

conceptualizing he comes to understand. As he comes to understand in the structure of love, faith, and obedience he comes to commit himself to the truth and order his life accordingly.

11. In teaching, one directs the learning process of the child. The teacher does this by inspiring the learner in the active pursuit of ends, by instructing him in the skills and understanding necessary to attain those ends, and by disciplining him in the process.
12. The principle of unity causes us to see the educational task as one. It cannot be "pieced out" among various agencies. However, the spheres of operation of the home, the school, and the church can be well-defined. The school as extension of the home brings up a child in the totality or unity of life in the medium that the school only can provide, the cultural medium.
13. The child learns in the unity of life. When we select a given area for momentary analysis, we must remember that only its relation to life is ultimately fruitful in bringing up a child to maturity. Life is always more true than any system we abstract from it. We may slay a child with our systems. Systems help him only when they help him in-life to experience its unity.
14. The implications of the principle of unity are several. They apply to curriculum and methodology, as well as to the understanding of a child. Rightly interpreted this principle will avoid the Scilla and Charibdis in education, the intellectualism of the past and the pragmatism and activism of the present.

8

Humanism in the Life of the School

One who does not know humanism in its modern form cannot understand why, for example, a given language lesson must be termed humanistic. That the Christian school is distinctive by virtue of its basic principle and that it is not in accord with the "spirit of our age" are commonly accepted. But if foreign penetrations are to be removed from school practice, it is imperative that we learn to understand this spirit, and we may detect them in the common, everyday smaller details. This is not merely a fad of philosophers and educationists, but the calling of every Christian teacher. For this spirit stands squarely in opposition to the spirit of Christ. This spirit of humanism has slain its thousands by means of the school.

I desire to point out some major features of this humanism with reference to education, schooling in particular. Historically, humanism operates between two poles, which we may conceive of as two centers of power within the same principle. On the one hand we have the *personality ideal*, in which everything revolves about human personality. On the other hand, we see a striving for *knowledge as the ideal*, in which every activity is bent toward erudition or learning. The two poles have in common that they make men sovereign, that they deny God's sovereignty or ignore it, that the creature is glorified above the Creator who is to be praised to all eternity. The last humanism has in common with the idolatry of the pagan.

A. We shall first of all point to some illustrations of the poisonous character of the knowledge ideal for our children.

1. First, we call attention to the awful exaggeration of mathematical thinking, as if only this kind of thinking gives real certainty. It has been said: "2 + 2 = 4, this I know, this is absolutely certain; but what the Bible says is not certain, that I can 'only believe,' but no one knows." In this case 2 + 2 = 4 is presented as reliable knowledge, more certain than the Word of God. In brief, human knowledge is more reliable than God's communication. Thousands have fallen into this error and have become unbelievers. And the school has frequently contributed to this. The school has taught the grandeur of number

and mathematical certainty as if we ourselves are the creators of number and has not pointed to God as their author and that our mathematical certainty is a gift of God. Thus the entire sphere of number is viewed as a human product, and we no longer think of God as sovereign in mathematics. Hence, God is not given the glory due him. In this, too, we must choose between God and current thinking.

2. Another characteristic of humanism in its knowledge ideal is the *overrating of the natural sciences* as if they furnish the predominating knowledge.

3. When children begin to relate their mathematical thinking — regarded more certain than the Word of God — with the predominance of the natural sciences, it is obvious that acceptance of the biblical account of miracles becomes more difficult.

4. A fourth characteristic of humanism that follows directly from the foregoing is what Prof. Dooyeweerd has called *the abstraction-fallacy of humanism*. When the concept is made the real and takes the place of and placed above the actual creature of God, it is abused. God created actual birds in a manifold variety of form and color, in an amazing multitude of kinds. And now man tries to form some concepts to help him understand the great works of God. He begins to classify animals under a certain concept; thus the heron is a bird, the sparrow is a bird, the blackbird is a bird and the robin is a bird. If the concept 'bird' serves to call attention to the birdness of the actual sparrow, robin, etc., and to recognize the unity amidst the diversity, this is very well. All genuine scientific study does this. But when in pride the concept is made to dominate God's creature, and the concept supercedes what God created, our troubles commence. Then the riches of God's creation becomes mere 'bird,' and 'birdness' becomes the real. With the concept, 'bird' dominates the entire bird world. If you desire to see a bird-concept, ask someone to draw a bird. He will not draw a sparrow, or a duck, or a stork, but something like a pigeon, with wings, a beak, and two small paws. This is the actual bird concept. Poor student of bird life who must be satisfied with this kind of bird!

