

 **CHRISTIAN PERSPECTIVES**

# **FOUNDATIONS OF CHRISTIAN EDUCATION**

*Addresses to Christian Teachers*

**LOUIS BERKHOF  
CORNELIUS VAN TIL**

**EDITED BY DENNIS E. JOHNSON**

**FOUNDATIONS OF  
CHRISTIAN EDUCATION**

**ADDRESSES TO CHRISTIAN TEACHERS**

BY  
LOUIS BERKHOF  
AND  
CORNELIUS VAN TIL

EDITED BY  
DENNIS E. JOHNSON

**Presbyterian and Reformed Publishing Company  
Phillipsburg, New Jersey**

These addresses were originally part of a larger volume,  
*Fundamentals in Christian Education: Theory and Practice*,  
edited by Cornelius Jaarsma, published in 1953 by William B. Eerdmans.

This collection reprinted in 1990 by Presbyterian and Reformed Publishing Company.

Manufactured in the United States of America.

Set in Palatino by Olive Tree Graphics.

### Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data

Berkhof, Louis, 1873–1957.

Foundations of Christian education: addresses to Christian teachers/ by Louis  
Berkhof and Cornelius Van Til; edited by Dennis E. Johnson.

p. cm.

"These addresses were originally part of a larger volume, *Fundamentals in  
Christian Education: Theory and Practice*, edited by Cornelius Jaarsma, published  
in 1953 by William B. Eerdmans"—T. P. verso.

ISBN-10: 0-87552-114-2

ISBN-13: 978-0-87552-114-5

1. Education (Christian theology) 2. Christian education—Philosophy.  
3. Reformed Church—Doctrines. 4. Reformed Church—Education. I. Van Til,  
Cornelius, 1895–1987. II. Johnson, Dennis E. (Dennis Edward) III. Title.

BT738.17.B47 1989

268'.85—dc20

89-39157

CIP

# CONTENTS

<b>Editor's Preface</b>	v
<b>PART ONE: THE NECESSITY AND DISTINCTIVENESS OF CHRISTIAN EDUCATION IN REFORMED PERSPECTIVE</b>	1
1. Antitheses in Education <i>Cornelius Van Til</i>	3
2. Being Reformed in Our Attitude Toward the Christian School <i>Louis Berkhof</i>	25
<b>PART TWO: THE DOCTRINAL FOUNDATIONS OF CHRISTIAN EDUCATION</b>	41
3. Creation: The Education of Man— A Divinely Ordained Need <i>Cornelius Van Til</i>	43
4. Covenant: The Covenant of Grace and Its Significance for Christian Education <i>Louis Berkhof</i>	65
5. Faith: Faith and Our Program <i>Cornelius Van Til</i>	82
6. Authority: The Christian School and Authority <i>Louis Berkhof</i>	102
7. Eternal Life: The Full-orbed Life <i>Cornelius Van Til</i>	116
<b>Notes</b>	131



## EDITOR'S PREFACE

The essays contained in this book were originally addresses delivered to national conventions of the National Union of Christian Schools (now Christian Schools International). They first appeared in print as part of a much larger collection entitled *Fundamentals in Christian Education: Theory and Practice* and edited by Cornelius Jaarsma, then professor of education at Calvin College (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans, 1953).

When these addresses were delivered in the 1920s and 1930s, non-parochial (i.e., non-Roman Catholic or non-Lutheran) Christian day schools were a rare phenomenon on the American scene, and it would be no understatement to observe that most evangelical Christians, including many in churches confessing Reformed theology, saw little need to challenge the adequacy of state-controlled public education. It is not surprising, then, that we hear from these authors a tone that is both polemical and encouraging: *polemical*, because the teachers and supporters involved in Christian schools needed then (as we need now) to be reminded constantly that these schools—such costly alternatives in time, money, and energy in comparison to the tax-supported public school down the street—are in fact part of the great spiritual warfare between Christ and Satan, the City of God and the City of Man; and *encouraging*, because those committed to Christian schools needed then (as we need now, but perhaps even more so in those early days) the reassurance that, despite the apparent weakness of their cause in terms of numbers, the Lord of hosts would honor his people's humble efforts, in dependence on his grace, to nurture their children in the Lord's instruction—through all the breadth of the created order, through every moment of human history, experience, and thought.

The Christian school movement in the United States and Canada has "grown up" significantly in the half-century since these words were first

spoken. The polemical points so insightfully made by Van Til and Berkhof at that time have become self-evident to a wider circle of Bible-believing Christians as the humanistic world view underlying governmentally sponsored education has become more and more overt. One might even dare to hope that more Christians are recognizing that there is in fact no neutral ground, in education or anywhere else; that nothing can be taught apart from *some* religious orientation, whether it be Christianity, Hinduism, secular humanism, Marxism, or some other.

