

c. When a true work of art is produced, the idea in the soul of the creator will, of necessity, be translated to the soul of the audience.

d. There is a problem which arises: can only an elect produce a work of art? The answer to this question will have to be "No". Even the reprobate can be an artist and does produce a work of art. But then he knows the technical skills and has mastery of them; and he knows the truth and incorporates it in his work of art whether he believes it or not. Example: a reprobate minister can preach a sermon that is edifying to the believers.

IV. An individual treatment of each subject.

A. Painting, drawing, sculpturing, architecture.

1. Painting and drawing.

a. Based on the above, there must be rules governing the form of drawing and painting. Example: the rule of perspective.

1) The great task of the artist is to discover these rules.

2) They are evidently part of the revelation of God which are discoverable through study of God's natural revelation.

b. Painting and drawing of any type can be used and is a most powerful means of conveying ideas, thoughts, emotions, desires, etc. A work of this nature can do what a piece of literature cannot do inasmuch as it appeals to the eyes.

c. There is a perversion of art in the world of wickedness.

1) There is art which is technically correct, but which conveys something contrary to the truth of Scripture.

2) There is, in our day, a marked movement to ignore the rules of art. So-called "modern art" has no true place in the field of art.

a) This includes all types of surrealism, abstractionism, cubism, impressionism, etc.

b) Often times art can indeed become guilty of prostituting itself in the service of sin.

c) The very most that can be said for "modern art" is that it conveys the hopeless confusion and desperation of our age.

d) While it may perhaps be said to have some value (highly dubious value indeed) for the psychiatrist to determine what goes on in the deepest life of man, it cannot be called art.

2. Sculpture.

a. What has been said above applies here equally well.

b. Again, sinful man perverts this work of art both by his crass distortion and perversion of reality and the laws of art, and by his technical adherence to the rules, by his enormously sinful ideas which he conveys.

c. Nevertheless, sculpture can also be a highly effective way

of communicating ideas and thought; for while it is mostly limited to the members of the human race, it has as its study the most interesting subject of creation.

3. Architecture.

a. Architecture is also a means of conveying thought. While architecture, on the whole, must also be functional, its very adaptation to function brings it within the realm of the artistic.

b. A cathedral with its lofty spires and exalted domes reaching towards heaven can have no other effect by lifting worshippers up above things mundane to the contemplation of things heavenly.

c. There are several interesting and current examples of this in church architecture.

1) The modern church architecture of America reflects the church's opinion of the life of the church. While the auditorium in modern churches continues to shrink in size and to be a less important part of the edifice, offices, halls, lounges, kitchens, banquet rooms, etc., become increasingly the main part of the building, all indicating that the church has become a social and administrative center rather than a place of worship.

2) No one who has seen the church building of those who make a tenet of doubting one's salvation can help but be impressed with the flat and low tower of the church which, no doubt, reflects the thoughts of people ever striving upward, but never gaining heaven's portals.

B. Music.

1. The most effective type of music is, no doubt, music which is sung. This is because words are introduced into the music, and words are the most effective way of communicating thought.

a. Music is pre-eminently a means of glorifying God. This is best done and most gloriously accomplished through singing.

b. This is always emphasized in Scripture. Scripture mentions singing of songs as the chief way of glorifying God. The gift of singing is a wonderful gift.

2. This does not, however, exclude instrumental music.

a. Instrumental music is very capable of conveying thought and emotion. Religion is also an emotional experience and response, if this is considered in the good sense of the word. For the emotions, however important, can never be divorced from the intellect and will.

b. When music is the accompaniment of words, the music must fit the words to be successful. That is, the music must convey the same idea as the words. There are notorious illustrations of this not being done in our Psalter.

c. Very definite ideas and pictures can be woven through the agency of strings, brasses, percussion and reeds. These ideas and pictures also can indeed be the truth of the revelation of God.

d. One is reminded of the many Psalms of David that speak of praising God with tymbrals, harps, and psalteries.

e. An illustration of the power of music to move to fierce passion and emotion is found in Pope's poem, "Alexander's Feast".

3. Music has also definite rules which must control and govern its composition. These rules, such as the rules of the harmonic scale, the chord, etc., can evidently be discovered by study and

application of the revelation of God. It is only within the sphere of these rules that there is true music.

4. Because of the high place which music holds in the lives of the people of God, this form of art has also most horribly been turned in the service of sin.

a. Music itself is used to teach and convey by words and melodies evil and heretical thoughts. Examples of this are found not only in the world, but also in the church in modern hymnology.

b. Modern music today cannot even rightly be called music for the most part. It intends to arouse all kinds of evil emotions, convey all kinds of evil thoughts, and has reached a point where even some of the world finds it intolerable.

c. Again it reflects the gross confusion and immorality of the age.

C. Literature.

1. This subject being more extensively treated in "The Language Arts", will only be briefly touched upon here.

2. The following points we should notice:

a. There are certain rules and principles which govern the construction of fiction, biography, poetry, short stories, etc.

b. It is well nigh impossible to construct an autobiography, for it is impossible it seems for a man to be so objective as to show his own place in life and his own part in God's purpose of redemption.

c. Each form of literature, however, has its own place and its own genius in conveying the truth.

3. This form of art has also been abused by the world.

a. Predominantly the abuse has come in the form of filling literature with sin and using literature to further the cause of sin. Even "Christian literature" is often guilty of this.

b. It is well to admonish the seed of the covenant with the words of the apostle Paul, "Let not these things even be mentioned among you."

c. But there is a general tendency beginning to manifest itself which ignores even the formal rules governing literature and the technical aspects of this type of art. It is possible that free verse is guilty of this; there are fruits of beatniks which fall under this category; there are also several novels on the market which must be classified as evil not because of their content, but also because of their form.

4. There is here a field which has only been slightly touched by the people of God. There is a vast field of Christian endeavor lying in literature, music, art, sculpture which would be fruitful and profitable for the church, if developed. It may well be the calling of the Christian school teacher to instruct and urge the covenant seed to develop their talents in these rich fields.

V. Conclusion.

There is, in teaching these subjects, a two-fold calling for the teacher. On the one hand, there is the responsibility that teachers can never escape to instill in their pupils the love of that which is truly beautiful--truly the revelation of God. This implies that, in the use of literature, music, paintings, etc., the teacher takes pains to point out that which is wrong and contrary to the Reformed principles of the truth. On the other hand, there is great need for teachers to encourage their pupils to develop in these fields so that the arts may be used for the benefit of those who love the truth of God's Word. It is an important calling to make use of the gifts which God gives His people to produce that which is in harmony with our Reformed faith. May God grant that our schools serve this purpose.