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PERSPECTIVES IN COVENANT EDUCATION

VOLUME III SEPT ET YBER, 1977 NUMBER 1

Published semi-annually in September and March by the Protestant Reformed Teachers’ Institute.

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Perspectives in Covenant Education is a journal regulated and published semi-annually, in September and March, by the Protestant Reformed Teachers’ Institute. The purpose of this magazine, in most general terms, is to advance the cause of distinctively Christian education as it is conceived in the Protestant Reformed community. More specifically, the magazine is intended to serve as an encouragement and an inducement toward individual scholarship, and a medium for the development of distinctive principles and methods of teaching. The journal is meant to be a vehicle of communication: a vehicle of communication, not only within the profession, but within the Protestant Reformed community and within the Christian community in general.

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Third Class Postage paid at Jenison, Michigan 49428

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EDITORIAL COMMENTS

By Agatha Lubbers, editor-in-chief

The members of the Protestant Reformed Teachers Institute are thankful that we are able to publish this first issue of the third year of Perspectives in Covenant Education. The response to the magazine has surpassed the expectations we had when we first published the journal in October, 1975. We are particularly happy with the way in which we have been remembered financially by organizations and individuals.

We do not mean to suggest that we are satisfied with the number of subscribers. We encourage others to subscribe to the magazine. We recognize that the nature of the articles is sometimes scholarly, but we believe that the cause of the education of the Covenant youth is important. The issues are sometimes complex, and we beg the reader to give himself to a careful study of the ideas contained in the articles.

We are happy to notice that certain churches have used articles that appear in the magazine as sources of material for discussion groups. This may be a useful suggestion for others.

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During the past eighteen months a group of teachers has been working on a history manual for Christian teachers. This manual covering Ancient World History beginning with the Creation of the world and ending with the fall of the Roman Empire can be obtained from the secretary of the Federation of Protestant Reformed Christian
School Societies, Mr. Peter Vander Schaaf, c/o Covenant Christian High School.

Two of the articles that appear in the journal this month are reprints of the articles that are contained in the Ancient World History manual. These articles are "Philosophy of History" by Fred Hanko, and "The Development of Sin in the Prediluvian World" by Peter Vander Schaaf.

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In the article entitled "A New Approach: Progress or Confusion?" Mrs. Lois Kregel analyzes the interdisciplinary curriculum. She says, "I find interdisciplinary teaching utterly mind-boggling, and certainly not conducive to good memory..."

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Randy Groenendyk, a member of the 1977 graduating class of Covenant Christian High School, writes about the need for final examinations. You will find this student response to be mature and enlightening.

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Mrs. Carol Brands (formerly Carol De Jong) of Edgerton, Minnesota, writes a provocative article on the topic, "Academic Awards: Are They Godly Rewards?" When she answers the question concerning the Godly character of rewards such as financial awards and awards of honor rolls, she says, "It is my conviction that they are not." How do you feel about awards given to Valedictorians and Salutatorians? You have heard one side of the issue? What's your opinion?

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Due to carelessness in proof-reading two "nots" were omitted from articles in the last issue of the magazine, March, 1977. The absence of these "nots" disturbs the sense of the passages in which they should have appeared. On page 7 in the 4th line from the bottom of the page the word "not" is omitted before the words "the reason." The sentence ought to read "...simply is not the reason," etc.

2/PERSPECTIVES
On page 23, the second column, and third paragraph, the first sentence should include the word "not" before the word "agree." The sentence should read as follows: "We do not agree with Mary Lou White in an article in the Elementary School Journal, etc.

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Copies of the monograph Reformed Education by Rev. David J. Engelsma have been distributed. This monograph published by the Federation Of Protestant Reformed School Societies is a series of five essays on various aspects of education. Such topics as "The Covenant-Basis of Christian Education", "Scripture in the Schools", "Reformed Education and Culture" are included in this informative little booklet. You should have a copy. Mr. Peter Vander Schaaf, Covenant Christian High School, can be contacted for copies of this booklet.

A NEW APPROACH: PROGRESS OR CONFUSION?
by Lois E. Kregel

Education is constantly changing; it takes very little perception to come to this conclusion. New ideas and theories are ever coming to the fore, although many of them are merely old ones in disguise; new methods, new materials are emerging. All of these things have an impact on teaching. It was only a few years ago, for example, that the new math came into the educational picture; now we find a definite trend toward returning to some of the old methods. Similarly, for a time phonics was neglected when reading was taught; when, however, the schools found that they were producing people who could neither read nor spell, there was a general movement back to more phonetic methods of teaching reading.

It is imperative for us that we be aware of the changes that are taking place in the field of education. As Christian parents and teachers we have the obligation to provide for our children the very best that we can. Now, if there are better ways of teaching, it behooves us to adopt them. If, on the other hand, there is something wrong with any new approach, we must be alert to any threat to the well-being of our covenant children. Our education must be a precision tool, sharply honed, in order to train our children to be citizens of the heavenly kingdom while they are travellers through this present one, and pursuing their calling in it.
What makes any trend good or bad, and under what circumstances may we, should we follow it? Negatively, change merely for its own sake may never be our objective; we may not try something new, simply because we feel we have used the old long enough. Nor may we follow a trend because others, even a majority of others, are following it. That, of all reasons, may never be ours, as Christians.

Briefly, I believe change is indicated only when that change is scripturally sound in its basis, and when the new approach is either pedagogically better than the old, or a refreshing and equally good alternative to it. Here, as in everything, the rule should be, “try the spirits.”

One of the more recent trends in educational theory and practice is toward an interdisciplinary curriculum, particularly in the fields of the social studies and language arts. Trends, of course, are gradual: they do not make their appearances overnight. Already in the sixties it was being suggested by some educators that it would be better to lump social studies and language arts together, and teach them as one. In the March, 1973, issue of Grade Teacher magazine there appeared an article entitled, “Humanities is When you Get it All Together,” by Howard S. Ravis. I would like to quote at length from this article, because it expresses rather well what is meant by an interdisciplinary curriculum.

“If you were asked to name one of the big trends in education today, you’d probably say, ‘The Humanities.’ It’s the ‘in thing’—starting in the high schools a few years back and now filtering down to the junior highs, middle and even elementary schools.

“But ask someone exactly what ‘The humanities’ (or just plain ‘Humanities’) is...and be ready for a big, blank stare. Why? Because, according to a recent report on the subject from the ASCD (Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development) Working Group on the Humanities, what humanities is (or are) ‘depends on who is doing the defining.’

“One definition views humanities solely as a course which combines language arts (or English) and social studies, with a little art and music appreciation thrown in. Rarely are math, sciences, and languages included. It’s interdisciplinary and team taught, and usually offered to the brighter students.

“But there are others who say the humanities should be much more. Take Peter Greer...associate director of the National Humanities Faculty....

“Greer sees the humanities as a wide-ranging approach to teaching, affecting both content (curriculum) and method (instruction). ‘Humanities,’ he says, ‘is not just a two hour course, it’s the whole learning experience.

“I’m not saying that setting up a two hour course to replace language arts and social studies is bad or wrong. What I’m saying, what more and more of us are saying is that it’s only a beginning.’

“Or, as the previously mentioned ASCD report comments.... ‘The general intent in a true humanities program should be to relate all disciplines to the study of man and his humanness, and to relate all learning to the individual child.’

In plain language, the proponents of this theory would discontinue separate courses in history, geography, grammar, composition, government, etc., and substitute for these the study of man—his relationship to his environment, to his fellow man, to his historical development in many different countries, even to his religion. The studies (disciplines) would be intertwined. This is interdisciplinary teaching.

The advantage, they say, is that they are able to give a better representation of the body of learning, which has grown so large that a teacher cannot cover all the necessary ground. Besides, these
educators add, when man as a whole is elevated, national differences are minimized and we grow closer to achieving one world. Moreover, students are encouraged to form their own concepts, and this is good for them, they say; it teaches them to think for themselves.

To see what this concept does to a textbook, examine with me one of the textbooks in a series called *Exploring the Social Sciences*, published by the American Book Company. This one is called *Learning About Countries and Societies*. In the preface to the Teachers' Guide we read, "*Exploring the Social Sciences* is a multi-disciplinary program. History, geography, sociology, anthropology, archaeology, political science, and economics are stressed in these units. Other disciplines such as philosophy, urbanology, religion, language, and the arts are considered. Although each unit of study approaches its subject from the vantage point of many different disciplines the stress is placed on the several disciplines most relevant to the material discussed. The net result of this approach is the pupils' understanding that any given area of study may be explored valuably using many different criteria.