To be sure, some parents place their children in Christian schools in the hope of avoiding the world's obvious temptations: drugs, premarital sex and the resulting spread of teen pregnancy and life-threatening disease, violence and other crime. But Van Til and Berkhof point us to a deeper rationale for Christian schools, a rationale that plunges to the root of the issue. For the superficial fruit that so alarms the observer of the public high school must be traced to its root in a world view that takes man as the measure of all things. The purpose for the Christian school is not to facilitate flight from surface symptoms but to counteract the source of the infection that attacks the educational system, as it does our society generally, from within.

These essays, then, deal with the "why" of Christian education. Questions of "how"—the "practical" questions, as we so often think of them—are touched on only in passing. Methodological questions are important, and essays by others in Professor Jaarsma's original collection addressed such issues. But it is also essential, particularly as Christian education benefits from increasing sophistication and technological support, to keep clearly focused on the *purpose* of Christian day school education. Only as we have clarity regarding what our work in Christian education is to *be* and to *accomplish* can we select the methods appropriate to those ends. The questions addressed by Van Til and Berkhof are, then, the most practical ones of all; without clear answers here, we can go nowhere.

There are two reasons for the selection of these essays out of the larger collection, *Fundamentals in Christian Education*, for republication at this time. In the first place the suggestion came from Dr. Van Til himself during the final year of his life. It was, in fact, while the essays were in the process of editing for republication that Dr. Van Til was ushered into the glorious presence of his Lord Jesus Christ on April 17, 1987. Although most well known as professor of apologetics at Westminster Theological Seminary and for his pioneering work in developing a Reformed apologetic that challenges non-Christian thought at its presuppositional foundation, Van Til maintained a lifelong concern for the lower levels of

Christian education. In 1942 he was one of the founders of Philadelphia-Montgomery Christian Academy, which now has over 700 students on campuses in three communities near Philadelphia. The dates of the addresses that follow (1930-33) demonstrate Van Til's commitment to Christian education: in those first years of his teaching at Westminster he traveled annually to the Midwest (Michigan, Illinois, Iowa) to bring encouragement and challenge to Christian school teachers. Moreover, even in his last hospitalization Dr. Van Til asked a Christian friend to check on the status of the essays' preparation for republication. In a note to the editor this friend later observed, "I suppose the republication of those articles could be considered [Van Til's] last request."

The second reason for the republication of these essays is the need for those in the Christian school (and Christian home school) movement to hear afresh the words of encouragement and challenge from these prophetic voices of the recent past. The all-too-visible decay in governmentally controlled education and the corresponding expansion of private education, including Christian and home schools, may tempt us to compare systems primarily in terms of measurable externals: enrollment figures, standardized test scores, college admissions; student patriotism, moral responsibility, and community leadership. But the real difference between Christian schools and all other educational systems, public or private, must be traced back to its source in two antithetical world views: on the one hand, the world view that takes the living God, Creator, Revealer, and Redeemer, as its starting point, listening dependently to his revelation in Scripture, creation, and providence; and, on the other hand, the world view that, explicitly or implicitly, denies that the God of the Bible is the source of all reality and the measure of all truth. From these fundamental starting points all the surface characteristics that mark off Christian education from humanistic education flow (with varying degrees of consistency). Thus it is as important now, when Christian schools in North America appear to enjoy a bloom of success, as it was in the earlier decades of struggling survival to hear the basic issues exposed with clarity by Van Til and Berkhof.

Van Til and Berkhof were particularly qualified to clarify these foundational issues in Christian education. Van Til has been introduced briefly above. In his essays the reader will discern his profound grasp of the deep philosophical issues entailed in the day-to-day life of the Christian school. Louis Berkhof is best known for his landmark distillations of Christian doctrine: *Manual of Christian Doctrine* (1933), *Summary of Christian Doctrine* (1938), and *Systematic Theology* (1939). He taught systematic



theology and was president of Calvin Theological Seminary, and then he was president emeritus until his death in 1957. The reader will appreciate the clarity with which Berkhof relates the task of Christian education to the great truths of the Christian faith.

After working with these seven addresses, as they now stand as a unit apart from the other essays in *Fundamentals in Christian Education*, it has seemed to me that a rearrangement of them may help readers to enter into the issues Van Til and Berkhof are addressing. Jaarsma placed Van Til's "Antitheses in Education" in the conclusion of his collection, and it well sums up the issues with which we are concerned. But to my mind this essay, together with Berkhof's "Being Reformed in our Attitude to the Christian School," provides an invaluable *introduction* to this new collection, laying out clearly the rationale—no, the imperative—for Christian education. The other five essays all relate Christian education to one or another of the cardinal doctrines of the Christian faith, and they are ordered "systematically": creation, covenant, faith, authority (Berkhof's essay speaks of the implementation of the teacher's role as discipler and discipliner of students), and finally eschatology (Van Til's "The Full-Orbed Life" dramatically critiques the futility of humanism's attempts to formulate an ultimate educational goal/outcome and affirms the climax of sanctification and joy that is the Christian hope).

