The Distinctive Features of the Christian School

BY

T. VAN DER KOOY

Principal of Dr. A. Kuyper School
Vlaardingen, Netherlands

TRANSLATED BY

Three Members of the Faculty
of Calvin College

WM. B. EERDMANS PUBLISHING CO
(*The Reformed Press*)
Grand Rapids, Michigan
1925

PREFACE

A FEW REMARKS with reference to the translation herewith presented to the reader will not be out of place.

The original appeared in 1923 as No. 20 of a series of pamphlets published by "Gereformeerd Schoolverband," an organization in The Netherlands promoting Christian Education there. This number bears the title, "Het Typeerende van de Gereformeerde School," and is the work of Mr. T. v. d. Kooy, Principal of a Christian School in Vlaardingen, Holland.

A book in English, setting forth the distinctive principles of Christian Education is, in our opinion, a necessity. This is evident when one considers the demand made recently by various writers in our circles for more distinctively intensive work in our schools, differentiating them from other schools. It is true that our institutions have certain needs in common with every other school, for example, the necessary equipment and the maintenance of academic standards; but it is equally true that in addition to, or rather qualifying all similarities between the Christian schools and others, there should be a definite educational consciousness on the part of our people revolving about the "Why" of Christian Education. And it is this very attitude we desire to re-inforce by a re-statement of the essential features of our Christian Schools, as embodied in this pamphlet of Mr. v. d. Kooy.

But there is a second consideration. We are in the midst of the stream of Americanization.

And just because we have so long stood on the banks, the danger is now greater that we shall be swept along by the current.

For these reasons it seemed to us an excellent thing to translate this booklet of Mr. v. d. Kooy, for in it we find a brief summary of the distinctive features of the Christian School. We believe that such a summary, in which the spiritual elements are emphasized, can contribute something to the development of a definite consciousness in educational matters, and that it ought to do so particularly in our time of rapid Americanization and material prosperity. Our purpose is to put into an English garb that which, generally speaking, was the conviction of our fathers. However, as that generation passes, we must have worthy descendants to whom the cause of the fathers is equally dear.

A few words regarding the method of translating are likewise necessary. We have translated freely rather than literally. We did not hesitate to drop certain phrases here and there which we regarded as bare repetitions. We have omitted the specific references of a local character. No one should infer, however, that it is not a faithful rendering of all that is essential to the work of the author. For the convenience of the reader a marginal analysis has been added.

We hope that this booklet may serve the cause of Christian Education, and through it, the cause of our Lord.

THE TRANSLATORS.

Grand Rapids, Mich., April, 1925.

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The Distinctive Features of the Christian School

CHAPTER ONE

Introduction

The fundamental question

WHAT IS THE peculiarly distinctive feature by which the Christian school[1] differentiates itself from other schools?

A possible objection to the very question

Before attempting the answer, I must briefly consider whether the question itself is a justifiable one. There may be those who would contend that he who asks such a question is only riding the hobby-horse of logical consistency to extremes. The Christian school, so they would argue, is after all a school like every other where children learn reading, writing, and arithmetic. All our prating about a peculiarly distinctive stamp which is supposed to differentiate the Christian school, they would object, is mere exaggeration, excellent as theory, but hardly to be realized in actuality.

I venture to think that this objection to the question itself no longer requires serious consideration in our circles. Were I to consider it, the counter objection would at once be raised:

1) In the following pages "Gereformeerde School," "Gereformeerd Onderwijs," and similar phrases have consistently been rendered "Christian school," "Christian education," etc. to conform with usage in America.

Why do you thus return to first rudiments? The conviction that the Christian school has about it some feature that distinguishes it from all others is in our circles a well-established one; it has long ago been firmly founded. * * * * * If indeed there is a distinctive attitude toward education, an attitude rooted in our Reformed principles, then it must follow that the Christian school will differentiate itself from all other institutions of learning.

Necessary in our day to raise the question anew

Nevertheless, there have in my opinion been times when we were more consciously aware of this need of distinctiveness than at present. Principles at such times more vitally controlled our thinking. * * * * * We were then still in the period of struggle, in which it was necessary to oppose principle to principle. The Christian teacher of that period could not neglect developing in his pedagogy the antithesis of principles; in curriculum building, he strove, even though in modest measure, after an application of principles. * * * * *

We today are apt to lose ourselves in questions of technique

But there followed a different period, a period wherein the majority of our teachers dropped the sword and took up the trowel. Far be it from me to minimize their labor! In my opinion it was just as essential as the labor it supplanted. It was necessary that our Christian schools evidence that they sought the best forms of instruction and that also in this sense they desired to be Christian. And thus our day is characterized not so much by a development

and application of our principles as by the taking cognizance of the results of psychology and pedagogy in general. Indubitably this more recent task can be of profit to our pedagogy, but if accompanied by a waning of appreciation of our principles is not without danger.

Or is there not danger that foreign elements enter into our pedagogical consciousness, and that inasmuch as the power of discernment rooting in knowledge of principle is absent, the teacher is carried along with various winds of pedagogical doctrine? How under such circumstances can there be vital educational consciousness, well rooted in our principles; how can that which presents itself as such be anything but an artificial combination, a crazy quilt, a self-contradiction, a theory without system, the fruit of eclecticism? And with such eclecticism there can even be joined a disparagement of the study of principles, a looking down on such study with disdain, a disapproval of "making a principle of everything." The most consistent procedure would then be to choose from the stock in hand of teaching devices, both public and Christian, those which empirically are best correlated. It is sometimes even considered blasphemy to speak of principles in this connection; but blasphemy is out of the question, inasmuch as the Scriptural command reads: "Whether therefore ye eat, or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God."

The welfare of both Christian education and Reformed principles demands consideration of the question

With all this in mind, it is but timely that we once more devote our attention to that which is distinctive of the Christian school, and in connection therewith to the power and the significance of the Reformed principles for nurture and education. If in the welter of our routine studies and activities, we do not, even though it be only occasionally, devote ourselves to the consideration of educational principles, there is great danger that the enthusiasm which was at one time felt for the Reformed principles, will finally be extinguished. And then, too, the danger is no less real that we lose ourselves in a superficial Christianity; that we look with contempt on all argument about principles, and in practice sing the praises of a Christianity above all creeds. It is beyond question that then our Christian school movement would be dealt a mortal blow. Or there would result a cold and petrified conservatism, a subsisting on the capital acquired in the past, without renewed contact with contemporary life, a dualism between pedagogy and faith, the two sometimes playfully wrestling, and then again living together in hostility.

* * * * *

How shall we proceed in the investigation?

Once more, our question is: What is the distinctive feature of the Christian school? To answer this I must first of all delimit my subject somewhat, particularly with a view to the method of investigation which I shall employ.

Does the question intend the Christian school

as it actually exists, or as it ought to be; as reality, as fact, or as norm, as ideal? It seems to me the one must not exclude the other. But each of these viewpoints requires its own method of treatment.

The apriori method: principles first

Place the ideal in the foreground, and you will of necessity start from principles, and only secondarily will you observe what consequences are to be drawn for the practices in our schools.

The empirical method: facts first

It is altogether conceivable, however, that in the investigation of the characteristic element of the Christian school, you follow the other method and proceed from the actual situation. This method, however, requires an extensive preparation; more specifically an inquiry into the various subdivisions of the existing school systems, an inquiry extending to all Christian schools. * * * * * The results of such an inquiry would have to be drawn up in statistical form, and you would then be enabled to arrive at a general survey of the whole. Those characteristics which you find most uniformly present you could regard as belonging to the typical Christian school. Such preliminary work, however, has not yet been accomplished, so that this second method can as yet not be employed. Furthermore, this second method would not be final.

The latter unsatisfactory

The scientific observation and statistical description of the existing situation could be done by anyone. A Calvinist looks for more. A Calvinist takes into consideration that in the exist-

ing Christian schools alien elements may have crept in which may by no means be regarded or registered as typical. He realizes that there may still be old leaven which must be removed.

The Calvinist must therefore take his departure from principles, and in this way give impetus to a further development in Reformed channels. For theory always surpasses practice, and the ideal is always higher than the actual.

It will, however, be pedagogical not to let the argument lose itself in purely theoretical vagaries, but throughout to keep in view its relation to practice. This I hope to do in the following pages.

* * * *

The investigation really an inventory

I should dislike being misunderstood as presumptuously setting up a sort of shibboleth by which the presence and degree of Calvinistic character in our schools is to be determined. Such is not at all my purpose, nor is the question so easy of solution. Have not all our efforts these many years been bent toward discovering, establishing, and strengthening the Calvinistic character of certain phases of our schools? Even so, after various subdivisions have as such received attention, it is not superfluous again to present the general question and to make a resumé of the results. To put it from another angle, the question, "What is the peculiarly distinctive feature of the Christian schools?"

means in our circles, "How far have we progressed? What can be regarded as the result of our labors?" And indeed, this question is pertinent. An inventory is sometimes necessary before further work can be accomplished.