"The wide range of social science processes is explored in these units. The goal of *Exploring the Social Sciences* is not to make miniature social scientists out of our young people. Rather, the emphasis on processes is a means of enabling pupils to achieve a degree of independence in working with concepts and generalizations and in analyzing various social science phenomena." (bold mine, L.K.)

There you have one of the stated purposes of this plan of teaching. Now let us look at some of the contents of the textbook itself.

Unit I Ancient Greece
Chapter 1
A Historian Looks at Ancient Greece
Chapter 2
A Sociologist Looks at Athens

Chapter 3
An Economist Looks at Athens
Chapter 4
An Archaeologist Looks at Ancient Greece
Chapter 5
Philosophers, Historians and Scientists in Ancient Greece

Unit IV India
Chapter 1
An Anthropologist Looks at India
Chapter 2
A Political Scientist Looks at India
Chapter 3
A Geographer Looks at India
Chapter 4
An Urbanologist Looks at India

Confucian China, Medieval France, The Middle East, Nigeria, Brazil, and the Soviet Union receive similar treatment. And why are those countries and areas lumped together for study in one textbook? It seems like an arbitrary choice: some other group of eight countries would have served as well.

Now let us go back to our original standards and ask, Is this method of teaching scripturally sound in its basis?

Obviously, we, as Protestant Reformed parents and teachers are not going to be carried about by every educational wind that blows. The material quoted above is so obviously man-centered, so humanistic, that we do not have to be very spiritually sensitive to see the evil in the philosophy that pervades it. It is a philosophy that clearly elevates, glorifies man, and makes him central to every study. We believe that not man, but God is the center of all things, and His church and the gathering of it is the reason for the continued existence of the world.

Over against the avowed purpose of this method of teaching stands our own: to inculcate in our children a world-and-life view that is antithetical, while they are gaining knowledge of facts; and let us not forget that learning facts is crucial to
viewing all things in their proper perspective. How can we get wisdom if we have no knowledge?

Besides, the very idea that this emphasis on man in general helps wipe out national boundaries and brings us closer to one world ought to make our spiritual antennae stand up. This is exactly the anti-Christian idea, attempted repeatedly throughout history, and culminating in the final kingdom of the anti-Christ. We must have no part of it.

But is this method, perhaps better, or even an equally good and refreshing alternative? Could we, for example, adopt its form, and use our own content? Would we be wise to follow the example of the textbook referred to above, and, instead of taking part of a day for history, part for geography, civics, literature, etc., lump these disciplines together under a general theme, such as, Learning About God’s World? And would it not be better to de-emphasize so much learning of facts, and let the students form their own concepts, by what is known as the inquiry method? Would they not be learning many good social traits, such as respect for one another’s ideas, and would it not be much better for them to think things out for themselves?

To this I say emphatically, No! Concepts must not be developed by the student, but taught to him: truth is objective. It is not so, that one concept is as good as another. Our students must learn the proper view of life—its meaning, its purpose. Oh, I do not mean to imply that this must be shoved down their throats, or that children must not be taught to think for themselves. Concepts must be imparted, but in such a way that thinking is stimulated, not stifled; thought-provoking questions, open discussions should be the rule; facts alone can truly be dull facts, and concepts can be dull concepts, unless the student understands how “all things work together” in all their beauty and unity.

Children need skillful, sanctified guidance.

Such guidance must be orderly. Facts must be presented and learned in a systematic way, and not so that the student gets a smattering of knowledge; I find interdisciplinary teaching utterly mind-boggling, and certainly not conducive to good memory; and without a firmly implanted foundation of knowledge, even good concepts are easily undermined and swept away.

It is true that the body of material to be learned grows larger day by day. History is being made fast; countries are changing in boundaries and names; technology increases; books and magazines pour off the presses. Do we then say, “Why even try to learn facts systematically? Let’s mix them all together and study man; in so doing we will pick up whatever factual information we can, and form concepts from it?” It would seem to me that a better solution would be to find our priorities in factual learning and teach these, but logically, systematically, and, where indicated, chronologically. I think that it is also of paramount importance to stimulate and encourage much more reading at home by our children; the student could surely supplement what he learns in school by reading at home. Here we have a concrete way in which parents can and should help, both by reading and discussing more themselves and by providing good reading material in the home.

Objection to an interdisciplinary curriculum, however, does not mean objection to a unified curriculum. Has not this always been basic to good Christian education? Can we teach history without talking about church history? Can we teach geography apart from ecology, and talk about God’s creation without talking about our responsibility to respect it and marvel at it, and take care of it? And do we not seek all day to glorify God in our speech, which is His gift, by using it correctly, by seeking to write well, and
beautifully? Should we not really be teaching grammar all day? Is not everything a student writes a lesson in composition, whether in history, civics, geography, or anything else? Even more specifically, the geography of a country is closely related to its history, and the development of government never stands isolated from either one. It is surely good to teach the relationship between all of these subjects, without wiping out the distinctions between them. The latter creates confusion: the former is conducive to orderly learning.

Interdisciplinary teaching, then, is not an option for us; rather, we should strive for that ideal of a truly unified curriculum, remembering the words of Proverbs 10:14; "Wise men lay up knowledge."

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ACADEMIC AWARDS: ARE THEY GODLY REWARDS?

by Carol Brands

Lying on the bed just across the hallway from me is a little baby, one month old. He is our baby, my husband and I say, our first baby. Yet even as we say this we know that he is not our baby, not really. He is the Lord’s child, given to us as a heritage with the task of training him in the service of the Lord. It is a child of God who is lying in the bedroom across the hallway.

My husband and I have been entrusted with the responsible privilege of training this child. God has created this child in such a way that he looks to us, his parents, to supply his needs and to teach him concepts and attitudes about God and God’s world. As we behave, so he learns to behave. As we talk, so he learns to talk. As we in behavior and speech with discipline instruct him, so he learns to live before God.

Our responsibility is awesome, for through us this child learns to know God. If that is true, then it is important that we train him properly. How shall we train this child? What shall be our guide in deciding how to train him? How can we train him to KNOW GOD?

We know the answer in principle. Our position to the child is parallel to God’s position to us. As God deals with us, his adult children, so we must deal with his little children. As He loves, we must love. As He rebukes, we must rebuke. As He chastens, we must chasten. As He deals gently, we must deal gently. As He leads by His Word and Spirit, so we must instruct by the Word in submission and dependence on the Spirit.

This guiding principle of parental training must be the principle also in the topic of this requested article. The topic as requested is an evaluation of the awards system in our schools. The issue, as I see it, is that of Godly motivation for our children. The motivation we provide must parallel the motivation God gives us, or else we fail to instruct in Godliness... and we fail in our responsibility.

I. Godly motivation

How we as adults need motivation to live the life of Godliness! Pressures on all
sides challenge us to give up the good fight of faith. We are called to sin by the news media, by the literature we read, by our society at large, by daily contacts in business, by struggling carnal members of the church, by our intimate friends and family, and most of all by our own weak and carnal natures. “Give up the fight!” these all challenge. “Live in pleasure, for yourself...at least once in awhile.” And how this call to sin appeals to our egocentric, self-loving, proud and rebellious natures.

God never denies us that which we need. We need motivation to live the Godly life, and He provides it abundantly.

God’s motivation, however, is not even similar to those motivations which the world offers. It has no appeal whatsoever to our proud, egocentric, hereditary natures. God’s motivation for man is contrary to all of the foolishness inherent in us and is possible only by grace in Christ.

God’s motivation for us is simply this: Himself. We desire God; we love God; we want to know God more and more.

This is an unnatural motivation, a queer motive in the eyes of men. No man at all would possess this motive apart from the Spirit of Christ which implants it in the heart through the Word.

But, planted and sustained by God, it is an abundant motive. To know God Himself! What better motive could we desire? If obedience to God results in greater fellowship with God, what greater incentive to obey could be found?

Love of God may not be for us one source of motivation alongside of others. This is THE motivation for a Christian, the only lawful motive. Any other reason for doing something must be in the service of THE reason for doing it. We labor alone out of love for God, which also expresses itself in love for the neighbor.