In the process of editing these essays for republication I have had the privilege of working from Dr. Van Til's own copy of *Fundamentals in Christian Education*, now in the collection of the Montgomery Library, Westminster Theological Seminary (Pennsylvania). A number of revisions or insertions in Van Til's essays therefore reflect his own handwritten marginal notes at points in which he would perhaps have modified or amplified his wording. Beyond these changes the editorial work on the text has been minimal, consisting in the reworking of certain difficult constructions and the addition of explanatory notes. The goal is not an academically precise "critical edition," but a book in which readers—Christian teachers, Christian parents, friends (and, yes, foes) of Christian education—can hear again the Lord's call to arms and faithfulness, delivered through these faithful servants of his.

Dennis E. Johnson  
Escondido, California

**PART ONE:**  
THE NECESSITY AND  
DISTINCTIVENESS OF  
CHRISTIAN EDUCATION  
IN REFORMED PERSPECTIVE



# 1

## ANTITHESES IN EDUCATION

CORNELIUS VAN TIL

The principles by which believers live are squarely opposed to the principles by which unbelievers live. This is true in the field of education as well as in the church. Accordingly we speak of antitheses in education. These antitheses cover the whole educational field. They cover first the field of educational philosophy. This is of basic significance, but is often overlooked. In the second place these antitheses appear in the field of what is to be taught, i.e., the curriculum. Finally these antitheses appear when we consider the child or the young person to be instructed. Under these three aspects we shall try to bring out the antitheses in educational philosophy.

Non-Christians believe that the universe has created God. They have a finite god. Christians believe that God has created the universe. They have a finite universe. Non-Christians therefore are not concerned with bringing the child face to face with God. They want to bring the child face to face with the universe. Non-Christian education is *Godless* education. What is of most importance to us in education, that which is absolutely indispensable to us, is left out entirely.

Godless education ignores or denies that man was created responsible to God. This implies that sin is not a transgression of God's law. Hence Christ did not need to die in our stead. Godless or nontheistic education is therefore also non- or anti-Christian education. Godless, non-Christian education naturally becomes humanistic, i.e., man-centered. If man does not need to live for God, he may live for himself. If then we want a God-centered and truly Christian education, we will have to break away completely from the educational philosophy that surrounds us.

Non-Christians believe that man is surrounded by an absolutely unknowable universe. Man is grasping in the dark, except for the little light that his own mind is radiating as a headlight in the mist. Christians believe that originally man lived in the light of the revelation of God and that in Christ as the fact-revelation and in Scripture as the Word-revelation, man is in principle restored to that true light of God.

Accordingly non-Christian education dashes first this way and then that under the delusion that it has pierced the darkness, or it stops altogether in utter despair. Often non-Christian educators do away with the idea of a definite aim or purpose in education altogether. They talk of "functional adjustment" to one's environment. But if man does not know the road and drives in the mist, why should he "step on the gas"? As Christians we *know* the *purpose* of education. We also *know* what should be the *content* of education. Finally we *know* that a definitely Christian *method* is to be used in the instruction of a definitely Christian content.

Non-Christians believe that insofar as man knows anything, he knows apart from God. Man's mind is not an electric bulb that needs a current if it is to show any light, but it is rather an oil lamp that carries its own supplies. Christians believe that everything is dark unless the current of God's revelation be turned on. We cannot even see any "facts" without this light. Non-Christian teachers will accordingly sometimes think they really have and know the "facts" and can teach the child all about them, and then again when they see that the "facts" are really in the dark they will give up in utter despair. Christian teachers know that not a single "fact" can really be known and therefore really be taught unless placed under the light of the revelation of God. Even the laws of arithmetic cannot be known otherwise.

We need to become more conscious of these basic distinctions. Unless we are conscious of them, we shall never have genuinely Christian schools. To be conscious of these distinctions does *not* mean that we must spend much more time on the direct teaching of religion than on teaching other matters. If we teach religion *indirectly*, everywhere and always, we may need less time to teach religion *directly*. To be conscious of these distinctions *does* mean that the plan of curriculum is to be God-centered. Man exists for God. But in the created universe other things exist for man. Hence in this sense the curriculum must be man-centered. Only thus can it become God-centered.

Non-Christians believe that the personality of the child can develop best if it is not placed face to face with God. Christians believe that the child's personality cannot develop at all unless it is placed face to face with God. Non-Christian education puts the child in a vacuum. In this vacuum the child is expected to grow. The result is that the child dies. Christian education alone really nurtures personality because it alone gives the child air and food.

Non-Christians believe that authority hurts the growth of the child. Christians believe that without authority a child cannot live at all.

Non-Christians do speak of the authority of the "expert," but that is not really authority. Christians want authority that is based upon the idea of God as man's Creator and of Christ as man's Redeemer.

Thus we see that the antithesis touches every phase of education. To try to enforce the idea of the antithesis at one point and to ignore it at others is to waste your energy and your money. We cannot afford this.