The problem a perennial one

But if the foregoing be true, it immediately follows that no one will expect me offhand to determine wherein consists the Calvinistic character of our schools. * * * * This problem will always continue to be examined and discussed by our schools, at some periods in its particular applications, at other periods in its more general aspects. To the extent that the Calvinistic principles also in the educational world live on as a stimulus on the one hand to ceaseless internal reformation, and on the other to adaptation to contemporary circumstances, to that extent will there be no possibility of outgrowing this problem. * * * * *

CHAPTER TWO

The General Distinctiveness of the Christian School

A simple answer: "A Christian School is one with 'Reformed' teaching"

BY THE ORDINARY man the answer to our question is often given, and given simply, in the following words: A Christian school is a school in which the instruction is given by members of a Reformed church, and in which the teaching is in harmony with the convictions of the Reformed parents who support the school.

This superficial and general indication is not sufficient, but it has at least the merit of suggesting that the instruction in the Christian school is in harmony with the convictions of the parents who establish the school, and that it is given by teachers who share these convictions. This is as it should be, for only under such circumstances can the teaching be done with inspiration and enthusiasm, and in such a way that there is unity in the education of the child and agreement between school and home.

But what makes an individual or school 'Reformed'?

In reality, however, this answer only shifts the question. One must now ask: What is the distinctive feature of the Reformed individual, of Reformed education, of Reformed conviction? Precisely because the bond between school and home is so intimate, this distinctive feature,

whatever it is, will of necessity influence the school and help to characterize it.

Some features are common to all education

When we consider the distinctive feature of the Reformed individual, what strikes us is that he lives his natural life, which he shares with all men, on the basis of creation and common grace. This being the situation, it need not surprise us that also the limited field of the Christian school has much in common with that of other schools. In both instances you find a teacher molding a child. Hence, that there should be, in spite of all differences of principle, a similarity between Christian schools and others, and that this similarity is, when considered superficially more evident than the difference, need not astonish us.

Other features are common to all Christian education

The Calvinist, however, also lives in the sphere of special grace and therefore moves in the domain of historic Christianity. For this reason it follows as a matter of course that schools which are Christian in our specifically Calvinistic sense have much in common with other Christian schools.

But certain distinctive features are present only in what a Calvinist means by Christian School

But what distinguishes us from Lutherans, Baptists, and Ethicalists is that we of the Reformed persuasion view all things in the spirit of Calvinism. Calvinism we consider Christianity par excellence. The result will be that certain factors will as it were attain their highest culmination only in what the Calvinist means by a Christian school. His school will manifest certain characteristics in greater

measure than other schools, and it is these characteristics which make his school distinctive.

One must not expect, therefore, that the Christian school in a Calvinistic sense will sharply distinguish itself in every respect from other schools. It can lay no claim to monopoly in all matters but in many respects is like every other school. The contention: "Our schools do in every respect constitute an absolute antithesis to all others", has its attractiveness the while one remains in the realm of principles. When, however, one descends to the sphere of practical execution, the contention does not hold.[2] This is all the more true inasmuch as the existence of reciprocal influence is not to be ignored. The Christian school because of its imperfection and deficiency will in the expression of its specific character always be hampered; practice, as has already been stated, will always lag behind the ideal. Furthermore, Calvinism has for centuries exerted influence on our national life; no cause for wonder then that in the sphere of education in general, also in the development of schools of other types, Calvinistic factors should in greater or lesser degree have played a role. Both circumstances contribute to minimize the difference in practice. Let us be on our guard to the extent of our abilities that the difference do not surreptitiously vanish! It is therefore

[2] The translators are of the opinion that the author here concedes too much to external appearances.

necessary that we become clearly conscious of the distinctive element in the Christian school in order that in the future we may more fully develop it.

* * * * *

The attempt to discover the distinctive features of pedagogical movements is not new. It is universally present in pedagogical thinking. * * * *

Distinctiveness of any school a matter of principles

I believe, however, that neither scientific method nor economic status, nor anything similar is among factors sufficiently fundamental to characterize any type of school education in essence. The following quotation from Frischeisen-Köhler is pertinent: "What distinguishes the various pedagogical theories from one another is, to be sure, in the first place the variety of the specific educational ideals, but this very variety indicates a more basic difference of world view from which these ideals spring, indeed, of which they are integral parts. And not only do the various educational systems from this receive their characteristic contents, but the methods in pedagogical thinking as well are determined by this relation. They have their roots in ethical and religio-metaphysical views." [3]

Scientifically then, we are evidently in good company when we contend with reference to

[3] Frischeisen-Köhler, M. "Civilization and Philosophy," 1921. (Quoted by Rudolph Lehmann in "Zeitschrift fur die Pädagogische Psychologie.")

the distinctive features of our Christian schools: Back to ultimate principles! Dr. Kuyper has clearly demonstrated in his Stone Lectures that Calvinism is not to be deprived of the honor of being a world and life view that can be scientifically defended. He pointed out that an all-inclusive life and world view must take its departure from a definite interpretation of our relation to God. "Personally, it is our repeated experience that in the depths of our hearts, at the point where we disclose ourselves to the Eternal One, all the rays of our life converge as in one focus, and there alone regain that harmony which we so often and so painfully lose in the stress of daily duty." [4]

The most fundamental of all principles

The central thought of Calvinism is that God is in immediate communion with His own, who in turn, bowing before the sovereignty of High God, live their whole life in His presence. A true aristocrat like Groen van Prinsterer is in this respect in full agreement with the common man.

The basic principle as interpreted by Calvinism

I wish to point out that from this basic thought there follow two direct practical applications for nurture and education. The first of these is the sense of the absolute. The Calvinist cannot be satisfied with the view that all judgments are true and that the only difference between views is one of "more or less true," one of degree; for him any view is either a truth or a

Two applications of this principle to education

[4] Kuyper, Dr. A. Sr., "Stone Lectures," p. 17.

lie,—even though in life truth and falsehood are intertwined. The same absoluteness is characteristic of the Christian school. Again, for the Calvinist, and so too for the Christian school, it is not true "that everything is, in an ethical sense, good and that the only difference is one of "more or less good" as though the whole matter were purely relative; for him and for his school something is either good or bad. The Christian school maintains the doctrine of two roads to eternity, of for and against Christ, of God and Satan, of sin and holiness. In this respect we are not in accord with the spirit of our times, which would put everything on the basis of mere relativity. "The time wherein we live," remarks *De Standaard* (Oct. 3, 1922), "has not unjustly been denominated the age of relativity. The colossal events of the last years, the shock through which the world passed, have crowded absolute values to the background and have substituted the relative. Especially in spiritual matters a dislike for the absolute and its determinateness has evidenced itself in a preference for the relative and its flux. Mysticism is preferred above dogma. Heteronomy is abhorred, autonomy is defended."

(1) Sense of the absolute character of truth and of goodness

It is characteristic of the Christian school that in this respect it does not permit itself to be overwhelmed by the spirit of the times. It holds the absolute in high esteem. It insists on recognizing and proclaiming the antithesis, even though the cry is raised round about for an un-

Opposed to relativism

desirable synthesis involving the sacrifice of principles. Just this absoluteness has at all times been the strength of the Calvinist; we must therefore not lose this sense of the absolute, though we acknowledge the benefits of common grace in matters natural and civil. Especially for the child is this sense of the absolute of great importance. The child understands nothing of relativism. He knows and asks only one question: Is it true, or not? May it be done, or not? Absolutism is in accord with his nature. Education in this spirit develops strong characters. Relativism can produce only weak natures.

(2) Belief in objectivity of truth

The second application is closely related to the first: for the consciousness of the Calvinist the objective has binding and convincing power. He yields to facts. For him truth has objective authority, so too the truths of Scripture. Scripture is for him the final court of appeal. This attitude, too, characterizes the Christian school.

Opposed to subjectivism

Such regard for the objective is far from universal. Rather, a boundless subjectivism more and more controls the souls of men. The individual himself insists on determining what he will recognize and accept. Independent of historical tradition he desires, in the consciousness of autonomy,to determine for himself what shall bind him. The facts of salvation are first subjected to a preconceived system of philosophy, only later to be regarded as superfluous and finally to be denied. The objective authority of

Scripture is rejected; it is no longer "a scrutinizing but a judging of the Word." Man himself becomes the criterion of all things, his own King and Lawgiver. * * * *

These two characteristics make for tranquillity

These two traits, submission to the absolute and submission to the objective, characterize the Christian school in a special degree. Accordingly, the Christian school is marked, in general, by a certain tranquillity, a calm objectivity. This peacefulness is not the peacefulness of death, nor the cold immobility of conservatism. In the sequel it will be sufficiently evident that the Christian school is averse to all conservatism and is motivated from within to continuous reformation. It is the calm of innate power and strength, which is the result of being rooted in a life view. It is the tranquillity of the oak, the king of trees, firmly rooted. Round about, in other institutions of learning and education, subjectivism, which brings about a confusion of tongues and makes futile the labor performed, sometimes holds sway. There relativism paralyzes the noblest efforts, produces confusion in the minds of the pupils, and frequently leads to inward skepticism, to doubting that which for ages was confessed as truth. In such institutions a few subdivisions receive the emphasis at the expense of the whole; ingenious discoveries relative to subordinate points are sometimes lauded to the skies and exalted as cornerstones of a new system. One theorist prescribes education by the state as a panacea; another raises