Well now, the outworn, schoolish concept world of humanism compares with the rich world of God's creation as the bird concept does with the sparrow, the robin, etc. The concept is of value when it helps us grasp the truth of God's marvelous creation. The concept is only a means. It tells us something about God's creation. Just as the conventional drawing of a bird is real art, for it lets us see something of the bird world. But when the concept dominates and even replaces God's creation, things become sterile. Then the abstraction fallacy of humanism prevails and destroys genuine scientific learning and real knowledge, and degenerates into a musty school affair. The

humanist attempts to popularize knowledge, and thereby makes a caricature of true knowledge. History of education can relate striking incidents of the abstraction fallacy. Alas, it is full of it. It has been called intellectualism. That is the first stage. Then the concept replaces knowledge. Then one rushes from things to knowledge, which can be learned apart from things. One can study Africa without thinking about it, that Africa lies yonder, way over there. But of what account is Africa to me if I only have the knowledge?

The second stage is still easier. Verbalism is directed to the practical. Academic concepts help no one. One can learn without concepts — just master words, and names. But for an examination, there is this risk involved — the examiner may ask for knowledge instead of words. Hence, the school has happily not dared to implement the practical implications of verbalism. They that have are exceptions. Instead instruction should be an imparting of concepts. This has been preached as pedagogical wisdom for a long time. Protest has come from practical workers in the school, rather than from Herbartian educational theory and practice. In practice, many have considered the accumulation of concepts as a stifling activity, and have, in spite of Herbartian theory, presented things in the place of concepts. They discussed actual chickens instead of the chicken.

Alas, humanism, like weeds, is tough. There have been school personnel who thought it a pity that children showed so little interest in *the* chicken. For this reason, they introduced pictures of chickens to make the experience more attractive. They even got the idea of bringing an actual chicken into the classroom as object lesson. Note, a creation of God as illustration of a man-made concept. What a glory for the creator of this animal concept, for man!

Really, we are not talking of pedantry. Here we have the sin of humanism, the sovereign thinking about God's creatures. The result of this kind of instruction that imparts ideas or concepts is evident in the schoolish composition written by a child whose father has eighty chickens. The child gathers the eggs in the evening and knows the chickens very well. One is his close friend and eats out of his hand. This child writes the following composition in a humanistic school.

THE CHICKEN

The chicken is a bird. It has feathers. It has two wings, two paws and a beak. The chicken lays eggs. The chicken is a useful animal.

You see, here the school — no, the sin of humanism — has broken something into pieces.

Up to this point I have called attention only to the formal errors of humanism; namely, the exaggeration of mathematical certainty, natural science overstepping its boundaries, control of God's laws of nature, and the abstraction fallacy. Let us note to what systems the knowledge-getting ideal of humanism has given rise. We confine ourselves to the elementary school.

1. The state school system. I am, in addition to being father of my family, member of the church, and principal of a school, also citizen of the kingdom of the Netherlands. This is one function among many. But if that concept of citizenship is elevated to an all-inclusive, dominating idea, as in the days of the French revolution when people embraced each other in tears only as citizens, then there is complete equality among men. Then logic demands some dominating power over this citizenry. And this is the state. But this state is principally different from the idea of government. This state acknowledges no sphere sovereignty, neither in the church nor in the school nor in the family. Hence, this state is sovereign over the school too. Buildings, curriculum, program, teachers, parents, and children — they are all the charge of the state. The school becomes a state institution.

2. A second institution of humanism in the area of the school is the *neutral school*, the school which practices tolerance of different faiths and convictions.

3. A third institution of humanism is the *modern common school*, school for all the people.

4. A fourth is the so-called *general education idea*, a minimum amount of knowledge, that must become the possession of all.

5. The knowledge ideal found its way into all methodology.

B. The second center of power is the *personality ideal*. Then it is not knowledge that step by step in its methodology becomes dominant, but the living person of the instructor or the pupil. Then every teacher may proceed according to his own insight. And sooner or later, every child does as he pleases. Then the human person becomes sovereign, as knowledge becomes sovereign at the other pole. It is to be expected that this likeness ends in an ignominious failure. Instead of the idea or concept being dominant, the person becomes dominant. And this is equally dangerous. Individualism in expression leads to boredom as much as does formalism of idea and concept. Not knowledge, nor personality, but God is sovereign over all. Let us in these serious times, in which we face a crisis of the humanistic ideal of knowledge-getting, not take our recourse in the personality ideal, but let us pray to God to give us the courage and the wisdom to serve him in the face of the spirit of the age.