### *I. The Antithesis in Educational Philosophy*

The whole Christian church is based upon the antithesis idea. But, if anything, it is still more pointedly true of Christian instruction in particular than of Christianity in general that it is based upon the idea of the antithesis. Oh, yes, I know there are voices heard on every side that we must not always emphasize the negative and the destructive but that we must emphasize rather the positive and the constructive. We are told that such is far wiser in the end. Now we all wish to be positive and constructive. But in this world of sin no Christian individual and no Christian organization can be positive and constructive till *after* they have been negative and destructive. To deny or to ignore this fact is to deny or to ignore the fact of sin. For anyone who recognizes the fact of sin in its unadulterated biblical connotation of insult to God on the part of man under the leadership of the devil, antithesis is in the nature of the case basic to synthesis. He who seeks to bring good tidings and to publish peace, he who calls upon Judah to perform her feasts and pay her vows, is a false prophet unless he offers as a reason for his optimism the assurance that the "wicked one will no more pass through because he is utterly cut off." <sup>1</sup>

### *The Non-Christian Idea of God*

In seeking to bring out something of the antitheses in education we wish first of all to stress the fact that there is really only one antithesis. We may speak of a plurality of antitheses only if we keep in mind that all the differences in educational theory are reducible to a single issue, the question of a personal God.

Every educational program seeks to bring the growing personality that is to be educated into the best possible relation to its environment. But such a term as environment is in itself perfectly colorless. And so if we should say that education is "adjustment of the growing personality to its environment," such a definition would be quite without significance unless one would specify what one means by the environment to which the growing personality is to be adjusted. And when it comes to

the question of the meaning of the term "environment," it will be seen at once that the Christian theistic and the nontheistic theories of reality stand diametrically opposed to one another. The former affirms that the environment to which human personality is to be adjusted is ultimately personal, while the latter denies it.

It is true that there are plenty of nontheistic theories of reality which speak of superhuman personality or personalities. But this does not make their views *ultimately personalistic*. No theory of reality can properly be called "personalistic" unless it thinks of God as an absolute personality. It is quite possible and quite common to speak of a personal God and yet not to think of him as absolute. Such a monotheism is not theism in the proper sense of the term any more than an outspoken polytheism is. It is clear that, if the god or gods to whom the child is to be adjusted must themselves be adjusted to a fate or a universe or a reality that is beyond or independent of them, in that case we may just as well look beyond such intermediaries and say that the child must be adjusted to this fate or universe or reality or whatever else we may choose to call that which we think of as most ultimate.

Now it seems to me to be incontrovertible that the educational philosophy of today presupposes an ultimately impersonal and thus antitheistic environment to which the child is to be adjusted. If one searches the pages of modern speculative thought, one may find here and there statements about belief in absolute truth and in absolute verities; and these may then be identified with the term "God" so that men may even speak of God as absolute. But when men speak thus they speak metaphorically. The "God" of modern philosophy is at most an impersonation of certain ideals that men have set for themselves and of which they are ultimately themselves the judges. Accordingly a metaphorical God is for all practical purposes a finite God.

It is to this universe, this reality, then, that the child must be adjusted, according to current educational philosophy; and it is this adjustment that constitutes his education. It follows that we have not grasped the depth of the educational antitheses until we have traced them back to this absolutely determinative antithesis between an ultimately personal and an ultimately impersonal surrounding. And no more basic difference is thinkable. The whole of the educational program built upon an impersonal background must be diametrically opposed to an educational program built upon a personal foundation. We shall seek to bring out something of this below. Suffice it for the moment to call attention to the fact that, for better or worse, every Christian educator should come to

grips with this point. And anyone who comes to grips with it at all will sense the impossibility of thinking of Christian education as being ninety or sixty or thirty or ten percent like other education, the only difference being that Christian education adds certain elements or emphasizes certain elements that secular education neglects. When viewed from this absolute standpoint Christian education is not even a fraction of one percent like public education. The different conceptions of God that underlie the two educational theories cover every point on the whole front and cover them before and behind, without and within.

At this point I may interject that when I thus emphasize the absolute antithesis, I am not denying or even for a moment forgetting the doctrine of common grace. That doctrine does not militate against the doctrine of the absolute antithesis, but here as elsewhere confirms it. Common grace does not overlook ultimate differences. Nor does it, when correctly understood, in any way tone down those ultimate differences. On the contrary, common grace helps to point out that things which look alike are not ultimately alike. Common grace points specifically to the fact that similarities between the people of God and the people of this world are but proximate similarities and that these proximate similarities play before the background of ultimate differences. If people do not believe in common grace or do not know what it means, they are likely to raise proximate similarities to ultimate similarities or to raise proximate differences to ultimate differences with the result that the absolute differences are toned down. It is this which has often taken place in non-Reformed churches. There it has been thought that religion is a condiment that may be added to the otherwise neutral territories of life. Because they did not understand the doctrine of common grace these churches took it for granted that no ultimate difference could be hidden behind the statement of a Christian that two times two are four and a statement of a non-Christian that two times two are four.