How these two qualities serve to differentiate the Christian School

the slogan: self-development of the child; again it is thought that by changing the school management in the direction of self-government by the pupils, all problems will have been solved. All such attempts which stress subordinate points and fail to see the whole are one-sided and lack balance. By men holding such theories the Christian school may be accused of presumption; its claim to be in possession of truth for which others are still searching, may be called pretentious. Our answer is that we have Holy Writ and know that it, to use Dr. Bavinck's expression, "also orients man in the present world." And again, "He who is instructed in the Scriptures rises to a height from which he surveys the great totality of things; his horizon extends itself to the ends of the earth; he knows his position as human being, because he views himself and all things primarily in his relation to God of Whom, through Whom, and to Whom all things are." [5] * * * *

Just as anything can be abused and exaggerated, so this presence in Christian pedagogy of tranquillity can certainly acquire the appearance now and then of staidness and conservatism. We must not, however, forget that in just this way continuity is preserved both in actual teaching and in the development of pedagogy. One is not carried away by the newest pedagogical frills. What was built up yesterday is

[5] Bavinck, H., "Pedagogische Beginselen," §60.

not torn down today. There is no swinging from one extreme to the other. The movement is steady. Development is in the historical line. * * * *

Our original question answered in general terms

To sum up all in one statement: That which makes the Christian school distinctive is, in general, its being rooted in the life view that takes its departure from the absolute sovereignty of God. To this life view it is most intimately related. This intimate relation explains its reverence for the absolute, keeping the school true to historical, explicitly Christian interpretations, true to the nature and needs of the child, and keeping it averse to contemporary relativism. It is for the same reason that the very warp and woof of Calvinistic thinking is the acknowledging of the objective character of truth, both in the actuality round about us and in the facts of history, sacred history included. It is necessarily implied that this thinking is based upon the reliability of Holy Writ and is diametrically opposed to all subjectivism. It is this high regard both for the absoluteness and objectivity of truth, that gives the Christian school its character of tranquillity by means of which it hews to the line of historical continuity and steadfastly perseveres in its task.

In this connection we need no more than mention that the Calvinistic life view particularly due to its principle of our whole life being lived

in the presence of God, will exert a wholesome influence toward the conscientious observance of one's daily task; likewise, that also in the sphere of education, this same view will demand unceasing reformation. * * * *

CHAPTER THREE

The Specific Distinctiveness of the Christian School

THE EDUCATIONAL VIEWS of one who lives in the presence of his Maker must be evolved out of the fundamental concepts creation, sin, and grace. It is these three facts that control all finite life round about us and influence its development. It is the interrelation of precisely these three factors that makes so difficult and complex the problem of retracing the development of created reality and of discovering the fundamental nature that was originally present in things. If we had to reckon with creation only, this difficulty would disappear.

Everything that exists God created to express a divine idea

For it must be remembered that the nature of things is not the result of caprice or chance. Each creature is the incarnation of a divine idea in which is bound up the law that governs its existence and development * * * *

The school, too, embodies a divine idea. This is its essential nature

It is true that God did not directly create the school. The school is a human creation, brought about by the conditions of life. Nevertheless, in and through all human institutions, and so in and through the school, is God as the "Auctor primarius" (first cause), He who worketh all things after the counsel of His own will.

Therefore it will not do to say, as is some-

times done, that the school is an evil. To be sure, it may develop in a wrong direction and as a result exert undesirable influence. But if inherently, in its very nature, the school were an evil, all the aims and efforts of all those who contend for Christian instruction would have to be directed toward the removal, abolishment, and annihilation of this evil. And that were inconsistency itself. * * * *

Distinctive nature of the Christian School

(1) Is content to be auxiliary to family

Considering the Christian school in its nature, we find as its distinctive feature that it pretends to be nothing further than a school; that is to say, an institution auxiliary to the family in the education of the children for their position in life. It is content with this supplementary function. It has no aspiration to supplant the state, the church, or scientific institutions; * * * * such, at least, is the prevalent opinion, which has gradually crystalized in our circles. Against it no valid objection can be raised, and of it no further elaboration is necessary.

Through group instruction transmitting past culture

One point possibly might yet be touched upon, a point to which the author of *Ons Program* already called attention in 1878. Precisely because the school is an auxiliary to the home in the education of the children, it is also the means, whereby "the present stage of development of national culture, which is the result of a gradual process, is transmitted to the next generation;" more particularly "to the extent that this transmission depends on group instruction."

Now, it is group instruction which, after all, is the distinguishing characteristic of the school. Though father, mother, private tutor, or governess can, of course, also transmit culture, such instruction can never take the place of group training. To obtain this the child must be member of the class in a school room.

It is just this supplementary function and nothing more which the Christian school sets as its aim. * * * * It is just because of this function that the school arose and is still necessary. The conditions particularly of modern life make the school indispensable, and it is becoming ever more so.

The Christian school, and this is typical of it, is content with its relation to the home. It respects the rights of the family. It does not usurp any prerogatives of the home. * * * * It never undermines the home.

And including religion in its program

The program of the school is already broad enough as it is. To educate the children for their calling means to educate them for society, state, and church; means, also, to educate them with reference to eternity. * * * * This broad program, again, is something characteristic of the Christian school; for the public school confines itself particularly to educating for society and state, ecclesiastical and religious life being sadly neglected.

The exhaustive execution of this program, as it has just been defined, is the aim of the Christian school. Thus its task is in the first place in

the domain of common grace, but in the course of its labor it will naturally be impossible that particular grace be ignored. We shall explain this more fully in a subsequent chapter on "Discipline."

(2) But insists on being a free institution

The second outstanding characteristic of the Christian school is that its supporters keenly appreciate the slogan, "Freedom for the School." For although the school is a supplementary agency, nevertheless it also has a certain independence, evident from the fact that most Christian schools have originated in and are supported by co-operative effort. Whatever originates through co-operation possesses a certain independence over against the constituent parts. Whenever men co-operate, they must needs frequently forego their own views and opinions. In the same way the school, at times, for the benefit of the whole, must take certain decisions contrary to the desires of certain individual families. * * * *

It very soon appears that the school is no subordinate part of the family. It is an independent, individual institution. How, for example, could the family pass judgment upon the classification of the pupils and the assignment of lessons? The school as an institution has its own proper regulations. To be sure, it is subject to the principles of the parents who have engaged a teacher who shares their views, but with regard to the application of these principles to method and subject matter the school is under

no compulsion. Such a matter cannot be dictated by the home. The teacher as specialist in this field cannot be bound by a parent who from the nature of the case is not an expert in such technical matters.

Though, of course, related to state, church, etc.

It is true, the school stands in most intimate relation to the family, and so, too, there exists a certain relation to state and church. * * * * * As long as these relations are clearly defined and duly recognized, the school enjoys true freedom, by which is meant, in distinction from license, a condition in which the school is bound by the laws of its own being. Dr. Kuyper in *Ons Program* mapped out these relations as follows: "The parent determines the spirit of the instruction, the church determines the principle whereby that spirit may be conserved, the state determines the minimum amount of education, but the method by which all this should be brought about is left to the teacher to determine." [6]

Its freedom, when threatened, defended

It cannot be denied that in practice one or another of the aforementioned parties frequently aims at supremacy in educational affairs. But under such circumstances the proper proportion is lost, there is no team work, there is undue friction, and true liberty is no more. This danger may arise equally well from the side of parents and teacher as from the side of church and state. But it is remarkable how sensitive to this

6) "Ons Program," §168.

danger the Christian school is. Immediately the cry goes forth against such undue restraint of liberty, and straightway enthusiasm is stirred up for another struggle to maintain the freedom of the school! And then we behold something of that persevering devotion with which our forbears defended their rights and liberties against whosoever might seek to violate them.

As illustrated in the 19th century in the Netherlands

This is not strange, inasmuch as the struggle for Christian education which was carried on in the last century is still fresh in our memory. That struggle ultimately became one for freedom of the school. It was precisely the concept of the free school which in the stress of the struggle gradually came to more exact delimitation, so that even outside our circles it gained followers. The fact that this ideal penetrated deeper and deeper so that at present, particularly as regards the relation to the family, it even seems to appear in part in the consciousness of the teachers of the public school need not prevent us from recognizing that originally it sprang from the Reformed root and that its appearance was contemporaneous with the revived Calvinism of the nineteenth century.

Parents, too, should permit the school to be free

It is, therefore, entirely in harmony with the principle of the Christian school that it make as intimate as possible its connection with the family. It is in this sense that the slogan, "The school belongs to the parents," and the contention that it does not belong to the teachers, must be understood. It is my fervent hope that we

may be spared the unfortunate conflict between parents and teachers which has sometimes been predicted. These ought by all means to stand shoulder to shoulder in the fulfilling of the sacred calling to educate.

Nor has the Christian school any desire of becoming a church school or state school, although it gladly grants both church and state the privileges to which they are fully entitled.