Accordingly, our children must be trained also to labor out of the motive of love for God and the neighbor. Since we as parents stand to the child in a relationship of God’s representative, this training at first takes the form of love for the parent. Love for parents, maturing into love for God, must be the child’s motivation. We must nurture this love in word, action, and discipline, in all of our child training.

II. Godly rewards

Rewards are a highly Biblical concept. The Bible approves of rewards as it uses various terms to denote rewards.

1. “A giving back again.” Colossians 3:24. We “receive the reward of the inheritance.”
2. “Hire/wage/reward.”
   Mt. 6:1. “Ye have no reward of your Father which is in heaven.”
   Mt. 6:2,5,&16. “They have their reward.”
   Rom. 4:4. “Then is the reward not reckoned of grace, but of debt.”
   I Co. 9:17. “If I do this willingly, I have a reward.”
   I Co. 9:18. “What is my reward then?”
3. “Recompense.”
   II Sam. 22:21. “The Lord rewarded me according to my righteousness.”
   Ps. 103:10. “Nor rewarded us according to our iniquities.”
There are other words in the original which the KING JAMES BIBLE translates "reward", but these five examples give the general idea of how the Bible uses the concept.

We repeat, then, that rewards are a firm Biblical concept. In regards to rewards, the Bible contains these ideas:

1. God rewards both good and evil.
2. God rewards both in this life and eternally.
3. All men by nature deserve the reward of wrath.
4. God rewards the good merely out of grace, because by nature no man would do good.
5. God rewards not external acts alone, but the motives or heart from which external acts proceed.
6. God's reward is Himself and His favor, His love, and all its accompaniments in salvation and eternal life.
7. God's reward is for His children a sure incentive, repeated often in Scripture for our encouragement.

The Bible also contains the distinct idea of rewards inherent in actions themselves, so that sowing wheat is "rewarded" with a wheat harvest while sowing thistles is rewarded with a harvest of thistles.

We as parents in our training are to be imitators of God in His dealings with us as His children. To our children we must be two things: instructors and examples of how God deals with us.

This means that we, standing before our children in God's stead, must reward our children. But we must reward in such a way that our rewards are instructive of the manner in which God rewards. Even our rewards are Godly instruction! Further, our rewards must be accompanied by verbal Godly instruction.

If the Bible speaks of two classes of rewards by God to His children, then these two classes of rewards should be part of covenantal instruction.

A. Rewards inherent in the activity

If we look through a concordance at the words which our Bible renders "award," we will find several words which more literally mean "fruit" or "recompense" or "a giving back again" or "wages (according to hire)". All these words, while designating rewards, actually refer to results of activities which are inherent in the activities themselves. The "reward" of sowing wheat, thus, is a wheat harvest. The "reward" of idleness is hunger.

This form of reward has an important place in our lives, although it is still subservient to the real reward. This reward is that of the joy of labor itself. Ecclesiastes 5:19 says that man should "rejoice in his labour: this is the gift of God." Man is to enjoy all the good things which God gives him. Labor is one good gift, and therefore man is also to find enjoyment in this gift itself.

God gives this gift of joy in labor to His adult children, and we must nourish this also in God's small children. We must teach them to enjoy their work first of all as a requirement of Godliness, and once they learn this they will learn also to enjoy work for itself, finding in the very work accomplished a reward.

How can parents and teachers teach joy in work itself? By giving work at the child's
level of ability, which he can accomplish and accomplish well, so that the accomplished work is in itself praiseworthy. By then giving the child due praise so that the child learns to find pleasure in the work. By setting a corollary example of enjoying our own work so that by our example, also, our children see work to be worthwhile, fruitful, and enjoyable.

B. The reward—beyond the activity itself

A look at various Bible passages, however, shows that this inherent reward is not the ultimate reward nor even the real reward to be sought in our activities. The Sermon on the Mount instructs us not to seek the things below but the things above, for then we have an eternal reward, not of man’s praise but of the Father in heaven. Ecclesiastes speaks of work—of well done, prosperous, praiseworthy work—done apart from God’s praise by saying, “I hated all my labour that I had laboured to do.”

But THE reward is the same thing which motivates us in our work. THE reward is God Himself and the blessings of covenant life with Him. Thus God said to Abraham, “I am thy shield and thy exceeding great reward.” Our true reward is to experience God’s gracious favor, to receive praise of Him.

Likewise in our dealings with our children. There is only one reward which is a real reward: the approval of the parent as God’s representative. Praise alone is the real reward. The parent’s smile, the parent’s hug or kiss, the parent’s word of approval is the reward which a child needs and which alone can truly motivate him.

III. Godly Awards

An award, by definition, is an honor or gift conferred on a person for some accomplishment.

The awards under consideration in this article are primarily those within a school system: the awards of honor rolls, salutatorian and valedictorian, and of financial awards accompanying achievement in these areas. This is what we usually mean when we speak of the “awards system” in our schools.

Are these awards a Godly form of reward?

It is my conviction that they are not. This conviction is a result both of my own experiences as I went through schools with awards systems and of much subsequent thought on the matter. I do not believe that an awards system within the home OR within the school is proper and profitable to covenant education.

Why not?

#1. Awards fail to be educational.

Education, we believe, is intrinsically a spiritual matter. Our goal in education is that the child mature into a man of God, thoroughly furnished unto every good work. The true content of education—even when we are teaching academics in the school—is Godliness.

And Godliness cannot be measured. Godliness is a matter of the heart. We cannot see into the heart to award that which really counts; thus we cannot award true education. Only God can do that.

#2. The awards system fails in Godly motivation.

THE motivation for God’s children is love of God, desiring God’s glory and praise. In children, this motivation is nurtured through the subservient motive of love of the parents, desiring their praise.
An awards system not only does not aid this motive, it contradicts this motive. When we set up a system of laboring to achieve distinction or public acclaim over other students, the motive which we foster is not love of God and love of neighbor but rather pride...simply pride, the antithesis of Godliness.

#3. Awards fail to be Godly rewards.
Awards are neither fruits of labor inherent in the labor nor the real reward of God Himself, His favor and praise. The awards system is a man-made and man-geared system of motivation in labor, instructing the child to labor hard in order to do better than his peers in order to be honored by men as superior to his peers. Thus man sets up unGodly awards, either of man’s praise or of man’s money. Such false rewards should be meaningless to a child of God, accounted as “dung” because they are a hindrance in the struggle to attain Christ and His praise.

IV. Godly incentives
Yet, children are children. They are still in the years of types and shadows. Foolishness is still bound up in their hearts, often so strongly that they have a terrible struggle seeing the truth and seeking that which is above. The goal of God’s praise can seem terribly unreal and distant to a child. Is there no form of tangible reward permitted to encourage the child?

First of all, the reward of parental praise is no future, distant reward. Praise should be bountiful, accompanying every accomplishment. The child who loves his parents will labor hard to earn that praise.

This love of the child is unquestionably hampered by sin, both in the parent and in the child. But while sin always makes difficult the ideal situation, we nonetheless set up our practices by principle, not pampering sin or the sinner.

Secondly, the child must be so instructed and guided by parental training in love—with rewards both negative and positive of chastisement and of praise—that he learns to see in labor the inherent rewards. He learns to color well because his parents praise good coloring and thus he learns himself to enjoy a well-colored product. He learns to study hard because he learns—first through parental insistence plus praise or maybe chastisements—that there is pleasurable profit in the results of diligent study. He learns to paint well, or sweep well, or clean the car well, or plow well, or practice music well, because he has been trained to enjoy well-done labor, wrought for God’s sake.

Thirdly, I do believe a parent may encourage a child through special rewards expressive of his praise from time to time. These should never become award SYSTEMS so that the child begins to labor for the reward itself, possibly despising the parent while demanding the reward (even weekly allowances can be a danger here). But occasional special awards especially for especially difficult tasks, can encourage the child. Even in these occasional incentives, however, certain principles ought to be followed.

1. One child ought not to be exalted above another. All children should be able equally to attain the incentive reward.
2. The award incentive must be accompanied by instruction as well. The child must be instructed that the real reward is God’s favor and work well done which by grace acknowledges that favor, but that this incentive is only an aid to encourage
him right now. Consistently taught that, the child will WANT fewer incentives as he matures.