Now the fact that two times two are four does not mean the same thing to you as a believer and to someone else as an unbeliever. When you think of two times two as four, you connect this fact with numerical law. And when you connect this fact with numerical law, you must connect numerical law with all law. The question you face, then, is whether law exists in its own right or is an expression of the will and nature of God. Thus the fact that two times two are four enables you to implicate yourself more deeply into the nature and will of God. On the other hand, when an unbeliever says that two times two are four, he will also be led to connect this fact with the whole idea of law; but he will regard this



law as independent of God. Thus the fact that two times two are four enables him, so he thinks, to get farther away from God. That fact will place the unbeliever before a whole sea of open possibilities in which he may seek to realize his life away from God. And it is this basic difference between what "two times two are four" means to the believer and what it means to the unbeliever that the doctrine of common grace has helped us to see. It has enabled us to focus our attention upon the antithesis without fearing that we are doing injustice to any of the facts that surround us.

Let us look then more fully at this antithesis and what it means for education. The first thing we would observe is that, if the universe to which the child is to be adjusted is thought of as impersonal, the one supreme result is that there are then no antitheses between the child and the universe. We may say, if we wish, that as Christian theists we have a life-and-world view in which the antitheses of life are not overlooked, while nontheists have a life-and-world view in which the antitheses of life are overlooked. For that reason every Christian knows that he cannot begin to build till he has first broken down, while every non-Christian thinks he can begin to build without any necessity of first breaking down.

*Godless Education.* Perhaps one of the most important points in this connection is to note that on the impersonalistic basis of our opponents there is no forensic relationship between man and his environment. How can anyone stand in a forensic relationship to an impersonal law? You cannot get any notion of what it might possibly mean that you should be legally responsible to law as such. Now the whole structure of Christian ethics or morality presupposes this forensic relationship. Scripture defines sin as a transgression of the law of God. Without the possibility and the actuality of a forensic relationship between God and man, the whole doctrine of sin falls by the board. And if sin falls by the board, the only thing that can be done with the evil in this world is to knit it into the constitution of the universe. Accordingly we find that both ancient and modern philosophy have maintained that negation is as fundamental as affirmation and that the devil is as old as God. Thus all ethical distinctions are reduced to metaphysical distinctions. "What ought to be is, and what is ought to be" is not merely the philosophy of certain philosophical schools but is the philosophy of all nonregenerate thought. And a consequence of this is that no Christianity is possible. There would be no sin and therefore no sin to remove. And if there were sin to remove, there would never be anyone able to remove it since it would be im-

possible that any one person appearing at any one point in the course of history should occupy the absolutely unique position that Christianity has attributed to Christ.

From these considerations it follows that if any ethics or morality is to be taught in schools that are based upon this impersonalistic philosophy, it must be pagan ethics or morality. So too if any religion is to be taught, it must be pagan religion. Everything that is truly Christian is in the nature of the case excluded.

In the second place the complete removal of all antitheses between the child and its surroundings appears still more fully in the fact that the impersonal conception of the universe has of necessity led to a complete relativism of all things. The "eternal ideas" of Plato did not for long remain eternal. Plato himself injected temporalism into them when he insisted on the ultimacy of evil. By doing this he made the ideal world dependent upon the temporal world. Time became a moving image of eternity. In modern days this motif has been worked out fully until Pragmatism openly avowed an exclusive temporalism, while Idealism made time and eternity correlatives with the "Concrete Universal." It could not have done otherwise. The impersonal means nothing if it is not related to the personal. If the impersonal cannot be related to and derive its meaning from the absolute personality of God, it will in the nature of the case be subjected to the personality of man. The evolutionary theory is only a particular manifestation of this general tendency. It is quite hopeless to fight evolution in the public schools and think that in doing so you have gone to the bottom of the trouble. Back of evolution lie relativism and impersonalism.

It will be seen at once that upon such a relativistic basis there can be no antithesis between man and his environment. On such a basis God and man are mutually dependent upon one another. And if you say that this very relativism provides for an infinity of antitheses, it is true in a sense; but in such a case there is no one to settle the antitheses, and they are thus rendered meaningless. Man does not stand higher than God and God does not stand higher than man. Who is to judge the other?

*Humanistic Education.* Now a Christian will recognize in this process of the history of philosophy the realization of the plans and purposes of Satan. The first thing he did for the human race was to tell Eve that nothing would happen to her if she ignored what she thought were the laws of God. He instilled into her mind the notion that the universe is neutral, that is, that there are no antitheses in it. The devil told Eve that he was just as old as God. The devil told Eve that there was an impersonal law above both

God and himself. He did not openly deny the personality of God. He implicitly denied the absolute personality of God. Satan is not opposed to personalistic philosophies. He can sometimes use them more effectively than outspoken impersonalistic philosophies when he wants to make non-Christians believe that they really are Christians.