CHAPTER FOUR

Attitude Toward the Pupil

A life-view implies attitudes toward God, toward nature,

AS HAS BEEN mentioned in the second chapter[7]), an all inclusive world and life view, according to Dr. Kuyper in his Stone Lectures, should find its point of departure in a definite interpretation of man's relation to God.

And toward our fellowmen—here the pupils

Besides our relation to God there are two other relations fundamental to all human life; namely, our relation to our fellow men and our relation to the world. In tracing the distinctiveness of our Christian school, therefore, we must also of necessity include man's relation to his fellow who in this connection is the pupil.

In this sphere of human relationship Calvinism, according to Dr. Kuyper, also has its own specific view point; namely, that we are all equal before God, and that there is no difference other than that God has entrusted to one man authority over another, or has endowed one with more talents than another.

Three distinctive characteristics of Calvinistic attitude toward pupil:

Equality before God, delegated authority, diversity in talents—these ideas are also fundamental to group life in the class room. * * * It seems to me that as far as authority is concerned, the distinctive feature of the Christian school is immediately obvious. In its principle

7) Page 22.

the Christian school is in accord with the interpretation which history has given. "All education and nurture rests on two pillars: authority and respect (piëteit)." (Bavinck.)

(1) Authority of the educator

The child is placed under tutors and governors, hence is not yet of age, and does not yet participate in government. He bows before the authority of others. In the home the parents are placed over him. In school, too, he does not yet enjoy independence, but is subject to the authority of the teacher.

It is self evident that the teacher is not therefore privileged to permit his exercise of authority to degenerate into tyranny, but that on the contrary, it is his duty to protect the child from too rigid restraints, especially as the child grows older. This, however, detracts nothing from the fundamental principle that in the school authority is delegated to the teacher as representative of the parent; a principle which the Christian school maintains in the face of all contemporary theories of self-government and school democracy, as these are to-day prevalent especially in America and Switzerland.

The child should be submissive in home and at school. True, just as in the home adolescent children gradually become accustomed to an increase of autonomy, so, too, it is to be recommended that in classes of adolescent pupils the schoolmasterly compulsion be replaced as much as possible by a greater freedom. But this has nothing to do with authority itself.

(2) Equality of all men before God

For the rest, — "equality before God." Children are no beings of inferior order with respect to which the teacher may give free reign to his idiosyncrasies and caprices.

Such a fundamental principle must of necessity exert its influence in the actual teaching in general and in the discipline in particular.

(a) Every soul has eternal value

(b) All created as images of God. Heart, intellect, and will

In this connection the thought of supreme importance is that the child has been created for eternity. This fact attaches incalculable value to his body and soul. What shall a man give as ransom for his soul? The thought of being privileged to assist in the fashioning, unfolding, and developing of human life is impressive and overwhelming. It is work of the first order. It is work for eternity.

Equality of all men before God lies also in their all being created in His image. This thought opens such a wealth of ideas that I hesitate to put them in my own words.

"In all the psychical capacities and activities of man," says Prof. Bavinck, "traces are to be discovered of the image of God. Augustine even saw in the threefold human functions of intellect, feeling, and will, an analogy to the divine Trinity. Precisely as the Father gives life to the Son and the Spirit, and the Spirit proceeds from the Father through the Son, so in man it is the heart, which as the profound mysterious life of the soul brings into being intellect and will and definitely gives primacy to the intellect."

Now the full development of human life and

human activity is in accord with this tripartite nature of man, and expresses itself in the threefold office to which man is called. The priestly office is linked up with the heart: to present oneself as a living sacrifice to God. The intellect points to the prophetic office: to confess the name of the Lord. The will is the instrument of the kingly office which calls man to fight against sin, world, and devil and with God to reign over creation.

Must be trained in proper relation. Hence,

What now according to the Calvinistic view is the purpose of education? The answer is the fashioning of the whole man, the fashioning of heart, intellect, and will, with an eye to the whole of man's life. Education is concerned with more than mere knowledge; the heart, too, has its rights. The Bible speaks in the same vein when it speaks of the man of God, completely furnished unto every good work. The heart above all must be won for God and his service; the ultimate purpose in all education must be true piety. But this piety must not remain isolated as though it is to be confined to one sphere of life. From the very beginning it must be bound up with wisdom, with genuine and thorough knowledge of affairs. To accomplish this we need the development of the intellect, and this knowledge which is sanctified through piety must not be limited to the intellect but must be spiritually assimilated in our inner being, and so become a power that fashions our whole personality, also in the expressions of the

will. Then especially does the cultural influence of education become evident. In his descriptive summary of the Scriptural educational ideal Prof. Bavinck (whose "Paedagogische Beginselen" I have utilized in my treatment) agrees with the Calvinistic pedagogue of the sixteenth century, Johann Sturm, and arrives with slight modification at the following formulation of the purpose of education: "True piety in organic relation with thorough knowledge and genuine culture."

Thus the distinctiveness of the educational ideal of the Christian school also becomes more clear. The child is created for eternity: the purpose of education, therefore, lies beyond this transient life. The child is created in the image of God; the end, therefore, is piety, knowledge, and culture. The Christian school will brook the neglect of no one of these. A one-sided emphasis on any of these means a losing oneself in either mysticism, intellectualism, or pragmatism.

(3) Organic relation of man's (pupil's) capacities as image of God must be the ideal

Nay, the three factors mentioned, expressive of the image of God, should be organically related. A typically Reformed idea! No mutual conflict between faith and knowledge; not pagan in thought and Christian at heart, as Jacobi and others since him would fain have it; faith and knowledge not now at odds and then again flirting with each other, but organic relation answering to the ultimate unity of things! Likewise, the training of the will ought not to take place out of relation with the rest; we as Calvinists want none of the autonomous morality wherewith the public school hopes to save its so-called neutral education. For the consciousness of the Calvinist, who in everything seeks the glory of God, there is an intimate relation between religion and morality, such that morality must be grounded in religion.

This insistence on unity and harmony is typical of the Reformed view. We cannot be satisfied with such public instruction as relegates all religious education to catechism and Sunday school. Such relegation violates absolutely the natural organic relationship; religion must not be added to education but form an integral part of it.

In the interest of completeness, I may just mention that the fashioning of the whole man naturally includes the training also of the body; that is to say, includes also physical education. The Christian school should not despise bodily exercise. It is undeniably profitable,—but the context permits no further expatiation at this time.

Strictly, the child educates himself

We must, indeed, not neglect to mention that education in its general sense, is after all a task for the child himself. This is not always sufficiently realized and particularly not by young enthusiastic teachers. Their aim is to advance the class and to do so as rapidly as possible. They wear themselves out with praiseworthy zeal, but sometimes forget that the activity of the child does not necessarily keep pace with

their own. In such cases you find a hard-working and loquacious teacher and a drowsy and sluggish class. The real mental labor must be done by the child himself, both in the acquisition and assimilation of new knowledge in the case of intellectual development and in the overcoming of bad and the fostering of good desires in the case of moral training. All this, moreover, holds good not only for the work at school but for training in general. The educator merely gives guidance in the development. This the teacher does in selecting subject matter, in making it adaptable, and in then presenting it to the child. This also the parents do when they exhort the children to the good. The child may be made to hear, but the actual appropriation is the work of the child himself. This fact is the reason for so much disappointment; the labor seems to have been done in vain and continual repetition is needed.

It is obvious that the guidance can be more or less pronounced, that there are various degrees possible. The Montessori method, for instance, gives the least of all. The fundamental principle of this method, "the self-education of the young child" need not be condemned by us in principle; intentional guidance (though the question is ultimately one of practice) has in this system at any rate been reduced to a minimum.

The guidance which we give the child in his intellectual development is instruction; that in

the development of his volitions is called discipline. We have already shown that the centre of his education must be the religious element.

Plan of remaining chapters

In practice these phases of education are interrelated, and ought to be. In tracing the typical element in the Christian school still further I shall first discuss instruction (course of study or subject-matter, and method) and then discipline, regarded from the point of view of religion.

* * * *

Perhaps it occasions some surprise that in speaking of the attitude toward the pupil I make no mention of the Reformed doctrine of the Covenant. I prefer to discuss this subject in the chapter on discipline because of the direct relationship that exists between discipline and instruction in religion.

CHAPTER FIVE

Subject-Matter

WHAT IS THE distinctive feature of the subject matter of the Christian school? It is in the first place that it takes into consideration what the child must know and be able to do in his later life.

Subject-matter is that which the child needs theoretically and practically in later life

Theory and practice immediately divide the course of study or subject-matter into two principal departments: content subjects and formal subjects. Each of these, too, must be appropriated by the child himself. Looking at it from the latter point of view, we may say the course of study is that which the child must assimilate for the equipment, development, and unfolding of his intellectual power primarily; though this, in turn, exerts great influence upon the training of his will.

Subject-matter is the culture of the past

Subject-matter, taken broadly, is a spiritual heritage of great worth, for it is the result of the development of ages. Generation succeeds generation but the subject-matter which is the accumulated wealth of preceding ages is carefully handed down. In accord with the truth of Ps. 78, "I will utter dark sayings of old which our fathers have told us," and "we will not hide them from their children, showing to the generation to come the praises of the Lord," the result of the development of ages becomes the inheritance of every generation, so that it is not necessary for each generation anew to return to the beginning. The elementary school contributes its bit, though in a modest way, to the preservation of this heritage.