In this period of transition and crisis, let not the conservatives among us defend the knowledge-ideal of humanism, and let the progressives be on their guard against a striving for the personality ideal. Let us together on the present basis work out the distinctive character of the Christian school and clean house of all humanistic infiltration. May God help us to this end.

A. JANSE

*The Distinctive Character
of the Christian School*, pp. 7-29.

Key Thoughts:

1. Humanism turns up in the schools of today in one of two forms or in a degree of compromise between the two. On the one hand the knowledge-getting ideal is glorified. On the other hand the personality ideal is given primary emphasis. Both are known to turn up in Christian schools too.
2. The knowledge-getting ideal makes either concepts or things its basis for learning. The personality development ideal makes the teacher and his guidance of the pupil primary while subordinating the values of instruction and discipline.
3. The Christian school must be saved from the infiltration of both humanistic errors.

Comment:

The Christian schools arose when nineteenth century intellectualistic humanism had the upper hand in education. They developed while secular education became largely influenced by the social and personality ideals. Many teachers recognized that the reform movement had something to contribute to the Christian school largely dominated by a knowledge-getting ideal. A genuinely Christian education will integrate both the knowledge-getting ideal and the personality-development ideal in a meaningful whole which transcends both.

The New Obedience

When we speak of obedience — one of the thorniest and most important issues of our time — it is first of all necessary that we clearly state the given conditions and formulate our problem. I do this in connection with a story taken from a small book by Laura Richard entitled *Go and Come*.

"Sonny," says the maid, "it would be better if you did something. Your little garden needs weeding. Go out and weed it as a good boy."

But the little boy had no desire of weeding his garden that day. "I can't weed," he said.

"Oh yes you can," said the maid.

"But I would rather not," replied the boy.

"But you must," said the maid. "Don't be naughty, but get to work at once and do as I say."

She went back to her own work, for she was diligent. But the little fellow sat still, and thought that he had not been treated very nicely. After some time mother entered the room and saw him sit there. "What's the trouble, sonny?" she asked, for his expression reminded one of March weather.

"She said I should weed my garden," said sonny.

"Oh," said mother, "I think that's a good idea! I love to weed, and it is a beautiful day! May I go along to help you?"

"Of course, you may," replied sonny. And both weeded the garden and had a joyful hour.

This story presents us with the following:

A. A diligent maid, one of the old-fashioned kind, who sees what needs to be done and does it, and takes pride in being a hard worker. Gardens full of weeds annoy her, as do idle people. No wonder that she thinks that idleness is bad for the boy and wants to put him to work. To this end she uses the following arguments: (1) It would be better if you did something, (2) Your garden needs weeding, and (3) If you do this at once, you're a good boy. A good boy, you understand, as she is a good, hard-working maid. If the boy gives heed to her arguments and obeys, then she has imparted to this small boy

her life's ideal, and that he is as courageous, diligent, useful and amiable as she. I would be the last to discredit the diligence of a maid — but I must at least say this; that in this case she fails to understand completely the child, child life, and the bringing up of children.

I would raise the following serious objections. The greatest objection is that she makes herself the norm for the child. She fails to understand that God created each thing with a nature all its own, and that divine ordinance for child life is not the same as that for a servant girl. A number of errors follow. A maid may not be idle; neither the child. A maid must keep the garden weeded; the child has the same responsibility. A maid does her work as quickly as possible; the child is to weed the garden quickly. A diligent maid is a good maid; therefore, a diligent, obedient child is a good child.

That the Lord has not given the child a life task, that he has kept the child free from cares, that the child is not expected to hurry to get to a job, that the Lord has not made the child to be a small adult, but that he must grow as a child — the diligent maid has no conception of these matters. No wonder that this diligent maid can serve to characterize the nineteenth century school with its appropriate and useful accomplishments and Christian social virtues of adults.

B. We should turn to the second point given us in the story quoted. The small boy finds weeding the garden very distasteful, at least for today. He believes too that it would be a good thing to be busy, as is the maid. He knows too that there are many weeds in the garden, and they should come out. And he recognizes that he will be called a good boy if he does the weeding soon — but the ideal of the maid arouses in him an aversion. The result is, "I don't feel like it today!" If he should say this openly, he would no longer be called a good boy, and to be so regarded is rather pleasant. He seeks a way out. Feeling unequal to the adult ideal held before him, he seeks to escape in the thought, "I cannot weed." And this is true. As the maid thinks of work, the child is unequal to it. But she says, "You can weed the garden." This is also true. He *can*. But at once, his distaste for the whole thing overmasters him, and he says positively, "I'd rather not." He would even forego being called a good boy. He won't. The nineteenth century school that held the adult ideal before children has known: 1. Obedient children who did as they were told and were known as good boys. 2. Children who felt the oppressiveness of the adult ideal and said, "I can't." 3. Children who revolted and boldly asserted, "I won't."