Now when the educational curriculum of a school is based upon such a relativistic educational philosophy, the child is sure to learn that it really does not matter at all what he does. Oh yes, it does matter as far as getting through this life is concerned. It is still the best policy to be honest. Yet if you are dishonest, that too does not matter as long as you can "get away with it." The whole universe is then a place to "get away with" things. "The Lord doeth no good neither doeth He evil."<sup>2</sup> The "Lord" becomes but a symbolic expression for the impersonal laws of nature.

When Zephaniah the prophet noticed this sort of attitude getting into the lives of those who were Jehovah's covenant people, he preached the antithesis in its highest possible expression. He preached the judgment day as a day of wrath and of tribulation. God's people could not possibly insult their Maker and Redeemer in any more gruesome fashion than by having anything to do in their educational policies with those who said that God was dead. When God was no longer recognized either in his promises or his threats, the climax had been reached of all that the devil could possibly desire. To ignore God is to go to perdition without so much as a bump.

*God-centered Education.* It goes without saying, then, that our first duty as Christian educators is to face this education without antithesis and to take a thoroughly antithetical attitude toward it. Modern educational philosophy gruesomely insults our God and our Christ. How, then, do you expect to build anything positively Christian or theistic upon a foundation which is the negation of Christianity and theism? Here it appears that we must be negative before we can be positive. We must negate the negation entailed in the educational philosophy about us in order that thereafter we may be truly constructive. All your construction and all your synthesis that have failed to negate this negation of modern philosophy is itself negative and destructive. Here lies the antithesis in education.

### *The Non-Christian Idea of Mystery*

And now to look at the same antithesis from the point of view of knowledge rather than from the point of view of reality, we must note that according to modern educational philosophy man is thrown entirely upon his own resources. This is but a natural concomitant of an impersonalist theory of reality. In an impersonal universe God can at

the most be given the place of a collaborator with man in the field of knowledge. The void surrounds both God and man. Accordingly man makes himself the standard of truth. Nothing will happen to him if he thinks incorrectly about the nature of reality. Nothing will happen to him if he does not choose to think about the nature of reality at all. Says D. C. Macintosh, "There is no law human or divine to force man to waste his time on matters on which he feels no real concern; and since the human capacity for interest is limited at best it perhaps is just as well that he should keep to the things to which his special bent inclines him."<sup>3</sup> In Tolstoy's *Anna Karenina*, one of the main characters expresses it as his opinion that the gods will certainly not take it amiss of us if we have made some mistakes about them, inasmuch as we have done the best that we could. Now such a way of presentation presupposes that man has never had any contact with God and has never had any information about the truth of reality, which would make it an insult to God to think mistakenly about him and his universe.

And how does man feel now that he has for centuries tried for himself the task of interpreting reality without any reference to God? He has done his best. He has courageously entered the field with the crowbar of his intellect in order to conquer all mystery or, if you will, conquer *the* mystery. When his intellect failed him, he tried to descend into the lower levels of his existence in order to receive there some feeling of what it is all about. And when that failed, he was driven to the conclusion that reality is *essentially irrational*. That is the prevailing view today. We are told that a surd remains no matter how carefully and exhaustively we may study any particular fact.<sup>4</sup> And as for the notion that men can have knowledge about reality as a whole, it is said to be based upon conceit. The philosopher of today has given up every attempt to understand the meaning of the whole of reality. "The contemplation of total reality, the idea of knowing so as to understand what total reality, historically and in the present, might be, is a fundamental mistake; the existence of this total reality is itself open to question."<sup>5</sup> And yet the philosopher is also conscious of the fact that all things are related. He knows that unless we know the whole we cannot really know any part of the whole. The question of the one and the many is to him as insoluble as it was to Plato and Aristotle. The whole of reality is in darkness and consequently a surd surrounds every particular fact.

The net result of all this is that modern man feels himself adrift as a derelict on a shoreless sea. He is overwhelmed with a sense of the utter futility of it all. More than that, he feels terrified. He speaks much of

"*Lebensangst*" ("life-anxiety"). "Anxiety arises to the consciousness, as a lost point rises to be swallowed up in an empty expanse, since all human relationships are of only temporary value."<sup>6</sup> Man feels that he is somehow significantly related to that ultimate irrational existence about which he has no knowledge and over which he has no control.