The Christian school will take this aspect of the subject-matter into account, and will not proceed without due reflection when it prescribes the course of study. So too the Christian school, abiding by the historical development of the curriculum, is not misled by unjustified limitations but holds that thorough consideration must precede any departure from established practice.

* * * *

What theory and practice does the child need in later life?

What now does the child need in the way of knowledge and skill in his later life? To this question various answers are possible.

(1) The realistic answer

One may understand the word "need" in realistic sense as opposed to the views of the humanist, who looked to the past and placed all his hopes on the appropriation of the spirit of the classics. This humanism is not necessary for the mass of people according to the realist. Instead of consulting the past he demands attention be primarily confined to the contemporary life of man and of nature round about him.

(2) The materialistic answer

One can also favor a materialistic interpretation in reaction to extreme idealism. Teach the

child, so runs the materialistic doctrine, that only which he needs in order to earn his daily bread, to be successful in his trade, to carve out a career for himself. But all the Caesars and Napoleons of history, all the mountains and rivers and capes and gulfs of geography are so much useless baggage intended to be thrown away as soon as possible. No doubt this contention is well meant, and they who speak thus may be inspired with love for the child. Their good intention to equip the child for the struggle of existence by ridding him of all superfluous baggage, however, sometimes causes them to be narrow and one-sided in their views. It is easily overlooked that material prosperity and vocational success are, strictly speaking, only inferior values, so that they can never be considered final criteria in the choice of subject-matter. Even so, the school will never be able to prepare the child for all life's possible eventualities, since these are hidden in the future. The school is able to assist only in developing power to overcome difficulties, it can only equip the soul for the coming struggle and thus help to fashion character. Finally, the child's future vocation may not dominate everything else in the child's youthful years; childhood has its own worth; a bright, happy childhood is a treasure which is not to be supplanted, not even by a successful career; on the contrary, the Lord Jesus said, "Become as little

children";—do not then make them wise beyond their years.

(3) The Calvinistic answer: In later life he is to serve God in all spheres of human activity

We, however, in our search for what is distinctive in the subject-matter of the Christian school naturally answer the question in a Calvinistic manner. And thus we arrive at the position that the child must know and be able to do whatever is necessary to serve God in the various spheres of human life. We are here in the immediate presence of the fundamental demand of the Calvinistic life view with its sense of and open eye for empirical reality. Properly to fulfil that demand, knowledge of and insight into the world round about us is absolutely necessary. And this brings us to the third fundamental relation in human life: our relation to the created world below man.

The child needs knowledge of the actual world as embodiment of divine ideas of True, Good, Beautiful

This world is an incarnation of divine ideas. Nothing has happened by chance; a divine idea is at the bottom of all things. Accordingly, creation round about us is a book in which all creatures are so many letters that spell the invisible things. And the soul of man created in the image of God is adapted to the comprehension of these things. The truth of the nature of things—imprinted by the creative Logos—enters into relation with man through his intellect.

Again, things can be looked at from the point of view of Good and Evil. This is to be accounted for by the operation of the Holy Spirit in the soul of man, an operation which takes place in his will.

Finally, a reflection of the majesty of the Father shines forth in all creation; a reflection, which touches the heart of man and makes him conscious of the Beautiful.

As the True, the Beautiful, and the Good are one in God who himself is Truth, Majesty, and Holiness, so the identical empirical realities enter into various relations with the human spirit and make man conscious of the True, the Good, and the Beautiful.

Hence, of Science, Morality, Art, and Religion

In whatever instance the beautiful in creation touches the heart of man, there Art arises; wherever the true finds a response in the intellect, Science takes its origin; and as a result of the operation of the good on the will of man, Morality is born. These three have their root in the soul of man and education must therefore link itself up with them. They are the three factors of culture. But first of all man must be fashioned centrally in religion, which includes the whole man in all his thinking, feeling, and willing. This is the highest and most fundamental, is the foundation of the true, the good, and the beautiful and aims at eternal salvation through communion with God. Science, morality and art are necessarily related to the works of God and must fashion man in the particular expressions of his life: intellect, will, and heart. In this wise man is completely furnished unto all good works, completely furnished unto the service of God in the various domains of life

in which God calls him to the fulfillment of his task.

Subject-matter should reflect life-view

Dr. Kuyper points out in his Stone Lectures that Calvinism is a life view which essentially includes everything, theology, church, state, society, art, science, morality—and that all these subdivisions are controlled by a single principle. The subject-matter of the Christian school should be a reflection of this Christian life view. Naturally, we do not imagine that it would be possible in a period of six or seven years to furnish the child completely for his task. Neither is this necessary, for training extends even beyond the elementary school years. The school shares this task with the church and various agencies, among which are our societies. But the school particularly is engaged in the task of "rearing the child in the way he should go."

The text just quoted suggests something for both subject-matter and method. But without question it remains true that the subject-matter may be taken from the world of empirical reality and that it should be directed towards the whole of human life. This very desire for inclusiveness, for one, in my opinion distinctively characterizes the Christian school in its subject-matter. * * * *

Distinctiveness does not mean entirely different branches of study

The distinctive feature of the Christian school does not consist in an entirely different choice of subjects, but in a different sequence, a somewhat different choice of subject-matter, a differ-

ent method of presentation, a different spirit, a different interpretation of facts.

The curriculum

First of all then we have the religious branches: Bible History, Doctrine, Christian Hymns, Church History, and History of Missions. * * * * * The subjects which immediately follow these are the history and language of one's country, as means of maintaining national independence through the strengthening of the national consciousness. The study of language at the same time includes reading and writing.

Next in order are nature study (including hygiene) and geography, and finally arithmetic, drawing, and gymnastics. I do not intend this enumeration and order as one that is to be universally accepted. It is very likely that personal factors will enter into consideration in determining their sequence. Besides, it is self evident that we must be content with indefinite and general suggestions. In a textbook on pedagogy these matters would be further developed.

Subject-matter must be unified, consolidated

It should be pointed out that this diversity of subjects has hampered the child in the acquisition of the subject-matter and has brought about crowding of the curriculum. The remedy was sought in the so-called concentration of subject-matter, involving re-arranging of the order of the subjects, and purposing correlation of the various subjects. The motive itself was excellent, but frequently this attempt at reorganization resulted in all sorts of artificial systems

born of a forced relation. The course of study must not be administered in capsule form; the sequence of its parts need not be in strict accord with logic but should rather be pedagogical, and the mutual relationships of the parts should be kept in mind, and whenever appropriate emphasized. Hence I should prefer the term *consolidation* to *concentration.* Consolidation, indeed, is necessary. The child should not be lost in the maze of subjects. Exactly as organic unity must control our life view, and exactly as according to the formulation of Prof. Bavinck the aim of Christian education is "true piety, organically related to thorough knowledge and genuine culture," so also the aim must be organic relation of the subjects in the curriculum. Especially should this be the case in elementary instruction, although even there the division into subjects should gradually appear. New content should carefully and circumspectly be linked up with already acquired knowledge.

in order to harmonize with our organic life-view

This consolidation of the subject-matter I find to be a task which, if the unity of our life view is to mean anything, must be performed. * * * * In this manner the pupil receives an organic body of knowledge which broadens his outlook.

God the center of subject-matter

It is a matter of course that the Christian school views God as Creator, Sustainer, and Governor of all things, and so, too, be it said with reverence, the Core to which all things

must by nature be related. This is the only proper correlation, for it is the natural one; artificial systems cannot be used by us.

The importance of Sacred History

Naturally, various questions arise in the actual execution of this task. The facts of sacred history are just as much facts for the Reformed man as are those of secular history and church history. Creation, fall, deluge, the building of the tower of Babel are facts of the greatest significance for the teaching of history in the Christian school; they are pivotal for both general history and the history of one's nation. These facts cast the true light upon the original division and ultimate unity of the nations. Only this light gives a proper interpretation of the fall, the curse, original sin, and the covenant of works. In this connection Prof. Bavinck has well said, "The man who is instructed in Scripture and nurtured by it reaches a height from which he views the sum total of things; his vision reaches to the ends of the earth; his universe of thought includes the beginning and the end of history. * * * * And so it follows that Bible study is the soul of all education, the organizing power of all teaching."

And therefore the instruction in the content subjects should link itself to Bible Study and should continue in the same spirit. For instance, in the instruction in history the Christian school will not neglect the facts but at the same time will not merely fill the mental hopper. And the Christian school will particularly emphasize

those facts which have influenced the course of history for ages (I mean, for instance, the preaching of the Gospel, the Reformation, and the Revolution). Nor will it neglect the historical conditions. It will especially stress the principles at the bottom of historical movements. History taken in this broad sense is the means by which we learn historically the Calvinistic principles of life in Church, State, and Society.

Naturally, Scripture takes the first place. The Christian school will attempt to stem the tide of ignorance of the Bible. For that reason, too, the Bible is put in the hands of the child in order that he may feel at home in it, and become wise. In addition, this institution will acquaint the child with the confessions of faith and will have the child acquire as large a treasure of Scripture texts and psalms as possible—in order that in developing his views he may utilize this knowledge as so much ready material.