3. The award should be for a short-range goal, emphasizing a single project rather than cumulative projects. The apostle Paul said that he would work forgetting those things that were behind and pressing forward to the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus. Likewise a child must be trained not to count up his achievements but to deliberately and constantly lay aside the past, laboring in the present with a view to eternity. Setting long range incentives not only abets pride but can also greatly discourage the child if he fails.

4. Even award incentives should normally be given as an expression of parental pleasure AFTER the task is finished rather than promised ahead as a reward. During the task, verbal encouragement and assistance where needed will do far more good, anyway. Awards given after completion of a task serve far better as a means of reinforcement of the reward of praise.

5. It follows that award incentives should not be set up on a regular basis. If Jimmy is given an award for cleaning the car each time that he cleans it, he soon will refuse to clean the car willingly unless the award is forthcoming. Then he has failed to see the award as merely an incentive and has failed also to learn that his true rewards are (1) knowing that the car IS well cleaned, and (2) knowing that his parents and God are pleased if it was done willingly.

The conclusion of the matter which I come to is thus this. Parents and teachers of covenant children, be sure that in our instruction we amply surround our children with rewards, for these are necessary and important. Let these rewards be REAL rewards, of well accomplished work and of teacherly or parental praise, subject to the praise of God as the final reward. And if the child is struggling, if a task is difficult, then perhaps give an incentive award to show that the difficulty is understood and to reinforce the reward of praise...but even then with caution so as not to lessen the seeking of the true rewards. For only, finally, as the child labors for God alone with love for the neighbor will God be glorified in the life of that child.

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**TO TEST OR NOT TO TEST**

by Randy Groenendyk

Over the years schools have changed in many ways. Teaching methods, course offerings, and even students themselves are now different from the way they used to be. But one aspect of school has remained pretty much the same: final examinations. Nearly every junior high school, high school, and college in the country insist upon giving them after each semester.

Today, however, exams are coming under close scrutiny and evaluation by many educators. Some advocate the elimination of exams, while others feel the merits of exams make them well worth retaining. It is fast becoming a controversial issue in the teaching world.

If convenience dictated what should be done, then there would be no choice but to cancel all exams—permanently.
Without a doubt, no student in the world enjoys the hassles of preparing for and taking an exam. To most students, exams are nothing but an unnecessary headache. And what teacher enjoys putting together several pages of test questions and then evaluating the possibly hundreds of tests and assigning a grade to them? For both students and teachers, the time consumed can total several hours—and not a minute can be considered enjoyable.

However, just because something is not enjoyable does not mean that it is worthless or without benefit. If exams do serve a purpose and are beneficial, then they certainly should not be thrown out of our educational system.

But what are the merits of exams and why are they considered so important by so many people? And, on the other hand, what are its liabilities and why do other people argue so vehemently against them?

One of the reasons the value of exams is denied by many is the manner in which many students prepare for them. Few students study slowly, deliberately, and with total concentration. Rather, they choose to stay up late at night or get up early in the morning to do their studying, which is often done very hurriedly and with little comprehension. "Cramming," as it has come to be called, has and always will be very common. The end result of cramming is that the hastily gathered knowledge is forgotten soon after exams are over. Thus, nothing is really gained and the student does not benefit in the least.

A second argument is exams simply are not necessary in some courses because the knowledge gained throughout the year is practiced every day. Mathematics is one good example of this type of course. All year, long math students build upon and add to the facts and principles already learned for the purpose of solving more difficult and complex problems. The "pyramid" effect, which requires the student to constantly use and re-use previous information, makes exams unnecessary for the purpose of reviewing.

A third proposed reason for eliminating exams is this: if the student hasn't learned the material the first time it was presented to him, what would enable him to pick it up the second time around? If he doesn't understand it, (or doesn't want to understand it) why would he "get it" now while reviewing for the exam?

Exams, also, say some teachers, contain far too much material to be covered in just one test. How can anyone adequately study literally hundreds of textbook pages, not to mention pages and pages of notes, and really know and comprehend everything he is looking at? And when you have three or four exams of a similar nature, well, it can be mind boggling.

Nevertheless, there are some strong reasons for continuing exams. The first, and perhaps the best, is that in many courses, especially in the liberal arts field, a "total view" is a must. History is a good example of this. When each event, person, war, nation, etc., are studied individually, as is done during the year, history really is nothing more than a meaningless collection of boring facts.

However, by reviewing large segments of time, as is done in an exam, the student can begin to see not only how all events in history are related to each other, but also the workings and plan of God. God is, very definitely, guiding and directing all of history, and everything that ever happens is part of His master plan. And it is only by getting that "total view," so well accomplished by an exam, that the student can begin to see and understand that plan of God. And after all, isn't that one of the child of God's responsibilities?

Secondly, just as surely as there are students who cram or don't study at all for exams, there are also those who study long and hard and are successful in reviewing all of the necessary material.
The all-too-painful truth is, the human memory can be very poor at times, often forgetting a great deal of facts and information. Exams, when properly prepared for, very adequately serve the purpose of refreshing and re-informing the student of significant information which he had forgotten.

In recent years, there have been a few new developments in exams. One is letting seniors skip taking the exams of classes in which they achieve a certain grade (usually an A- or B+). The reason for that is if a student studies hard and learns the material well the first time, there is no need for him to review it and be tested on it again. This may indeed be right and good, but in all fairness, why shouldn't this privilege be extended to everyone? Underclassmen may work just as hard as seniors, yet they have to take all their exams and seniors don't. Perhaps this practice should be re-evaluated.

Certain variations in exams are also possible. Semesters can be divided into nine week marking periods, with "mini-exams" given after each period. There would be four exams each year, but they would be smaller in content and much more easy to study for.

Or, exams can be held only once every school year. These exams would cover a broader range of material, but would include only the basics of the course, meaning students would not have to worry about the smaller, relatively insignificant details.

There are other suggestions for changing exams, but it really isn't necessary to list them all, for each one is based upon the supposition that exams, as they are now held, are not beneficial and should be eliminated or replaced. The task of educators, then, is to wade through the many pro and con arguments and make the crucial decision on the future of exams.

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PHILOSOPHY OF HISTORY

by Fred Hanko

In the nineteenth century an influential historian, Leopold von Ranke, stated clearly an idea that was prevalent in his time: that the sole duty of the historian is to record as accurately as possible the happenings of the past. If this were true, we would not need to discuss a philosophy of history. Before we begin, then, it is necessary to dispose of this idea, which is also stated in a current textbook, "History is the record of all that men have said or done, up to the present moment."1

I. The Necessity of Interpretation in History

In the first place history as simply a record of facts is impossible. The writing of history inevitably involves selection and arrangement, and in the selection and arrangement of materials the historian cannot avoid interpretation. The fact that the historian chooses to include certain materials in his account and to leave out others assumes interpretation of the relative importance of these materials.
Also, if the historian is to arrange his materials into some kind of continuity, he is going to make some kind of subjective judgment as to the relative value of the materials that he has. If I include in my writings that the Assyrians produced iron weapons and exclude the fact that they also produced fine pottery, I am making an interpretation as to which of these facts I consider more important. If I should include both of these facts, the way in which I present them will imply some subjective opinion as to which of these facts I consider the more important.

Second, history as a record of facts is useless. Uninterpreted facts are both sterile and meaningless. The fact that the Assyrians produced iron weapons, although very important for Sargon II, is entirely meaningless for me and everyone else living today, unless I can show that these iron weapons were a part of the general warlike structure of the Assyrian civilization. And even this is useless unless I show that the warlike Assyrians brought about the downfall of the Kingdom of Israel because of the wrath of God against their sins.

Interpretation is the legitimate and essential function of the historian. It is not the facts of history but the meaning of the facts that gives value to the study of history and meaning to the present time. Thus an important part of the study of history is the search for cause and effect, the search for pattern and unity, the search for answers to the problems of the world today. Mankind searches history for answers to the basic questions for every person: From whence have we come? What is the reason for the things that happen? Where are we going? History itself gives no answers. The answers to these questions depend on the philosophy of history that each man has: whether it is based on the knowledge of God or on the opinions of man. In this discussion we will first examine some of the answers that men have given to these questions, and then discuss and try to formulate some of the principles of a Christian philosophy of history.