Looking at this modern Irrationalism, what else can we do but reject it *in toto*? If we give to God his rightful place as absolute self-conscious personality, we have the very opposite of Irrationalism. In that case we know that our knowledge is analogical of God's knowledge and therefore true. We live and move and have our being in the revelation of God. And as for Scripture, it is then but the means of the reinstatement of man into the original revelational atmosphere in which he was created. We make no apologies for regarding Scripture as the textbook of the philosophy of science. Granted the existence of God and granted the existence of sin, the imperative necessity of redemptive revelation follows unless God should fail of his purpose with man. "If ye believe in God believe also in me," said Christ. As theism is the presupposition of Christianity, so Christianity is the implication of theism. We are in no doubt about either. Fear of the void is the controlling motive of the unbeliever's life. Confidence in God is the controlling motive of the believer's life. And you cannot be positive on a basis of fear. You cannot construct into the void, especially when you stand upon the void. Here again we must negate the negation entailed in modern education before we can really be constructive in anything that we do.

*Uncertainty and Fear.* And if now we turn to the educational picture that surrounds us, we find that it corresponds exactly to the educational philosophy that we have been discussing.

In the first place we would note the excited interest in matters educational. The number of books on education is legion. Man throws all his hopes on the education of the next generation. He is conscious of the fact that the present generation is in a hopeless condition. "A generation which has no confidence in itself occupies itself with education, as though here again something could come into being from nothing."<sup>7</sup>

In the second place there is no centrality in the educational policies of the day. How could there be if no one knows what the center of human life is? Instead of following a policy that is based upon a definite assurance that human life must be lived for the sake of God, we find a hasty and nervous series of experimentations into the unknown. One demagogue after another arises to proclaim: Lo, here is the Christ; and lo, there is the Christ. Since man thinks he has no knowledge of reality but at most a glimpse now and then as to what he may accomplish in this world, his

educational policies are split up as to purpose, as to content, and as to method. Educational theorists are out of breath. They dash after one thing and then after another as dogs do after a ball that is carelessly thrown out. What else then can we do but negate this negation of a center and a goal in education?

As to the purpose of education we are told that it is to teach the growing personality a method of adjustment to the environment in which it may be placed. This purpose is set in opposition to what is said to be the older conception of the purpose of education, namely to give the child a certain informational content. Functional education is substituted for conceptual education. But if we look for a minute at this so-called functional theory of education we notice that it cannot possibly function. The reason for this is that nothing will function in the void. It is perfectly self-contradictory to say that the purpose of education is to teach people adjustment to environment if neither we nor anybody else can have any notion whatever as to what that environment may really be. There can be no preparation for the void. In trying to prepare for the void modern educational theory has missed all sense of direction.

In contrast to this we can readily see that only the Christian conception of education can really be said to be the functional conception of education. Upon a Christian basis there is assured a conviction as to what the growing personality will meet in the environment with which it will come into contact, and functional adjustment can be made accordingly. It becomes evident how absolutely imperative it is for any teacher who becomes enamored of the modern idea of functional education to ask himself whether such an idea of education is consistent with the Christianity that he professes. All too often have Trojan horses come into the Christian camp.

*Knowledge and Confidence.* The case is similar with respect to the content of Christian education. Here, too, we shall have to be increasingly fearless in letting the controlling concepts of the Christian-theistic life-and-world view determine what shall be the center of the curriculum. If we constantly keep looking over the fence to see how many hours are spent on this subject and how many hours are spent on that subject, we shall not get very far. If we are always worried about the criticism of our opponents, it is a sign that we have not yet learned the lesson to build alone. Again, this does not at all mean that we cannot learn from our opponents. During the World War the Germans no doubt learned from the Allies and the Allies learned from the Germans. Yet it is equally true that the Germans never failed to use what they learned from the Allies against the Allies and the Allies never failed to use what they learned

from the Germans against the Germans. Thus, too, we can afford to take over from our enemies only that which will fit into our own program of constructing a covenant personality. No educational content that cannot be set into a definitely Christian-theistic pattern and be conducive to the development of covenant personality has any right to appear in our schools.

And finally this is also true of educational method. Here, too, the temptation besets us that we should be very keen to watch the methods that are used around us. Now this too is in itself altogether commendable and necessary. It is commendable because every good soldier should know the tactics of the enemy. It is commendable too because perhaps some of the methods used by the enemy may be transformed and used by us. But *transformed* they must always be. We cannot afford to say that if only we place a different content before our pupils we need not worry about the form because the form is neutral. If a glass has contained carbolic acid you do not merely pour it out in order then to give your child a drink of water. How much more impossible will it be to take a non-Christian spiritual content and pour it out of its form in order to use the latter for the pouring out of a definite Christian-theistic content? The connection between form and matter is too much like that of skin and flesh to allow for the easy removal of the one without taking something of the other. It is incumbent on us to be on our guard with respect to the educational methods of our opponents. We can never, strictly speaking, use their methods. We can use methods that appear similar to theirs, but never can we use methods that are the same as theirs.

So, then, our conclusion with respect to the educational philosophies and the educational policies that surround us is that we must be intensively and extensively negative or we can never be intensively and extensively positive in the Christian-theistic sense of the term. The fundamental principle of the antithesis upon which Christianity is built demands nothing less than that. We must more and more dare to be consistently peculiar in our educational policies. If we dare to be peculiar we will be "peculiar" in the eyes of the world, to be sure, but we will not be "peculiar" in the eyes of God. If we are not peculiar, we will be "peculiar" in the eyes of God and be twice "peculiar" in the eyes of the world.

