

The Glory of God – And The Christian School

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The subject comprises two aspects, namely, that God's glory is revealed in the Christian school, and consequently also reflected. To what degree the glory of God is taught and reflected depends on many conditions.

I. COVENANT PUPILS.

The Christian school is very closely related to the home. It is not subordinate to it, nor does it supplant it, but it is supplementary to it—an extension of the home. Therefore the quality of the Christian school is related to the type of homes that are represented. Our pupils must be covenant pupils, regenerated, manifesting the “small beginning of new life”. When they come from Reformed homes they have the ideal background.

II. CONSECRATED CHRISTIAN TEACHERS.

The Christian teacher too must be Reformed that there may be harmony between parents and teachers and no confusion in children's minds. A few of the teacher's spiritual qualifications may be considered here.

1. The teacher should be wise, well able to discern the truth and the lie. Of course we mean wisdom which is rooted in the true knowledge of God. He should possess a rich storehouse of Biblical knowledge that it may be the organizing power of all his teaching.
2. There must be love for God's kingdom and the childhood members of it. This love may not be easily provoked, and must be long-suffering and kind even while justice and firmness must be maintained.
3. A good teacher must be humble “as a little child”, and submissive, knowing that though he can plant and water God must give the increase.

III. THE PURPOSE AND GOALS OF CHRISTIAN EDUCATION.

The purpose of Christian Education is “that the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works.” 2 Timothy 3:17. Christian education is the training of the covenant seed, that they may be equipped for a Christian walk in every sphere of life.

We do not look to the future primarily. We desire first of all a sanctified childhood. “Even a child is known by his doing, whether his work be pure and whether it be right”. Proverbs 20:11. Jesus said, “Suffer the little children to come unto me” and, “Out of the mouths of babes and sucklings Thou hast perfected praise.” We want Timothys who know the scriptures from infancy and Samuels who cry, “Speak, Lord, for thy servant heareth.” In contrast to this, how we despise the children of Jericho! A sanctified childhood will naturally develop into godly youth like Moses who chose for affliction with God's people rather than the pleasures of Egypt.

In the second place we aim to prepare them for the struggle of Christian adulthood, that they may fulfill their calling in the church, the home, and in the modern world.

The final goal is that the covenant children may be prepared to be citizens of heaven. Yes, the ultimate objective lies beyond this transient life. Our pupils must be taught to be pilgrims, seeking a better country.

IV. DISCIPLINE AND ORDER.

It is perhaps here that the glory of God is often obscure. Daily we face the awful fact that our covenant children are not delivered of that old nature that loves disobedience and disorder. Their natural inclinations are to transgress God's laws. "Foolishness is bound up in the heart of a child". There is daily lapse into sin. The teacher needs much grace to discipline aright. What is discipline? It is guidance we give the children for their daily conversion, whether that be by means of instruction, correction, exhortation, punishment, or the rod. Here the teacher is put to a tremendous trial because punishment may be given only as a benefit, never out of revenge.

Closely related to discipline is order. Alexander Pope says, "Order is heaven's first law". God is a God of order and He insists that "all things be done decently and in order." A mortal fear and dread of disorder haunts every teacher. God is so strict here. Without order a teacher's hands are tied.

V. SUBJECT MATTER.

All subject matter must be theocentric. God's sovereignty and His counsel with respect to the redemption of His people in Christ must be basic. Needless to say, Bible Study is the core subject. As Bavinck puts it, "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." We discover a divine motive at the bottom of all things; nothing occurs by chance. Enlightened by Scripture we see how God's natural laws must and are obeyed in subjects as nature study, art, general science, arithmetic and geography. We see God's wrath manifested in the barrenness and suffering of Creation. The deluge solves many scientific problems for us; Babel, the development of nations. A knowledge of the kingdom of Antichrist explains many historical events and all movements toward world union so prevalent in our day. A reflection of some of God's perfections—His immutability, His infinity. His simplicity, we discover in number work. We strive for neatness and accuracy in writing, spelling, and grammar because God insists that we be like Him—orderly, truthful, pure, law abiding.

The question arises "Who is capable of so great a task?" No one. Our efficiency is from God. There must be much fervent prayer in the classroom—prayer with and for the pupils and the teachers if a Christian atmosphere is to prevail and God is to be glorified. "The effectual fervent supplication of a righteous man availeth much in its working." Relying on God the Christian teacher is able to say, "I can do all things through Him that strengtheneth me."

Originally Published in:
Vol 9 No 5 February 1949