C. Now our third point given here. A coercive nurse maid who becomes enraged because her arguments are not accepted and her

ideals are not followed out. "But you must," takes the place now of reasoning about what is useful and good. Over against the idea of the good boy, she places the terrifying image of the bad boy. And the "Quickly, then you are a good boy," changes to "Get to work at once and do as I say!" Humanistic schools have known them, those teachers who became angry because the child did not seem to understand the value, necessity, and good of the instruction given, who shouted, "quickly" and "naughty" and "do as I say." And all this without reference to higher authority. I tell you — with the greatest emphasis on that I.

D. Our fourth given. A small boy who doesn't feel like it, does not want to, is disobedient, and doesn't do what he is told by the maid; a naughty boy, and yet — he feels that he is ill treated. And in this feeling he is right. The humanistic school has known them by the thousands, those children who didn't care for the instruction given and who sought some kind of escape, who didn't want to and were naughty and — who, notwithstanding their awareness of not being good children, felt that they were ill treated.

E. Now our fifth given. A mother who understands her child better than anyone else, and who has entered into the life of her child. She sees him "as the last rose of summer," and she wants to enter into his grief. There are in our time many teachers who see in this mother their ideal, and who would make the following adage their goal:

He who the child would understand,
Must learn his way in kiddie-land.

They despise the adult ideal of being virtuous, of being good and diligent as the ideal for the child. They see the child in his childhood and regard child-likeness more important than virtue. The little pranks of youngsters they find most interesting. Those kiddies are real types for funny sketches of child life in school. And they are such "cute" youngsters.

F. There is a sixth point given. A mother who knows the play-way. Weed the garden for the fun of it; it's such a beautiful day. But it is childhood play — it is the boy's garden and it is his game. And mother says, "May I go along and help you?" We have them in our time who play with the children — reading, figuring, writing, singing, speaking — but it is the children's game; it is their fun, and the teacher plays with them — and asks whether she may help. The child remains a child in keeping with his nature. Isn't this progress?

G. And there is a final point. A boy who feels like weeding his garden and goes to work joyfully. And quickly too. A child who doesn't bother about the value of what he is doing, nor does he especially feel that he is a good boy, but he is no longer naughty and feels that he is treated decently. There are thousands of children today who eagerly go to work at school without insight in the value of it, who go to school joyfully, and protest when father and mother think they should stay home. These children are treated as children and, as a result, are unusually willing and obedient. Teachers can get them to do anything and everything. And when father tells the teacher that his child is very disobedient at home, it stands to reason that the first thought that occurs to the teacher is: that is your fault; you do not treat him as a child. If that father could come to understand the secret that evokes the new obedience, as the new school does, things would be different at home. What is the modern problem? It is this: How can the naughty boy who doesn't feel like it, will not, and doesn't, and therefore extremely disobedient in the main, become suddenly a lovely, obedient, willing boy for mother?

Is this real? May I give you another example from literature to clarify the problem further?

Jan Ligthart tells in his *Memories of Youth* of a catechetical class held in school which the teacher could not control. The rascals took the cards containing memory verses and texts and made spitballs out of them, which they used to throw at one another. At one time the disorder became so great the teacher yelled in desperation, "You're possessed of the devil. He controls this class. But soon the Lord Jesus will come to punish you all." At this moment, the door opened and the principal entered, an avowed atheist, who had no regard for religion. Immediately the rascals rushed to their seats and were silent. His presence was enough to banish all devilishness.

And now I ask again: How is it possible that a class of rascals with no respect for anyone is suddenly transformed into a group of obedient children who go to their seats orderly?

Is this real? Mother knows. Treat the child as a child, for he is but a child. And then you can do with him what you will. She is right. And the principal says, "You've got to be firm with such rascals, then you can wind them around your finger." And he is right. But the maid says, "I have no time to play, and I came here as a maid, so this boy must do as I tell him; otherwise, I might as well leave." And I believe she is right too. And likewise, the teacher of the catechetical class who says, "Those rascals, they have no respect for God's Word, but they do for that strapping, bossy principal. They are still far from the true obedience." And surely this man is right

too; he speaks a serious truth. And so, I am no further with my problem.