II. The Evolutionary Theory of the Origin of Man

Secular historians are generally agreed on the origins of man: that "history" extends far into the distant past and that "pre-history" extends many times further into the past to the time that the earth was formed from an exploding star or a condensing nebula or some similar natural phenomenon. We need not discuss here the subject of evolution since the general outline is fairly well known and the details can better be the subject of a separate study. We do want to mention a few of the consequences of belief in this theory since they have a bearing on our present discussion. Evolution, of course, presupposes a development of mankind from some early primitive state to his present highly civilized position. Given the fact of a civilized culture existing about two thousand years before Christ, the evolutionist must assume a period of many thousands of years before this time for man to develop the intelligence and social and mechanical aptitudes to produce such a culture. Since no one can say how long it takes man to develop from a cave-dwelling anthropoid to a civilized human being, this creates problems for the historian who wants to know the exact time that certain events occurred. It is this problem that leads to the many discrepancies in the dates given for ancient history.

Evolution also teaches a progression in the history of the world not only from simple to complex but also from "lower" to "higher". This teaching involves both an explanation of the origins of the earth and an interpretation of the history of the world. This means that all of the events of the past are simply rungs on the ladder of time upon which man has now ascended part way and will continue to ascend until the world ends in a chaos created by
either man or nature. As we shall see, this results in a variety of different ways of explaining the progress and purpose of history.

The teachings of evolution also imply a particular way of judging the importance of man. The man who crawled out of the primeval slime is a great deal different from the man that was created in the image of God, and who now bears the image of Satan. Evolutionary man lives for a brief time on earth and satisfies his biological drives or maybe even strives for the ideal of social equality, self-expression, or peace on earth and then dissolves into eternal dust.

III. Naturalistic Theories of History

It is generally on the question of the causes and meaning of events that most secular historians differ. In ancient times people believed that all events were caused by their gods. If they wanted rain for their crops, they simply had to appeal to the particular god involved and they would be supplied with rain. On the other hand, if they displeased their gods, they could expect prompt disaster to overtake them. The evil in the world was the work of the wicked gods who would sometimes scatter disasters indiscriminately on good and bad alike. Since ancient times men have adopted a number of "natural" explanations for events. Generally, historians adopt one of three naturalistic explanations or a combination of these: the geographic, the "great men" idea, or the economic.

A junior high textbook expresses the geographic interpretation of history in this manner: "In a sense one might even say that history is the story of how men have reacted and adjusted themselves to their environment." The geographic interpretation of history sees the major forces that cause events in the operations of mountains and plains, fertile soils and deserts, rivers and seas. An extreme form of this position is expressed by Lombroso who maintains that revolutions usually occur on limestone formations. Mason has worked out an entire system based on this idea in which he finds that prophets and poets come from mountains, artists from riverbanks, and monotheism from the desert. Von Treitschke, a German historian, finds a lack of artistic development in the Swiss due to the influence of the overpowering mountains, while the lower mountains of his own country are ideal for the production of poets and artists. Grant Allen sums up the geographic position in this way, "the differences between one nation and another ultimately depend... simply and solely upon physical circumstances to which they are exposed."3

We recognize, of course, that the geography of a certain area is important to an understanding of its history. It is important that the Phoenicians developed their civilization on the shores of the Mediterranean Sea instead of the Arabian Desert. Nevertheless, to say that the geographic factors are the sole or even the most important factors in the history of a people is entirely wrong. Even when they recognize a human factor, as most of them do, they are still far from the basic factor of history which is the counsel of God.

The economic interpretation of history has been described as follows: "The key to history is asserted to be man's economic production and consequent antagonisms. Naturally such a view rests to no small degree upon a geographical view of history. The explanation of social institutions and morality is to be found in the fact that nature apparently is more willing to provide inhabitants than inhabitable areas, hungry mouths than food, and cold and heat than fuel and shade. Relative economic scarcity is therefore the incentive to progress and in the effort to solve the problems which arise from such scarcity history is said to emerge.

"The intermediary between the limitations of nature and the development of human civilization is declared to be
social antagonism. The disproportion between human wants and the means of satisfying them results in an attempt to subdue and to establish with nature a harmony which did not at first exist. Out of this lack of harmony between man and nature emerges, however, disharmony between man and man. By this principle of antagonism not only is property explained, but the conflict between the individual and the group, out from which morality emerges, as well as the conflict between classes in society from which comes the state."\(^4\)

One of the best-known exponents of the economic interpretation of history is Engels. He summarizes his view in this statement: "that view of the course of history which seeks the ultimate cause and the great moving power of all important historic events in the economic development of society, in the changes in the modes of production and exchange, in the consequent division of society into classes against one another."\(^5\) Engels along with Karl Marx adopted the economic interpretation of history and combined it with the teaching of the German philosopher Hegel to form the doctrine of dialectical materialism. They believed that historical progress occurred by means of an economic thesis that developed in opposition to an economic antithesis. The thesis and the antithesis eventually combine into a synthesis which becomes the thesis for the next cycle. For example, they believed that in the medieval times the landlord (the thesis) was opposed to the merchant (the antithesis) and that these eventually combined to form bourgeois society (the synthesis). The bourgeois society then becomes the thesis which is opposed by the proletariat, the antithesis, and these combine to produce communism, the synthesis.\(^6\)

Although most historians in this country reject the system of Engels and Marx, they do place a great deal of emphasis on an economic interpretation of history. While it is true that one cannot understand the history of the ancient civilizations of Mesopotamia without recognizing the struggle between those that had the fertile land and those that did not, or the history of the United States in the last century without recognizing the struggle between the employer and the employee in the rise of the labor unions, this is not and cannot be the only or even the major factor in the understanding of history. The explanation of history as the operation of economic forces is the attempt of unbelieving man to deny the operation of the Providence of God.

A third view of history that is held by some historians is the "great men" theory. This view holds that history is mainly shaped by a few men who have had more influence or ability than the rest of mankind. This view is expressed by Carlyle, "the history of what man has accomplished in this world is at bottom the history of great men who have worked there."\(^7\) The study of history, in this view, is primarily the study of the biographies of the most influential men. They are believed to be the makers and shapers of history. France today is the work of men like Rousseau or Napoleon and the history of the United States is shaped by men like Washington, Jefferson, and Lincoln.

In recent years this idea has resolved itself into a discussion of whether social situations produce the man who is the embodiment of the situation or whether the man determines the character of the situation. The majority are on the side of those that emphasize the social situation.

From the point of view of a Christian philosophy of history this discussion is entirely meaningless. That men have a part to play in the history of the world, we accept as obvious; that they are ultimate makers and shapers of the history of the world, we deny. We can no more say that men are the makers of history than we can say that the hammer and saw are the
IV. "Spiritual" Interpretations of History

Some philosophers of history, while recognizing that geography, economics, and "great men" are important in history, maintain that these are secondary factors and posit some kind of "spiritual" force in history. An example of this kind of idea is that of the philosopher Hegel, whose famous dialectic became the basis for Marxism. While Marx taught that the basis of history is the economic conflict between social classes, Hegel taught that the basic conflict was one of ideas. He believed that the important force in history was something that he called the World Spirit. History, according to him, was the record of the struggle of the absolute idea to impose itself upon the world scene. The struggle of pros and cons would ultimately result in a world that was the embodiment of divine reason. The dominating principle in history becomes an abstract idea, the social mind, the Weltgeist.

While the system of Hegel is pretty much ignored today, many historians do teach some kind of "idealism". "History is...the mass of men and women, like ourselves seeking...to realize in the midst of the process from impersonal to the personal, their own spiritual capacities in the adventure, not always simple or easy, of actual living."8 Others may see in history the struggle for democracy, the struggle to realize the importance of the individual, or the struggle for human "rights". All of these teachings of "idealism" ignore the work of God in history and the principles taught in the Word of God.

Some secular writers profess to find "spiritual" forces in history. To some these "spiritual" forces are the beliefs—any beliefs—that the people of a particular civilization may hold. "I believe that the main factors in the political and economic development of any society are its general view of life and system of values."9 To others, these spiritual forces are in the creative human personality. "The spiritual interpretation of history, accordingly, must be found in the discovery of spiritual forces cooperating with geographic and economic to produce a general tendency toward conditions which are truly personal. And these conditions will not be found in generalizations concerning metaphysical entities such as the older psychologists assumed, but in the activities of worthwhile individuals finding self-expression in social relations for the ever more complete subjection of physical nature to human welfare."10 We must recognize that these references to "spiritual" forces in history are humanistic and ungodly. While speaking of a spiritual force in history, these writers explicitly deny the existence of God and the work of God in history.