To recapitulate, religion comes first, but the Christian school by emphasizing the True, the Good, and the Beautiful, which nature and Scripture present, also attempts to mold the child in the expressions of his mind, will, and heart in order that, being perfectly equipped for every good work, he may serve God in the various spheres of human life.

CHAPTER SIX

Method

THE QUESTION next in order is: What shall be the method employed in teaching?

Importance of Method

Method, proper technique, is not at all an indifferent matter. Because of the great significance of teaching, we teachers have not fulfilled our task until we accomplish all that can be accomplished. This maximum accomplishment is not to be understood in a narrow sense as referring to the child's progress in the subject-matter (arithmetic, language, and the like), but rather as referring to the development of the child himself, and its attainment is largely a question of method.

Method must adapt itself to created nature of child

The question then is in what way, by what method is this result attained, and in my opinion the answer must be: by adapting oneself to the nature of the soul of the child. And, since the peculiarity of the child's soul is not a work of man but of the Creator himself, fundamentally we here face the law of creation. The laws according to which the development and unfolding of the child take place and must be promoted, are innate in the child. There are here laws of God which we must discover in order that, following them, we may attain the highest result.

The task of methodology is nothing but the discovery of the divine laws that control the development of the soul of the child. These laws are present in the soul of the child himself. The result is that a specific method for any one subdivision as well as also method in general must rest upon a psychological basis, more particularly on the basis of child psychology. All study of method aims at the discovery of these divine ordinances, which together constitute what we call methodology. Scripture itself points in this direction when it says, "Rear the child the way he should go." In order to be able to do that, the "way" of the child must first be known. Such is the Reformed conception of methodology.

Hence methodology must discover the laws of child psychology

We can utilize results obtained by others

Nevertheless, he who does not share this Calvinistic view can assist in the discovery of these laws of method. Is not such assistance available in other domains and human endeavors? Can we not apply also here what Isaiah says concerning the work of the husbandman, "And his God does teach him?" God teaches man through experience in the realm of practical labors, but by investigation, reflection and study as soon as man attempts a theoretical account of things.

Consequently, the Christian school is not narrow and exclusive in its attitude toward methodology. It does not hold itself aloof from the methodology which is being developed outside of Christan education. The fruits of universal culture were at all times utilized by the Church

though caution is necessary

of God. Of course, she will test that which she receives from foreign sources. I most urgently warn against blind appropriation. And especially would I do so because in foreign quarters, inasmuch as an all inclusive fundamental principle and an organic unity in pedagogy are lacking, the emphasis is frequently placed upon subordinate elements. That which is in reality secondary is often made fundamental principle and point of departure. In such cases of misplaced emphasis, the first task of the Christian methodologist is to criticize and evaluate the view presented, and so to arrive at the truth.

Some characteristics of method in the Christian School: (1) Relative un-importance of eye-knowledge

Thus, about twenty years ago, it became clear after serious and thorough discussion that eye-knowledge is not and cannot be, as had long been maintained, the point of departure for all education. For it has been proved that though the child in the early period of his life receives many impressions of the world through vision, nevertheless a much larger portion of knowledge comes through the ear; it has been proved that the subject-matter presented may and must be clarified through presentation to the eye, but that this must be merely for the sake of illustration; it has been proved that eye-knowledge must be accompanied from the very start by thinking, and that our mind by means of reflection penetrates more deeply into the essence of things than through sheer perception, since subject and object, man and the world have been created by one and the same Logos.

Although the original antithesis between education by ear-knowledge and education by eye-knowledge is no longer generally held to be an absolute one, without doubt the less presumptuous position assigned to "eye-knowledge" may be regarded as one of the distinctive features of the Christian school.

(2) Place of dogma

At that time, too, great stress was laid upon the fact that the teacher should by all means descend to the level of the child, and that the teacher's aim should be to have the child comprehend that which is learned.

But it was soon understood that in practice one readily becomes one-sided in this matter. If the teacher descends too far his method of teaching acquires a forced and artificial form which misses the mark in that it does not satisfy the child, with the inevitable result that the latter considers the teacher childish. The same objection was voiced some time ago in the periodical *Pharus*: "Do not always be descending; let us rather raise the child to our own higher level."

Personally, I would express the contrast between the two views less sharply and less absolutely. It is a matter of course that the teacher will attempt to adapt his instruction as much as possible to the acquired knowledge of the child. But it is not necessary for the child to comprehend everything, for this could only be demanded in an age of superficial rationalism. Who understands everything? What adult does not

find himself in the midst of many mysteries which it is impossible for him to solve? And must a child then comprehend everything and be reared with the thought that the incomprehensible does not exist? It is preferable that the child be impressed with the reality of a wonderful and invisible world beyond the visible. Then reverence for the mysterious will fill his soul. Especially in two instances does the world of the incomprehensible enter into consideration; namely, in religious instruction and in memorizing. Many dogmas transcend the mind of the child, it is said. Granted; but they transcend the mind even of adults. The opposition to dogma in pedagogy is fundamentally an opposition to dogma itself. There are, however, certain truths that must be accepted without comprehension.

and of memory

And thus, too, the objection against memorizing selections that are not understood falls away, for what he memorizes will equip the child for the future when he will evaluate and appreciate these selections. We owe our thanks to the Rev. Sikkel for nobly defending this truth. In consequence, I also include as one of the chief distinctive features of the Christian school that in agreement with what Scripture teaches in regard to the limitations of human understanding and the darkening of the intellect, this school does not hesitate to impart incomprehensible material to the child. Prof. Bavinck puts this beautifully, "The truth is not in need of our approval, rather we are in need of the truth."

Even in arithmetic reaction has recently set in against the mania for explaining every step. The custom has lately arisen of not losing too much time in explanation of the four fundamental operations in arithmetic, but of learning the trick of solution, although the process may not be understood. The tacit theory is that explanation may conveniently be deferred.

The soul of the child lays hold by intuition on many things which cannot be made clear to his intelligence. Especially must it be remembered that high and ideal thoughts facilitate and hasten the acquisition and the assimilation of subject-matter that in many instances might be considered as lying beyond the comprehension of the child.

(3) Importance of arousing interest in order to cultivate self-activity of pupil

The requisite of good method is, naturally, that the child be spurred on to self-activity. The child must not be listless; his soul must be in action and in this way completely engaged in the learning process.

In order to reach this ideal of making the child himself active, the Christian school must make use of the discovery, made outside its own circles, that the best means of bringing about the activity of the pupils is by arousing their interest. Experience has proved that this is the right way. If the pupil has no interest in the material that is presented, either one of two things takes place: he is indolent, listless, and passive, or his activity expresses itself in other directions. If, however, one succeeds in arousing his interests

(and the teacher must discover the means of doing so) one can be assured of the pupil's participation, and the teacher need then only exercise care that the interest be sustained.

The pupil is just as much an active being as a receptive being. Naturally, method must adapt itself to this fact. Even the very concept of receptivity presupposes self-activity. But reproduction, assimilation, approval, and application must follow reception. In this way the subject-matter becomes the child's permanent possession. And especially in the formal subjects the need of activity is very pronounced. How could these subjects be taught otherwise than by the child's careful observation and imitation of the teacher's examples immediately followed by drill and application?

The Christian school cannot possibly ignore the need of self-activity. Exactly in this way it counteracts the dislike of work which is a characteristic of the rising generation. Is it not striking that in the period immediately preceding ours one finds the teacher who was always teaching, always speaking, always convincing and persuading, and who often gave the class little time for self-activity?

We can also utilize results obtained in the more practical field of applied technique

And so, too, we must carefully watch the course of development of ideas in another, closely related, field — to-wit, that of class room technique. In this field it is, for example, already an established principle that the monologue of a teacher who does all the talking must

be supplanted by the conversational method, in which the teacher must give guidance, but in which he seeks in Socratic fashion to stimulate the pupils' thoughts and to cause them to proceed in the direction he desires. The conversational method increases the interest of the pupils, and though in this respect we can easily pursue Utopias, we must not forget that children in general eagerly ask questions, and that this expression of their inquisitiveness is often wrongly checked at school, so that a period of indifference frequently follows former enthusiasm.

The attempt to promote self-activity by carrying to unwarranted extremes the self-initiative type of learning has in every instance proved an illusion. And it proved such in the first place because people were charmed by the idea that "seeking knowledge" is more important than "finding knowledge" — a contention which the Reformed people cannot grant. But in the second place, it resulted in a method which developed only the appearance of self-initiative, whereas in reality it endangered self-activity. Every teacher will understand me. It was the period when all the questioning and all the talking was done by the teacher and the pupils did not learn to discover problems for themselves, although that was the intention.

The Reformed view can serve as a wholesome corrective of such extremes. It can do so because it maintains that the laws of God with re-

gard to the development of the child are present in his characteristics, and a proper method must be deduced from these.