And if I had to choose between the maid who commands, "Do what I say," and the mother who asks, "May I help you?"; between the teacher of the catechetical class who has God's Word but no tact, and the principal without God, but who knows how to be firm — if I had to choose one to teach obedience — in all seriousness, I wouldn't know.

And if you ask me to choose between the boy disobedient to the maid and the boy who permits his mother to help him, between the orderly rascals of the principal and the rascals of the catechetical teacher — if I must point out where true obedience is found — really, I don't know. I couldn't tell you. For obedience surely is to listen to a command, to accept in one's heart an admonition, to give heed to guidance of those placed over us.

The little boy of mother is "nice," but there is no obedience, for there is no command. And the orderly rascals seem to listen to the demands of the principal, but in reality, they are the same rascals who return to the seats quietly, merely because they dare not to do otherwise. They fear the principal more than the devil. They are afraid. And I don't know what is worse: disobedience or sham-obedience. I really don't know.

It is the modern problem of obedience of the well-disciplined school where everything is conducted in military style, but often produces lawless people outside of school, and the free school where child life is honored, but children do not learn to bow before law imposed upon them because they are not asked to do anything contrary to their desires. It is the problem of the old nineteenth century humanistic school and the new school of today. The old school is stuck with the question: How can I teach children to obey from their hearts? The new school is just as stuck with the question: How do I teach the children to obey? The old lacks the tact rooted in love. The new lacks the command.

Today we find ourselves in the midst of the struggle between the two. Both sides are severely critical of each other. Read what Montessori, Ligthart, and others have to say about the old school. And then listen to the criticism of the old guard. But neither gives us a solution to the problem of obedience.

In the sketch of Laura Richard and in the memories of Ligthart, the modern problem of obedience is clearly presented. And we saw that the maid and the mother, the teacher of the catechetical class and the principal are equally right — or if you will, equally wrong.

You realize the problem cannot be solved in this way. As so many problems, it is stated wrongly. The question is not, How can I get

the child to weed the garden gladly or against his desires? The question is not, How can I get this class to be quiet? But the question is, How can I teach the child to obey the fifth commandment, and every commandment and ordinance of God? Now the problem is stated not in the modern sense, but as the Christian views it. That we have a solution to this pressing problem, we owe to the Word of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Have you noticed that in stating our problem according to modernity only two parties are involved? The maid and the naughty boy. The mother and the sweet little boy. The catechetical teacher and the boys throwing spitballs. The principal and the quiet class. The teacher and the pupils. Montessori and her youngsters.

In stating the problem according to the Christian view, three parties are involved. The two mentioned here on earth, but also, in heaven, the Almighty, the King of Kings, our Lord, whose ordinances have priority.

Some seem to think that the difference between the modern school and the Christian school lies in a difference in teachers and in pupils, but the difference is to be found chiefly in the fact that in the Christian school God is acknowledged as sovereign over all men and over all human learning, over all things. And if teachers and pupils in the Christian school are different — and it is to be hoped they are — it is because of this fact.

God is not acknowledged in the modern school — at the most he is assigned to a subject as religion, but for the rest he is excluded. This is the root of all our objections to the modern school. And this applies, too, in the case of the problem of obedience. The modern world faces no such problem for it takes no account of God's commandments. The Christian school can state the problem of obedience meaningfully for it recognizes the fifth commandment. And it has an answer to the problem because Christ came.

Let us view the given facts of the situation we discussed in the light of the Word of God.

The maid has been engaged by mother as nursemaid and exercises limited authority over the child according to God's ordinance in behalf of the mother. Therefore, she may command. If she may not, she might as well leave. But God has assigned the child a sphere of life characteristic for him as a child; he plays; he is free from care; he is not full-grown. This ordinance of God for child life the maid must respect. She fails to recognize this fact and runs into conflict which proves embarrassing. Her appeal to self-confidence and to naughtiness if he fails to heed her, all are evidence of self-defense. She backs out.

2. The first requisite is that this obedience is evident in the life of the parent and the teacher.
3. The parent and the teacher are mandated by God to exact obedience from the children.
4. In the exercise of this authority the parent and teachers are called upon to:
 - a. Be penitent in their own disobedience.
 - b. Be firm and consistent in their demands upon children.
 - c. Honor the ordinances of God for child life in its development to maturity.