V. The Goal of History

Although history is primarily concerned with the past, most historians like to use history as a means of seeing into the future. They would like to find in the past some kind of goal for the future, or at least to see the direction in which history is moving. There are some who see in history a normative past (usually it is the "golden age" of Greece) which they strive to recreate in the future. Most people today, however, believe in a natural law of inevitable progression. (This is sometimes made conditional: if our civilization does not destroy itself.) The proponents of this idea point to the "progress" of mankind from the caveman to modern civilization and project this "progress" into the future. In the eighteenth century, when the idea of progress was first stated, it was believed that nature would inevitably promote this progress itself. Now it is generally believed that man, society, and government, have to work to secure this progress.

The goal of this progress varies with different philosophers and historians. For
the Marxist the goal of history is the ultimate triumph of the proletariat that will redeem the world and suppress all other classes. For others the goal of history is the establishment of democratic government in all nations, the establishment of a world-wide government, economic equality among all people, social equality among all people, self-realization of each individual, or peace—or all of these. One current textbook concludes in this way, "The poet Tennyson once wrote of a time when 'the war drum throbbed no longer and the battle flags were furled, in the Parliament of Man and the Federation of the World.' Can we make such a vision a reality?"11

Some so-called Christian writers are also carried away by this vision of a brighter future. They speak of a universal kingdom based on a common brotherhood of man and a universal fatherhood of God. Others see a time when the whole world will be dominated by the Church. A few even look for a time when all men will serve God and the Kingdom of God will be established upon earth. They feel that the business of the Christian is to extend his influence through all worldly institutions and to strive to bring all men to Christ. We only need to say one thing about these beliefs concerned with the goal of history: the Word of God does not teach any such thing. In fact, the Word of God teaches quite the opposite.

This, then, is the way that the worldly historians have attempted to answer the basic questions of history. They all agree that the origins of history lie in the dim past when man evolved from some lower form of life. They see the major causes of history in many different factors: economic, geographic, biographical, philosophical, or "spiritual". Some emphasize one factor to the near exclusion of all others, while others prefer a multiple hypothesis which emphasizes one or the other in different events. Nearly all see the goal of history in an inevitable progression to some future time when the evils of the present will disappear in the arrival of a better world.

VI. Principles of a Christian Philosophy of History

The Christian philosophy of history is based upon the following principles:

1. "History is the temporal revelation of the counsel of God with respect to all things beginning with creation and ending with the realization of God's purpose in the new creation."12 God's counsel is eternal and unchangeable; it is dependent only upon His own sovereign will. It alone determines all the events of history. "Remember the former things of old: for I am God, and there is none else; I am God, and there is none like me, declaring the end from the beginning, and from ancient times the things that are not yet done, saying, My counsel shall stand, and I will do all my pleasure." (Isa. 46:9, 10) 13

This leads to the following conclusions:

a. History is a unity. Each element in the study of history is understandable only in terms of the whole. There are no random or irrelevant events.

b. The events of history can be interpreted only in terms of God's counsel which transcends history. History is not self-explanatory. It can be interpreted only by means of the Word of God, for in His Word God has revealed His counsel.

2. God controls and directs the affairs of men by His Providence. "We believe that the same God, after He had created all things, did not forsake them, or give them up to fortune or chance, so that nothing happens in this world without His appointment..."14

a. Geographic, economic, and social factors, as well as men, are the means that God uses, through His Providence, to control and
direct the events of history.

b. This is not to say that the understanding of geographic, economic, and social factors and of the men on history is unimportant. Nor do we intend to say that history is unpredictable. God usually accomplishes His purpose through earthly means. Further, God limits Himself to certain laws in His rule over the earth. For example, the means that God used to bring about the fall of the Roman Empire included economic difficulties, social disintegration, and foolish and wicked policies of its rulers. Also, if a nation today follows unwise fiscal policies, we can reasonably expect that nation to decline.

3. The history of mankind is the story of active opposition to God. When man fell in the first disobedience, he lost the image of God, i.e. he lost the ability to know God and to serve him in righteousness and holiness. As the image-bearer of God he retains his rational and moral faculties but he uses these faculties in active and implacable opposition to God. Rom. 1:18-23.

a. The idea that natural man is searching for God is a delusion that perverts the understanding of history.

b. The difference between the seed of the woman and the seed of the serpent begins at the Fall and continues throughout all of history. The difference between them is an absolute difference. As history develops the character of this difference becomes more distinct.

c. There is a constant development of sin throughout history. This development of sin is closely related to the understanding of the creation and the subjugation of its powers. As man learns to understand the creation and to use its powers, his ability to commit sin increased.

4. The purpose of God in history is to glorify Himself. God has chosen to glorify Himself in the creation of a chosen people to whom He displays His power, His wisdom, His mercy, His justice, and His glory so that they in turn may praise Him. He does this in displaying the wonder of creation, in demonstrating His absolute control over all the affairs of men, and above all in Christ who bridges the infinite chasm that lies between the perfection of the kingdom of heaven and the evils of mankind in a cursed creation.

a. The peculiar paradox of history lies in the fact that the goal of history is accomplished only when history is finished.

b. This goal is accomplished by the infinite power of God, Who uses man as His instruments.

c. Clearly the history of the Church is of the greatest importance. The history of the Church includes the gathering of God's people from all nations, the growth of knowledge and understanding of things pertaining to God and the Kingdom of Heaven, and an increased distinction between the Church and the world. All nations, cultures, and events contribute to the development of God's Church. "But now thus saith the Lord that created thee, O Jacob, and he that formed thee, O Israel. Fear not: for I have redeemed thee, I have called thee by thy name: thou art mine...For I am the Lord thy God, the Holy One of Israel, thy Savior: I gave Egypt for thy ransom, Ethiopia and Seba for thee. Since thou wast precious in my sight, thou hast been honourable, and I have loved thee: therefore will I give men for thee, and people for thy life. Fear not: for I am with thee: I will bring thy
seed from the east, and gather thee from the west... Even every one that is called by my name: for I have created him for my glory, I have formed him; yea, I have made him.'''15

5. God carries out His purpose in history through Christ. The heavens and the earth were created by God through Christ. "All things were made by him; and without him was not anything made that was made." All of ancient history looks forward to the incarnation of Christ, and all history since His coming looks forward to His return. Throughout all of history God reveals Himself through Christ. Finally, the goal of history is fulfilled in the new creation when the whole earth is renewed in Christ, and the whole Church is glorified with Him. "That in the dispensation of the fulness of times he might gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven, and which are on earth; even in him: in whom also we have obtained an inheritance, being predestinated according to the purpose of him who worketh all things after the counsel of his own will: That we should be to the praise of his glory...''16

VII. Patterns in History

Now with these principles in mind, let's look at the history of mankind briefly and point out a few of the important patterns that the Christian historian must see in history.

Immediately after the Fall God spoke to the serpent. "And I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed..." Here the lines of the battle of history are drawn. This is the battle between Israel and the nations, between the Church and the world, between Christ and the Antichrist. The lines are drawn and the battle is joined, which continues without truce or armistice to the end of time. Sometimes it is a physical battle displayed in the attacks of the heathen nations against Israel, in the persecutions of the early church, and in the horrors of the Inquisition. Often it is an ideological battle of the church against idol worship, Arianism, Mariolatry, Deism, skepticism, or modernism. The church and the world are irreconcilably opposed to each other. As history progresses, the struggle becomes greater and the differences stand out more clearly.

The confusion of tongues at the Tower of Babel is another event that sets the pattern for history. As a result of this event we find throughout history not only lingual differences but also cultural competition, racial animosity, and political rivalry. These produce division in the forces of the Antichrist. History records the gradual closing of that breach. When this breach is finally healed, the kingdom of the Antichrist can begin, and the final assault upon the Church can also begin. Many events in history point to the healing of the breach of Babel: the Roman Empire, the political-religious unity imposed by the Roman Catholic Church in the Middle Ages, the imperialism of the modern national states, and the more recent movement toward political, cultural, and economic amalgamation.