* * * *

(4) Importance of effort

For a time, too, extreme gradation in the presentation of the subject-matter was regarded as the highest law. Everything, so ran the contention, should be articulated very gradually and without any serious gap between any of the steps. Sentimentalism this was; a sentimentalism which was anxiously concerned about too strenuous effort and too great difficulty. We may rejoice because a change is taking place. Exertion is an excellent thing for the child, for it strengthens his powers. Things were far too easy under the system of extreme gradation. The child is not so ignorant, delicate, and helpless as was held. In recent years methods are based upon sounder views. Although such sounder methods are not restricted to the Christian school, they are nevertheless welcomed as a reaction against previous lack of balance.

The situation is the same with regard to memory work. Aside from all formal procedure and routine factors in teaching, one would naturally demand much of the memory of the child and would not be afraid of a considerable amount of memorizing. There was, however, a time when the value of memorizing was not appreciated and its use even neglected, because of the view that bare memorization does hindrance to

thinking. But better views now prevail. The Christian school makes abundant use of this rich gift of memory. Memory is indispensable to retention. If the matter can be explained to the child, retention through memory becomes easier, but even if complete explanation is not possible we shall not fear the hobgoblin of "non-comprehended" material, for we know that in his later life with a fuller mental development the child digests what was formerly memorized.

These, it seems to me, are the characteristics of method in the Christian school. To be sure, we must with regard to method not look for an absolute difference between our schools and others. Just because the indications for method are inherent in the nature and composition of the child's soul, this phase of pedagogy is of a general character. Nevertheless, what we said previously is of particular application; namely, that the pedagogy which is not built upon the solid basis of God's Word is in danger of being carried along by every new pedagogical current and as a result emphasizes now one non-essential, and then another.

The Christian school rejoices in the reactions which result from such extremes, for its position is often justified by the reactions, and, in addition, these very reactions can teach it much.

CHAPTER SEVEN

Discipline

Definition of discipline and its relation to morality

BY DISCIPLINE I shall mean the guidance we give the child in the fashioning of his desires. This definition, it is true, has no specifically Reformed content, but will suffice as a provisional formulation. May I at once, too, point out that in it lies the contention that discipline is applied for the purpose both of strengthening and directing the will; no sound pedagogy neglects the importance of will power. So much is, indeed, universally granted and were we to proceed no further we should still be left with nothing but abstractions. A pedagogy of the will begins to acquire real content only when we consider the question of good and evil; then, too, diversity of opinion becomes evident.

Two kinds of good

It will be well to begin the discussion by making certain distinctions. There is, first of all, natural and civic good, as to the content of which there is little difference of opinion. But there is, in the second place, moral and spiritual good, and as soon as we relate the problem of discipline to it and investigate the essence of evil and the norm of good and evil, the difference of life-views becomes especially evident. In other words, as soon as we leave the sphere of

common grace and civic righteousness, the conflict of opinions arises.

Difference between Evolutionistic and Reformed views of evil

What is evil? Is it merely imperfection, an inferior stage of being, from which the higher stages will develop according to the laws of evolution? Is the difference between good and evil, ultimately, only a relative one? Or is evil a disease, which requires only skilful treatment and care in order to be eliminated?

According to the Reformed view it is neither the one nor the other. The difference between good and evil is not merely relative, nor is evil only a disease. For there is also present in evil the element of guilt. Evil inherently implies guilt on our part.

Evil is rebellion against God

The Reformed view recognizes the fact of sin which came over creation like a destructive tempest, and which would have disjointed all of created life, had its increasing momentum not been checked. Evil is deviation from the will of God, and hence is rebellion against the highest Sovereign. It is exactly this which makes evil guilt.

On this point, fortunately, the Calvinist will permit no yielding. He will not tolerate any whitewashing or disguising of evil. He wants evil to be known as evil. It must of necessity follow that by virtue of this standpoint Christian education acquires a measure of absoluteness, of severity; a severity, however, which is anything but uncharitableness. On the contrary, in the opinion of the Christian educator, uncharit-

ableness would manifest itself precisely in developing in the child the opinion that the difference between good and evil is of subordinate importance, or is, indeed, merely relative.

Moral views are determined by religious views; morality roots in religion

It will at once be evident in the light of this consideration that morality is according to our view not an independent something, but is intimately related to religion. Morality is not autonomous, but has its roots in religion.

This close relation between morality and religion becomes all the more evident when the question is raised of the norm or standard which determines what is good and what is evil. How are we to attain certainty with respect to the norm? It cannot be obtained from history. Man's sense of justice is often errant. Conscience is frequently seared and robbed of its sensitiveness. It is true that, as St. Paul tells us, the Gentiles have "the work of the law written in their hearts.....and their thoughts the meanwhile accusing or else excusing one another" (Rom. 2:15), but "the law of the Lord is perfect, converting the soul" (Ps. 19:7). For us the norm lies in Holy Scripture which reveals the will of God. Once more, morality is not autonomous, but rooted in religion.

Three characteristics of spiritual good

Furthermore, that the good may be truly spiritual, it is not only requisite that it be in conformity with the norm of Scripture, but it must also proceed from true faith and be directed to the glory of God. To put it otherwise, mere external conformity as such is not the only factor

that determines the morality of a deed. Both principle and aim are likewise involved, and when put this way the intimate relation between religion and morality is especially evident.

A distinctive feature of Christian education

It is profoundly typical of the Reformed view as also of Christian education in general, and of the Christian School in particular, that this relationship between morality and religion is fully recognized.

Though it is true that in the application of this view to discipline the family is primary, one must not underestimate the importance of school-discipline. For it is undeniably true that the school is a miniature society and as such contributes much to making the child fit for his later social life. The school furnishes the child with growth-situations for engrafting him into moral relationships as divinely appointed and historically developed ('zij doet ingroeien in de zedelijke rechtsorde'). The school "habituates the child to definite forms of order and discipline better than does the family" (*Ons Program*). And the school can likewise be of great value for the child's more general development and serviceable for the unfolding of all that is latent in him, so that grown to full stature, he may function effectively.[8]

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[8] In the opinion of the translators it should be borne in mind that moral life can have no content unless it be applied socially. This remark may help to clarify the paragraph.

The good is not by nature present

But the profoundly tragical element is that true faith is not by nature present. The natural inclination is to transgress God's law in thought, word, and deed; and the glory of God is in no wise the goal which corrupt man sets himself, for he is incapable of any good and prone to all evil. No education is powerful enough, no pedagogy sufficiently perfect, no love for children passionate enough to alter in the least this sinful condition. The substitution of a heart of flesh for one of stone is the work of the God of Life. The teacher can plant and water, but God must give the increase.

but God implants new life

Fortunately, such transformation is no mere speculative possibility but actuality. God Himself counteracts the consequences of sin by His grace. In the first place He checks the activity of sin in its pernicious effect in the sphere of human life in general by His common grace. But in addition to that He has revealed His covenant of particular grace, beginning in Paradise, and established with Abraham and his seed. Through the channel of this covenant of grace He imparts the blessings of salvation to the believers and their children, bestows on them the free gift of regeneration, and as they grow up, inclines their will to the fear of His Name. It is thus that He creates true faith in the soul, arouses the desire to live not only according to some, but to all God's laws, and directs their lives to the glory of God.

In this dispensation, however, this new life

does not attain maturity. It remains, as the Heidelberg Catechism says, "only a small beginning of this obedience" (Lord's Day XLIV, Question 114). Nevertheless, there is present the desire for and, at the same time, the daily increase in grace which we call sanctification,—the aspiring to the ideal of perfection of which the Apostle Paul speaks, and which consists in daily conversion.

Such imperfection is present in the children of the believers, who are included in the covenant of God and His Church as well as in the adults; with the children, too, there is a daily lapse into sin; the transgressions of childhood, too, are sins; most properly David prayed, "Remember not the sins of my youth, nor my transgressions" (Psalm 25: 7).

The importance of the doctrine of the covenant

Viewed in this light, the discipline both at home and at school is the guidance which we give the daily conversion of the child. Now in this matter men have attempted to penetrate beyond the veil; emphasis has been laid upon the fact that all are not Israel who are of Israel; on the part of some there is a demand for definite assurance regarding the status of each particular child, and they presume to have this assurance. All in vain, for the secret things are for the Lord, our God. An analogous situation obtains in the case of teaching for citizenship. Children are educated in this study; we have no assurance that none of them will turn traitor in the future, yet we do not take this lack of

assurance into account. In like manner, the distinctive feature of Christian education, and particularly of Christian discipline, is that the child is not reared in the atmosphere of a choice that is still to be made, but rather of a choice that has already been made; he is already included in the ranks of King Jesus, whose insignia he bears. The child is taught to accept the proffered offer of salvation and to conform to the revealed will of God, and so to walk in the way of the divine ordinances. The Christian teacher is guided by these considerations, and in prayerful expectation looks for the results of his labors from above. For his continual prayer will be that his hope may be realized, and that the child may enter into mystical communion with God. Who can know to what degree the new life has already developed, or that it is not in principle present? In this respect the Christian teacher finds himself in a world of mysteries, but, looking to the promise, he perseveres, faithfully hoping that after sowing in tears the reaping with joy will, in good time, follow.