Comment:

Discipline administered in love and penitence is an integral part of Christian education in the home and in the school. Neither the arbitrary command of an authoritarian teacher nor the sentimental appeal to the good will of the child constitute Christian discipline. Discipline in the Christian school is administered in the name of God, for He is the source of our authority over the child. It is carried out in love, for Christ has merited God's love for us and our children. It honors child life, for our children are the lambs of the flock of the Lord Jesus. God has ordained the ways of child life. These ordinances are authoritative for parents and teachers in directing child life to maturity.

10

Education for Self-Direction

If the child is to attain the true self-direction, he must recognize his place and adjust himself to God's ordinances for child life; therefore, he must be a child, not an adult. If we as Christians are to bring up our children for true self-direction, we shall have to take position four-square against the modern emancipated man, and fight this modern position in our own sphere of life and in our own hearts, and that with the Word of God as our armor.

The modern idea is this: man is autonomous, is a law unto himself, acknowledges no higher authority than his own better self, directs his world (micro-cosmos) according to his will as a little god within, thinks that as autonomous, free, independent subject he has free reign in all his decisions, purposes, and choices, often looks upon the actual world about him as antagonistic to his desires and would mold all things to his liking.

Over against this modern idle fancy we posit the following truth: independent, self-directing is the man who in the place assigned him by God subordinates himself in obedience to God's ordinances; who carries out his life's task; who voluntarily chooses to do so; who knows what he chooses and why; who in his choices recognizes God's ordinances for every sphere of life; who regulates his life as led by God; who does not ascribe his misdeeds to extenuating circumstances but to his own poor judgment and sin; and finally, who does not regard adversity in life as obstinacy of his environment but as God's providence in life to which he learns to be submissive.

How shall we bring up the child in this true self-direction, and how shall we guard him against the false independence? If we desire the child to develop into a self-directing person, have him practice self-direction now, a self-direction in keeping with his childhood. Let him practice childlike independence, and protect him against vain pride and foolish self-assertion by instructing him in God's Word.

The clear expression of God's Word, "Children, be obedient to your parents in everything; for this is well pleasing in the Lord" (Col. 3:20; Eph. 6:1) is not an undeserving limitation placed upon the ac-

tions of a free person and necessary only to realize the better-self in him, but is a divine command; and the Lord still knows best how a child is to be brought up. As Christians, we maintain this over against all plausible modern slogans of the liberation of childhood, which end in practice in the greatest slavery.

But — let us never forget this — as educators we too must be obedient. We may not act as autonomous beings any more than the children. No, we do not obey the child. Neither do we obey nature — especially not the nature of the child which is corrupted by sin. We must obey God. And he has told us, "Fathers, do not fret and harass your children, or you may make them sullen and morose" (Col. 3:21).

We can by arbitrary action frustrate children that they snap and lose heart, that in a defeatist spirit they go through their childhood feebly and burdened. We then break their independence with which God endowed them in creation. We may place burdens on our children too heavy to bear, beneath which they succumb. We can restrain all independent action, frustrate all self-control, deprive them of reaching conclusions by themselves. Then we do not resist his evil nature, but the nature of the child as created by God. We oppose the ordinances of God's creation — and break down many worthy potentialities in the child.

This the old school has done with its rigid grade division. You see, this "old" school, with its ideal of a carefully measured dose of knowledge that everyone must know whether it interests him or not or whether he can assimilate it or not, with its ideal of general education, has harassed the child and deprived him of his necessary opportunity for self-direction.

In reaction to this school that took no account of God's ordinances for child life which says that the child needs a certain amount of freedom of action, a measure of self-interest, of self-activity, of independent thinking, of self-direction, there has arisen the so-called new school that takes the very opposite position. The new school has seen what the child needs. It dares to allow a measure of childlike independence. It permits the child self-activity, independent thinking, decisions and action. And as a rule it achieves marvellous results, incredible to the minds of our teachers of the old school.

No, I would not praise the modern, new school in everything. When it undermines authority and sets aside the divine command, "Children, be obedient," it has violated even the true independence of the child, but especially God's law. Therefore, our demand for the Christian school in which God is honored stands in the face of the modern, new school. But we must give the new school credit for honoring divine ordinances for child life. And those Christian schools still one-sidedly

oriented to the old school should haste themselves to learn from the new school how God desires that children be treated. We shall give them the independence appropriate to child life that they may practice self-direction and thus grow up to act as independent, self-directing people in the larger areas of life. For this is a very serious truth that if a child does not learn to carry out his childhood activities independently, there is great danger that he will be unprepared to take his place in life.

A. JANSE

*The Distinctive Character
of the Christian Schools*, pp. 65-78.