Another pattern that we can see in history is the increase in knowledge about God and about the requirements that He makes of us. In the Old Testament we can see how God gradually revealed more about Himself, about His covenant, and about the Christ whom He had promised. The prophets played a large part in the increase of that knowledge especially in interpreting for the people the meaning of events as they happened. But in the time since the coming of Christ the church continues to grow in knowledge. There is the growth of doctrine in the writings of Christian theologians and in the confessions of the church. There is a growth in knowledge about the world through
which we may see more clearly the power and the wisdom of God. An interesting and significant fact about the growth of knowledge and doctrine in the Church is that they always grow as a reaction against heresy and worldly ideologies. For example, we can see that our knowledge of the Trinity was increased as a result of the Arian heresy. The study of the rise of capitalism results in a better understanding of our position in the world as citizens of the Kingdom of Heaven.

We can see in history the spread of the preaching of the gospel to all nations. We are told that before the end of time the gospel will be preached to all nations. The increase in scientific knowledge to improve communications contributes to this spread of the gospel. Through this spread of the preaching of the gospel God gathers His people from all nations. We know that by the end of time God will have saved every one of His elect people.

Throughout history there is a continuous development of secular culture. Man finds out more and more of the facts about the creation and about the uses of the materials of the creation. He is able gradually to put in subjection the forces of creation. Natural man uses this knowledge to deny God and to glorify man, and he uses the forces of nature to promote evil. The sin of man is in the interpretation and use of the facts that he discovers.

We find from a study of history in the light of the Scriptures that peoples and nations commit a fundamental sin when they begin to claim their own self-sufficiency, when they say that the things that they have accomplished are the works of their own hands; and when they claim themselves to have the key that will solve the problem of man's inhumanity to man. The basic sin of mankind is, in one word, pride. "Therefore thus saith the Lord God: Because thou hast lifted up thyself in height, and he hath shot up his top among the thick boughs, and his heart is lifted up in his height; I have therefore delivered him into the hand of the mighty one of the heathen; he shall surely deal with him: I have driven him out for his wickedness." 17

These observations are, of course, very general and certainly not exhaustive of all of the patterns of development to be found in history. They are included in order to give a few brief glimpses into a field that needs and deserves a great deal more study than it has received among Christians in the past.

VIII. Concluding Remarks:

It must be remembered that the study of the Word of God is basic to a proper interpretation of history. The church of the Old Testament had a tremendous feeling for the importance of history. They were constantly admonished to tell their children about the things that God had done in the past. The principles of the Old Testament, however, with its multiple corollaries, as found throughout the Scriptures, is considered to be universal, not merely Jewish or Christian. Its precepts apply to everyone in all situations and, hence, are a sure basis for judging men, their ideas, and the institutions they create. It supplies the Christian historian with a basis for judging civilizations such as that of the Incas of Peru, which never made contact with the Hebrew-Christian tradition, as well as for judging the political, economic, and
religious practices of Western European civilization, which is generally called Christian, though perhaps dishonoring the name.

"When a Christian historian stands on this moral Sinai, he likewise sees beyond the traditions of his own country, of his own racial group, or of what is called the Christian world. He speaks, rather, from the perspective of the Kingdom of God. He recognizes that his moral judgments must fall equally on Augustine's Rome, on Calvin's Geneva, and on his own United States or Canada. He recognizes that even though God seems silent on the particular form of government, of society, or of the economic system He requires, each must be judged by his moral law, and none can be equated with the Kingdom of God." 18

Note that the perspective of the Christian historian is the perspective of the Kingdom of God. Let us by all means avoid the shallow chauvinism of so many current history textbooks. Our perspective for understanding, for interpretation, and for judgment must be that of the eternal kingdom of God.

Let us also remember that many things remain to be revealed to us only in the world to come. Sometimes we feel as that wisest of all men did, "Man's goings are of the Lord; how can a man then understand his own way?" (Prov. 20:24)

FOOTNOTES

1 Smith, Muzzey, Lloyd, World History, Ginn & Co., 1955
3 The persons named and opinions expressed in this paragraph are described by Mathews, The Spiritual Interpretation of History, Harvard University Press, 1917, pp. 12-16.
4 ibid page 17
5 Engels, Socialism, Utopian and Scientific, p. 19.
6 For a discussion of this point see

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THE DEVELOPMENT OF SIN IN
THE PREDILUVIAN WORLD

by Peter Vander Schaaf

I. Introduction
A. Why study the development of sin?

We are assured in Holy Scripture that the people of God are more than conquerers in Christ. This means not simply that we have the victory over sin, the Devil, and all his forces, but also that all these must serve the salvation of Christ's Church. This is because Christ is from eternity the only begotten Son of God. God's people, the Church, are from eternity fellow heirs with Christ in the New Heavens and the New Earth. Therefore God so orders all of history that all things, sin and the devil included, work together to bring about the salvation of the Church of Christ. All things work together to bring Christ and His people into their inheritance.

It often does not seem this way. It often seems as though the Devil and sin reign supreme with nothing at all to oppose them. During these times the Church seems small and insignificant. The Word of God is laughed at and scorned as foolishness. But however it may seem, God is always supreme in His creation. God always has Christ and His Church first in His eternal counsel. He always holds sin and Satan in subjection to them.

Why then study a part of the world's history from the point of view of the development of sin? There are a couple of good reasons. First, the study of what man has done in God's creation is the study of sin as it is manifested in man's deeds and thoughts. It is important for the child of God to understand how sin manifests itself as natural man develops worldly culture, as he tries to put God out of his mind in order to serve the creature instead of the Creator. Second, it is essential that the child of God understand how sin is used by God to save His people. Sin, as it manifests itself in the world and in God's people themselves, forces the
child of God to depend completely on his Heavenly Father. The elect sinner is led to depend on God for his salvation and for his material, physical, and spiritual wellbeing. Furthermore, sin brings down the just judgment of God on the ungodly. By means of this judgment, the unregenerate world is destroyed and the Church of Christ delivered.

B. Why study the prediluvian world?

The era that began with the creation of Adam and ended with the flood was the first age of man. In it, the pattern was set for the rest of history. God manifests His covenant faithfulness for His people over against the sinful world that develops its civilization to high levels of knowledge and power in hatred of God and of His Church. The world will develop in sin to the point where the cup of iniquity is full, and God's people cannot survive without deliverance. This deliverance comes in the form of God's righteous judgment which destroys the wicked and brings salvation for the righteous.

II. Important characteristics of the development of sin before the flood

A. Sin developed very rapidly.

In the first generation from Adam, the line of the serpent manifested itself in Cain who killed his righteous brother Abel. This was not simply a family feud that involved murder, but was the beginning of the war between the seed of Satan and the Seed of the woman. In Cain the line of sin first lifted its proud fist against God and revealed its hatred for the sons of God. This rebellion culminated in only five generations in the brazen and proud Lamech, who praised himself for the greatness of his sin.

The proud and rebellious line of the serpent needed only about 1660 years, seven generations, to develop to the point where God could allow it to sin no more. During that time it reached the depths of lawlessness, violence, pride, and hatred for the Word of God preached by such saints as Enoch and Noah.

A few reasons could be given for this rapid development of sin. The basic reason is reprobation. God decreed in eternity that the wicked should be so. Along with this, God gave the wicked over to a reprobate mind as they rejected the Word of God preached to them. This was true of Cain, of Lamech, a contemporary of righteous Enoch, and of the contemporaries of Noah who refused to heed the preacher of righteousness, and so died in the flood.

There were also several natural causes. 1) The longevity of prediluvian man allowed him over 900 years to develop his talents and the natural bent of his nature. 2) The creativity and productivity that characterized Cain's line allowed men to increase in knowledge and thereby increase their capacity to sin. 3) The rapid increase in population in the later years of this period. (Gen. 6:1) The bent of man's nature to sin seems to vent itself more openly among large numbers. 4) The amalgamation of the nominal church with the world. (Gen. 6:2) The sons of God gave up their witness against the lawlessness of men. They noticed that the daughters of men were carnally beautiful, and so joined the rebellion of the line of Cain. This most certainly brought the prediluvian world to the point at which its cup of iniquity was full.