Some maxims based on these principles:

For the proper direction of the will from day to day, the prescribed means, the so-called disciplinary measures, must be applied. These are suggested in Holy Writ, but are especially discovered in the natural course of experience. Scripture gives us particularly in Proverbs, and in certain of the Apostolic epistles, rich pedagogical counsel. It speaks of instruction, correction, exhortation, threat, punishment, and

even of the rod. But, in addition, experience, both of human nature in general and of scientific pedagogy, enables us to determine the proper measures, so that we arrive at a complete system of disciplinary measures, which, if applied with wisdom and discriminating judgment, can be a blessing for the child.

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(1) There must be a cheerful atmosphere

In the first place, care must be exercised that a spirit of cheerfulness dominate the mutual relationship. This deserves to be emphasized in our Reformed circles particularly. There are instances in which the seriousness of the teacher was so rigid that it created an atmosphere of frigidity. Did not Dr. Kuyper regard it a meritorious feature of the poet Cats that he caused a healthy smile to play about the mouth of the Calvinist,—a mouth too often set in lines of austerity? Also in education a healthy laugh is invaluable. Happiness, joking, and play are indispensable for the child. And he will develop best in cheerful surroundings.

The importance of a pleasant atmosphere is not sufficiently appreciated in many homes and schools; frequently, the element of compulsion is over-emphasized. In such an environment the child cannot in the long run thrive, although parents and teachers may be inspired with the noblest intentions. The Christian school will take these things into consideration and will

take care not to be shipwrecked upon the rocky cliff of one-sided severity.

(2) There must be naturalness

A second requisite follows: that the educator, be he parent or teacher, remain natural in his dealings with children. "If you want your children to be good, be no hypocrite" (Nicolaas Beets). All intentional and forced unnaturalness must be absent. With reference to the quality of the voice, the child hates especially the unctuous holy whine and the haughty tone of the schoolmaster. The child wants naturalness. We must avoid Anabaptism; we must not attempt to make greybeards of children. Childhood has its intrinsic value but also its own advantages. The Lord said, "Become as the children".

(3) Love is a means of developing morality

Naturalness and cheerfulness are of great importance in the classroom, but in addition all those means which experience has proved to be sound measures in moral education are indispensable. Not to accept these means would cause a degeneration of the Christian school. For a distinctive feature of this institution is an open and unbiased view of the field of pedagogy. Among the means which affect the will, love occupies the first place. It expresses itself also at school as sympathy in joy and sorrow. It tries to win the heart of the child by friendliness; it is long-suffering and kind toward childhood's defects and shortcomings. "Love is not easily provoked, thinketh no evil;.....hopeth all things, endureth all things" (I Cor. 13: 5 and 7). Without love the Christian school would become "sounding brass or a tinkling cymbal."

Furthermore, our schools, as is the case with all education, face the problems of moral fashioning, of character development. Here we seem to encounter a contradiction. The will presupposes personal freedom, and all training of the will aims at acquiring and practising freedom. But exactly at this juncture the conflict arises, for a child cannot immediately be put in possession of full freedom; he is, as the Scripture says, under tutors and governors (Gal. 4: 2). The way to obtain freedom is by obedience and subjection. It is difficult for the educator to strike the proper balance. If he emphasizes obedience, he is in danger of neglecting to arouse and to bring into action the child's own will. This is the mistake of the Jesuits, who aimed at slavish subjection, but suppressed the child's opportunity for developing a free personality. It is likely that at times this was lost sight of in our circles also. But this is not to be ascribed to the Reformed principle. In the more recent views regarding a freer discipline, a wholesome reaction to and a sound correction of the former one-sidedness is observed. The characteristic feature of the Reformed method is certainly subjection and obedience, but in such a way that the reins are not held tighter than is necessary, in order that the child may also have the opportunity of developing unto freedom, till eventually the restraints of external authority fall away and childish things

(4) No more subjection than necessary

can be put aside. The Reformed type of discipline does not regard as ideal such children as, because of shyness, timidity, and bashfulness, do not dare to express themselves; rather by permitting the child to develop in self-activity does it seek to inculcate the proper self-confidence. It aims at guidance which does not destroy but respects the individuality of the child. For personality, all the more when understood in its essence, is the divine idea which is implicit in the being of man, and which in life must be unfolded and developed. And the teacher in the Christian school cannot better serve this purpose than by avoiding as much as possible the appearance of arbitrariness and the show of acting according to momentary whims and caprices. On the contrary, it is in accord with the Reformed view, that the teacher himself set the example of subjection to higher laws and faithfully follow the rules that have been established, mindful of the fact that God is a God of order and wills that all things take place in an orderly manner.

(5) Words should be few but firm

In addition, the injunction, "Speak sparingly," has been proved an invaluable means in controlling the class. The teacher must not always be disapproving, censuring, and rebuking. The speech that is infrequent has all the greater effect. But when the teacher feels he is compelled to take notice of childish naughtiness and defects, he should do so with a firmness which at the same time is gentle. Patience is an indispensable requisite. Let no nervous impatience or passionate wrath or childish vengefulness sweep him along; here, too, the divine injunction is pertinent, "Provoke not your children to wrath" (Ephesians 6:4).

(6) Encouragement goes further than criticism

Again, the Christian teacher should be mindful of the fact that he will accomplish more by encouragement and appreciation of honest effort than by constant criticism. Especially, let him not resort to crude sarcasm and cruel, unfeeling ridicule; amongst Christians in the sphere of the covenant, and when dealing with the lambs of Christ's flock, these qualities are altogether out of place.

This does not mean that strength and firmness, both in command and prohibition, are necessarily absent. The Decalogue, which has educational significance exactly because it is a "pedagogue", says, "Thou shalt not....." Likewise, the teacher should not, if necessary, hesitate to inflict punishment. "Objective authority and subjective respect for authority," says Prof. Bavinck, "are the two pillars upon which for centuries all education and instruction has rested". (See also Chapter IV). The Christian school aims at keeping them intact. By doing so it is consciously and intentionally in conflict both with Rousseau, whose educational system, by allowing the child absolute license, ended in sentimentalism, and with such modern educational reformers as thought that the child must express himself with perfect lack of restraint,

and that he thus would achieve the proper development. In maintaining its position the Christian school is supported alike by Scripture and experience, both of which teach that the child is in need of firm and unwavering guidance, and that license does not bring about true happiness.

* * * *

And when the question arises who is fit for the task that has just been outlined, our answer is, "Our efficiency is from God."

(7) Prayer is indispensable

Prayer, which according to the Heidelberg Catechism is the most important element of the Christian's gratitude, is therefore indispensable to education. Just as the body without the soul is dead, so, too, education without prayer is barren, dead, and mechanical.

The Christian school values prayer highly. In accord with its philosophy it is unthinkable that prayer should ever be discarded. Prayer must be offered with and for the pupils; prayer for the school in its entirety, for the individual needs of children, for the needs of the teachers, for the parents and the families, for the needs of the Kingdom of God at large, for the government and for the nation. We must invoke the blessing and the help of God without which all work would be in vain. In this way there will again arise a nation given to prayer, and it will once more be experienced that "the prayer of a righteous man availeth much."

CONCLUSION

But is the Christian School not petrified in conservatism?

COULD A CHRISTIAN SCHOOL that met all the requirements laid down in the preceding chapters still be a living reality, or would it not of necessity be a petrifaction, cold and dead, and that because of its self-complacency in view of what it had already so gloriously achieved? Could it still be aware of any problems?

The very principles which we have developed in the preceding chapters, themselves contain an answer to the question. For the Reformed view of life brooks no stagnation in any sphere. The Christian school, if all is well, is continually reforming and always remains true to its historical antecedents. This reformation is not a revolution. It lays no other foundation than what has been laid. Yet, the principle, "All to the glory of God," is so inclusive that it is not immediately comprehended in all its consequences. Each succeeding generation has a task. This is especially true because times are constantly changing, so that there are always new problems, new labors, and new tasks. When we compare our Christian school with its ideal, every occasion for self-complacency is as yet lacking. Rather should we speak of a great deficiency.

The Christian School believes in continual reformation

In this work of continual reformation, in the course of which the distinctive features of the Christian school will become ever clearer, we

Both theory and practice play a role in the development of the Christian School

gratefully accept the guidance of pedagogical theory ('aanvaarden we dankbaar de leiding der wetenschap'). But, in addition, the practical school men carry an important burden; practice tests theory and stimulates to continuous reflection and self-correction. By means of contact with practical life we are saved from barren and abstract scholasticism. And so, too, we take critical cognizance of that which is produced by those outside of Christian circles. It has happened repeatedly that life at large has given us the materials for the building, intensively and extensively, of the Kingdom of God.

It is thus that by both theory and practice we aim at causing the Christian school to progress along the lines of its historical development.

It is gratuitous to state that for the further development of our Christian schools we shall need manuals in which the relation between the elements of our pedagogy and the principles of our Calvinistic world-view is clearly presented, but which at the same time do not hesitate to advance in the direction of reformation and expansion, in order that our schools, in meeting the requirements of the day, may also excel in technique and yet may strive in all things after the ideal, *Soli Deo Gloria.*

* * * *

May all organized effort in behalf of Christian education contribute to that end!