Key Thoughts:

1. The child must attain to self-direction in obedience to God.
2. He learns self-direction by being permitted and enabled to practice self-direction in keeping with his maturity.
3. Modern education has learned to understand the needs of child life as earlier schools never dreamed of knowing. These needs are God-ordained ways of child development that must be honored if we are to bring up children rightly.
4. But the modern school undermines God-ordained authority when it fails to relate the child's needs to obedience.
5. Christian education must understand a child in his needs and develop him into a self-directing person according to the "new obedience."

Comment:

Self-direction in the "new obedience" is a mark of maturity for the Christian. Precept makes its contribution when the precept takes account of the needs of the child life in a given stage of development. But active participation by the child in responsible activity does far more. It is by participation that he begins to feel secure in the activity.

And a child needs security in his person if he is going to learn at all.

The catechetical teacher makes the same mistake and then commits the grave error — no, the great sin — to attribute his failure to-get-along-with-children to the devil and tries to use the Lord Jesus as a discipline measure. As the maid, he should be in another job.

Mother understands the child. But she forgets that God has commanded: Honor thy father and thy mother. And she forgets that she must exercise her authority which she also delegated to the maid. She fails to teach her child obedience for God's sake. The principal knows how to tighten the reins of control, but in his own self-satisfaction he is blind to the fact that the rascals learned no obedience, neither to the unfortunate principal, nor to God whom he disregards.

The little boy does not recognize that he must obey the maid, and he fails to see that mother needs no permission from him. The fifth commandment is entirely lacking. The rascals do not acknowledge their conduct as sin against God, as disobedience to his Word; and being driven by fear in slavish obedience to the principal, they haven't accepted the fifth commandment.

This conclusion is very disheartening, as well for those more at home in the old school as those that have adopted the new in education. True, genuine obedience is more than adjusting oneself contrary to his nature under the threat of the severity of a master, but it also is something else than giving mother permission to help. True obedience is in one's heart to be submissive to authority placed over us by God; it is giving heed to a command, guidance, admonition of one placed over us; it is listening with all one's heart to government ordained of God. Whether it is in harmony with or contrary to our nature, to our liking or not is of less importance. Severe masters, too, one can obey with all one's heart as a Christian. God asks this of us. Taken from this Christian standpoint, we all fall short, children too, of obedience; there is much transgression of God's command.

If we had no more than the command, we might well despair. A mountain of disobedience would rise up before us when we reflect on our past life, and at school we should hesitate to speak of obedient children. That commandment would slay us as far as obedience is concerned and would make ridicule of our traditional obedience as well as of the modern version; and declare both insufficient in the sight of God. In all fairness we would have to admit that it is useless to teach others to obey, and we might as well cease demanding of others what we cannot attain ourselves.

We might try to state the problem with relation to God's law thus: Do with all your heart what God commands, honor all authority, obey its commands. But to put this into practice and to answer the question, how do I teach children to obey, that is beyond us. We should

then perhaps arrive at the pedagogic of Jesus Sirach of the Pharisees, who by severe demands of the Law caused others to go down under the burden, but failed to take any cognizance of the Law himself. Jesus Sirach wrote in this spirit in his Book of Wisdom of Jesus Sirach's son, chapter 30: "He who loves his son will use the rod freely that in it he may reap joy. Who whips his son, heals his wounds. Caress a child and he will frighten you; play with him, and he will grieve you. Do not laugh with him that he pain you not and that in the end you gnash your teeth. Give him no privilege in his youth and do not disregard his ignorance. Bend his neck while he is young, and break his limbs while he is a child."

You see, this is teaching obedience under the Law by men who know only the Law, but who have not come to contrition by the Law, who have not died unto the Law by the Law, as Paul, but who remained erect in the face of the Law. Once again, had we only the Law, only the fifth commandment — with reference to obedience, the case would be hopeless, both for us and for our children.

But besides the solution of the Jewish Rabbi, thank God, there is another, a better solution — by the Rabbi of Nazareth, by our Lord Jesus, the Christ, and this is the Christian solution to the problem of obedience. Our obedience cannot stand in the sight of God. But He was obedient to death on the cross. He is the propitiation for our disobedience; He removes our guilt. He counts those who believe in him as never having disobeyed; He forgives; He loves with an eternal love; through his spirit He creates in us love in response to his love. And this blessing of the covenant He seals to us in baptism.