"...the sons of God saw the daughters of men that they were fair: and they took them wives of all which they chose. And the Lord said, My spirit shall not always strive with man, for that he also is flesh: yet his days shall be an hundred and twenty years.” (Gen. 6:2-3)

B. The seed of the serpent developed organically in the line of Cain. This line was characterized by willing and conscious pride, hatred of God, rebellion, violence,
and lawlessness.

Chapters 4 and 5 of Genesis show the lines of Cain and Seth up to the time of the flood. These two lines represented and embodied the thesis and antithesis, the seed of Satan and the seed of the woman, the wicked and the righteous, the war that could only be won on the cross. There could be no communion between the two lines because they were opposed to each other by the very principles that motivated them.

The sins that characterized Cain's line began with Cain himself. Cain showed his pride in his disdain for the sacrifice that the Lord had taught to Adam and Eve—the sacrifice of the lamb's blood by which atonement was made. He substituted his own sacrifice, an offering of the works of his own hands, and thereby tried to make himself acceptable to God on the basis of his own merit. He revealed his rebellion and lawlessness by refusing to repent of his sin and by killing Abel. Cain hated God because He would not accept him as just on his own merits. He hated Abel because he saw in Abel that righteousness which he could not earn himself.

The wickedness of Cain's line increased steadily and was epitomized in Lamech, who exalted himself because he was able to perform much greater sin than Cain. By the time of the flood the children of men were marrying and giving in marriage in complete disregard of God and His law. They refused to heed God's Word as it was preached by Noah, and it is probable that they violently persecuted the people of God (Heb. 11:15). Cain and his line did not accidently slip into sin. They willfully rebelled against God and sought to put Him out of their thoughts.

C. The line of Cain developed worldly culture. This culture represented the attempt of the world to gain security and peace in this life, to establish a kingdom of this world.

Cain and his line spurned the Kingdom of God and the peace which comes in communion with God in Christ. They sought instead to gain for themselves security, wealth, and the physical comforts of this life, and thereby to escape the curse of God for their sin.

Cain was cursed by God so that the earth would not yield to him its increase. He was to be a fugitive and vagabond on the earth. In defiance of this curse, Cain built a city in the land of Nod. (That is, the land of wandering. Implied in the name was the wandering, the lack of peace for the person who had rebelled against God.) Just as cities today represent the military and economic power of man, so Cain's city represented his attempt to gain security, to increase his power, to establish himself permanently over against God. That this last point is true is seen in the fact that Cain named his city after his son Enoch. Cain wanted to establish the name of his line, the name of his generations, forever.

The creative and productive genius of Cain's line was epitomized in the three sons of Lamech. These were Jabal, Jubal and Tubal-cain. Jabal, as "the father of those who dwell in tents, and of such as have cattle," was the natural and spiritual father of those who seek the riches of this world. As cattle represented wealth in ancient times, Jabal was the father of those who are rich according to the world. Jubal, "the father of all such as handle the harp and organ," was the father of artists, those who express in music, painting, etc. the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eye, and the pride of life. Tubal-cain, the instructor of every artificer of brass and iron," represented man's inventive genius, the ability of man to develop and subject the powers of nature to his own purpose. Together, the sons of Lamech represent the highest level of achievement for natural man. In Jabal, Jubal, and Tubal-cain natural man subjugates and orders creation to make for himself a material heaven on earth. In
such an earthly kingdom man hopes to vent the desires of his depraved nature, and thereby achieve happiness and peace outside of Christ.

Genesis 4 and 6 give us a clear picture of the culture that the line of the serpent had developed by the time of the flood. This culture was characterized by a yearning for the material things of this world (Jabal, Jubal, and Tubal-cain). It exalted violence, pride, and rebellion against God (Lamech). It glorified carnal sensuality. (The names of Lamech's wives and daughter suggest physical attraction. Adah means "the adorned." Zillah means "the shady" referring to the eyes, or the color of the skin or of the hair. Naamah means "the pleasant" or "lovely.") It encouraged the profligate, carnal existence that takes no thought of God (Gen. 6:5).

The line of Seth was everything that the line of Cain was not. It was characterized by godliness and faith. It included the pilgrims and strangers upon the earth who looked for a heavenly kingdom, the city that has foundations, whose builder and maker is God. The line of Seth did not produce the inventive geniuses that Cain's line did. The saints of God were not stupid, but it was true then as it is now that the great, the powerful, the "giants on the earth" were not found within the Church of Christ. The Church looked for its peace and comfort not in the material things of this life but in the Father of mercies.

D. Sin developed to the point at which it appeared that it would have the victory. At that point God revealed His faithfulness by sending judgment on the wicked for their sin. By means of this judgement the people of God were delivered.

The prediluvian world reached the point at which its cup of iniquity was full. This means that the world of that era could sin no more. God would no longer strive with that world. That means that He would no longer send His Word to it, demanding repentance. The people of God could not continue in that world. God had so ordered events that, from a natural point of view, the Church had reached impossible straits.

God sent the flood to punish the wicked world for its sin and to deliver His people. God's Church was, then, saved through judgment which reveals God's just wrath with the ungodly but also His covenant faithfulness for His people.

III. Conclusion - Sin served God's purpose, which He has in Christ, to save His Church and glorify Himself.

Over against the sin of Cain and the seed of the serpent, God revealed Himself as the Holy One. In His Word preached by His saints and in His just judgment, the Lord showed Himself to be a righteous God who could not tolerate iniquity.

God used sin to teach the Church to depend on Him for its deliverance. As sin developed in the prediluvian world, the enticements of the flesh must have become increasingly strong for the true sons of God. Because of persecution the very lives of the believers were threatened. The people of God had to learn that they depended on God alone for their salvation, for their spiritual deliverance, and even for their continued earthly existence. Sin would have destroyed the Church had not God sent His gracious deliverance in the form of the flood. Sin, then, was used by God to give occasion for the exercise of His just judgment and the manifestation of His covenant faithfulness toward His people.

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ORDERLINESS

by Miss W. Koole

One of the subjects in our school curriculum is math — or arithmetic as it was designated when I laboriously learned to add, subtract, multiply and divide. It was never my favorite subject although I experienced very little difficulty in mastering the various procedures. But it was not until the "new" math was introduced with its greater emphasis on an understanding of the structure of the number system, that mathematics began to intrigue me. I could see now something of the beauty and order of this facet of God’s creation — and to realize anew how this beauty and order is revelatory of God Himself. This is something that every God-fearing teacher hopes to show to the students.

Disorderliness leading to anarchy seems to be such a common thing today in many homes and schools, and even in society in general. Therefore it is fitting to remind ourselves that one of the attributes of God is order. We say He is a God of perfect order. In a creaturely fashion some people are endowed at birth with a sense of orderliness, and all through their lives their activities manifest this. Most of us have to be taught to develop and strengthen this virtue.

When a teacher in the classroom activities shows a great lack of orderliness, the pupils become progressively confused, frustrated, and disorderly. Therefore one of the important behind-the-scenes aspects of teaching is thorough preparation and organization. This takes much time and effort, but it is vital for effective teaching. One is cautioned though not to be so highly structured that spontaneity and a casual relaxed method may never characterize the teaching — particularly in the lower grades.

What about our homes? Because so much of the actual day to day routine depends upon the mother, she is forced to develop some organizational structure, or living would be chaotic. The measure of her success will surely influence the attitude and behavior of her children. The problem however reveals itself when the parents have to train the child to be orderly and self-disciplined. It is the rare child that becomes self-disciplined without continual and consistent guidance and admonition. That is the fatiguing part — for teachers also. But I believe that both parents and teachers must work together to instill such orderliness in the children under their care. God Himself tells us in His Holy Word: “Let all things be done decently and in order.” I Cor. 14:40

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The following is a list of the manuals for teachers that have been produced by teachers at summer workshops sponsored by the Federation of Protestant Reformed Christian Schools. A few copies of each of these are available.

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Quote from *Biblical Perspectives in the Social Sciences*,

"... I feel that the Biblical position on the question of which economic system is best is not defined. This is understandable, it seems to me, because the Bible is concerned with the ethics of living before God. In any system of economics, the Christian has the responsibility to live righteously, keeping God’s commandments in every sphere of life. This means that it is equally important to be righteous before God in communist Russia as it is in a completely free economic system."

"Comparing Economic Systems in the Light of Scripture"

by Lamm Lubbers
Published semi-annually by the
Protestant Reformed Teachers' Institute.