This is the Christian, the complete solution of the problem of obedience, or rather disobedience. The problem is completely solved; it is no half job, no humanistic embellishment, no "good boy" pedagogy, no corporal cruelty to assure greater fortitude as a Pharisee, no straight jacket but neither nullifying of the command, no satisfaction with sham submission (old school) but neither lawlessness (new school), no striving Excelsior, ever higher. It is very simple — go to Jesus with our disobedience and that of our children and ask for pardon, and confess guilt, and believe.

Whoever is not satisfied with this solution — it is much too simple for our sophisticated culture — will have to seal his broken cisterns that constantly lose their water content. But Christians of all time have rejoiced in the obedience of Christ who has conciliated our disobedience. And they have through the ages praised the sufficiency of his redemption. And they have — not with flogged bodies nor in timid suspicion — but with all their heart and soul bowed before him as Lord. With all their heart they submitted to his rule and renounced

all that was in conflict with it. And when they felt unequal to the true obedience, they strengthened each other in love, and reminded one another in love of the obligation of the new obedience, well expressed in: "Whereas in all covenants *there are contained two parts, therefore, are we by God through baptism, admonished of and obliged unto a new obedience*, namely, that we cleave to this one God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit; that we trust in him, and love him with all our heart, with all our soul, with all our mind, and with all our strength; that we forsake the world, crucify our old nature, and walk in a Godly life."

We can learn from the new school to give heed to divine ordinances for child life; we can learn from Montessori, Lighthart, and others; with the old school, however, we shall recognize authority and command — but we shall view authority and command as of God and shall constantly confess guilt and seek forgiveness. And then we join in love to him, and listen to his Word in new obedience. No, we shall not be talking about it all the time; but it will constitute the basis for all we do and leave undone; we shall teach these truths and implement them in practice.

Then the firm voice of the teacher may at times resound with "do as I say," and yet it will not sound harsh. When in the afternoon, this teacher bows in contrition before God with the children, that *I* will occupy a very secondary place. Then a motherly teacher may ask at times, "May I help you?" and yet not resemble the modern attitude to child life, for in all reverence she led the children to the throne of grace in prayer and then does not hesitate to command in the name of God. Then someone will pull the reigns of control tightly at times, but the fear he seems to engender is soon allayed in that he fears God and, too, confesses guilt; this children never forget. Then a catechetical teacher can act very stupidly at times and irritate an energetic group of rascals — but many a rascal will come to regret action and the catechetical teacher will confess his sin; both will be forgiven, and both will in all earnestness seek to live according to all God's ordinances.

Think not that all this passes by the children unnoticed. They do not reflect on it as such. But observe it they do. A boy soon feels that the Word of Christ is being honored. They are aware of the fact that the teacher bows before God's Word, that he knows himself to be of Christ, that he practices the new obedience. To make the pupil aware of this he need not testify to his own conversion in so many words. He need not display his inner life externally in tears or give expression to his religion in long-faced piety. No, daily life is the

best indicator of the true nature of the man. And to this children are very alert, you can be sure.

We must teach the truth concerning Christ revealed in his Word. If we are sincere, time and occasion will arise to prove us genuine. What is not genuine will disappear in fiery test of practice. And this will detract from our words about the Bible. It will not detract from God's Word, for without our example it can lay hold upon the soul, to stimulate it to resist (then woe unto us; then we become objects of scorn) or to acceptance (and then our learners gladly forgive our deficiencies).

In the grace of God the coming generation, the seed of the church, will grow in the new obedience and increase in favor both with Jehovah and also with men (I Sam. 2:26). And — in the future, join *him* who was subject to his parents, and was filled with wisdom and grew in favor with God and man. This means that a schoolboy increases in favor with God.

Yes, I know, there are others, but of this I am certain, God maintains his church, also among the children as the children increase in genuine obedience to the fifth commandment; they increase in their awareness of guilt, in their faith in Christ's forgiving love, they increase in the new obedience, and thus increase in favor with God and also with man.

May their teachers grow along with them. Our Lord is worthy of our most devoted, loving obedience. One day He, God himself, will wipe away all tears of our disobedience and say, "Don't mention it; all guilt is removed; enter thou faithful one. I will make you ruler over much," as though we had always obeyed. To know this gives rest to our soul.

Christ's work is complete, for us and for our children. He has solved the pressing problem of disobedience. That may not be so obvious in present practice — but, the practice of Christian obedience by us and by our children points to the time that we, like the angels, stand ready to serve God. We ask this daily as we pray, "Thy kingdom come."

A. JANSE

*The Distinctive Character
of the Christian Schools*, pp. 49-64.

Key Thoughts:

1. It is the new obedience that we seek to achieve in the lives of our children.