## *II. The Antithesis in the Curriculum*

And now, if you will speculate with me a little, I would like to look at

some of the features that, it would seem, should always characterize the curriculum of a Christian school. I purposely say that I wish only to look at some of the features that should never be missing. I do not presume to lay down a program.

In order to consider the curriculum in its broad outlines and not to lose ourselves in details, we may say that it deals with nature and history. It deals with "facts" of space and with "facts" of time. It matters not what subject you teach; whether it be mathematics, sewing, cooking, or music, you are dealing with *space-time* "facts." I speak of space-time "facts" even in preference to "facts" of space and time in order still further to simplify and centralize the question. All "facts" are inextricably interwoven with space and with time. We cannot intelligibly think of "facts" without thinking them in space and time. We may speak of space and time, if we will, as the form of the "facts" if only we recall that form and content too are inseparable. Empty space and empty time are meaningless concepts. We may say then that the curriculum deals with "space-time facts."

One more preliminary point we would make in this connection. A sharp distinction is usually made between "facts" and "laws." It is taken for granted that you have explained the "facts" if you have referred them to the "laws" according to which they work. But this is misleading. Laws are nothing but ways in which "space-time facts" behave. It is therefore more to the point to say that laws are aspects of the "facts" or are themselves a part of the larger "fact" that we are seeking to learn about the "facts." An historical "fact" is perfectly meaningless unless seen in the relation it sustains to all other historical "facts," or in other words unless seen according to the law of its operation. So, then, for our purposes it is better to include the term "law" under the term "fact." The phrase "space-time facts" would then include all the "facts" and all the "laws" in their concrete relationship.

And now with the consideration of these preliminary matters we have also prepared the way for a direct attack upon the problem as to what would be the main feature of any Christian school curriculum. This main feature, it would now appear, is that the whole of "space-time facts" should be set into the pattern of the conception of the absolute personality of God.

### *The Non-Christian's Self-Sufficiency*

We have seen that a "fact" without its relation to space is to us without significance. It is unintelligible. It is a mere abstraction. It is wholly unthinkable. And for these reasons it is *altogether unteachable*.



Similarly a "fact" in space without time is a mere abstraction and unteachable. You cannot tell anyone anything about such a thing because it does not mean anything to yourself. And it seems still to be a requirement that he who tries to teach should at least have some remote notion as to what it is all about.

*Teaching Without Reference to God.* Now, just in this way the whole of "space-time facts" is to a Christian a mere abstraction, wholly unintelligible and therefore altogether unteachable unless it be seen in its relationship to God as its presupposition. We may express the same idea by saying that no "fact" is seen as it really is unless it is seen in its correct relationship to God. Since God has made the space-time facts, their relation to God is naturally the most important thing to know about them. But more than that, it is not really enough to say that the most important thing to know about a "fact" is its relationship to God because that very relationship to God exhausts the meaning of the fact. When you have seen the "space-time facts" in their relationship to God, you have for the first time seen the *fact* about the "facts"; that is, you have for the first time seen the *facts* in distinction from bare facts. Accordingly, anyone who does not see the space-time facts before the background or in the pattern of the absolute personality of God does not see any facts but only thinks he does. It is not true to say that everybody has the facts to begin with. On the contrary, only a Christian theist has the facts because there are none but theistic facts. In one sense, we could of course say that all men "have" the facts, since all live in God's created order and all move in the general revelation of God. But the nontheist refuses to acknowledge the Creator who alone can be the proper context for interpreting any fact. Therefore nontheists deal only with "bare facts," that is, with abstractions that have no meaning.

We are purposely bringing the matter to this irreducible level in order to get away from the dangerously misleading confusion that appears perhaps more glaringly in the educational field than anywhere else, namely, that a fact is a fact for everybody alike, unbeliever as well as believer. Now this is either a truism or a satanic falsehood. It is a simple truism if we mean that Christianity is either true or it is not true. If it is true, then this truth does as a matter of fact exist for the unbeliever as well as for the believer, and the unbeliever will learn to know the facts when it is too late, as the parable of the rich man and Lazarus teaches us. But it is a satanic falsehood to say that a fact is a fact for everybody alike, if it is taken to mean, as it is usually taken to mean, that there is a realm of space-time fact that is known to all men alike. The whole point in

dispute between a theistic and a nontheistic interpretation of reality is this question, whether "facts" can be facts without being theistic. It follows then that to say that the facts are facts without saying anything further is to give yourself over soul and body to the mercy of your enemy, who likes nothing better than that you should give up the battle before the first blow has been given. As theists our contention is that there are no facts but theistic facts, while the contention of our opponents, expressed or unexpressed, is that facts are facts whether God exists or does not exist. For us to admit this at the outset would be complete admission of defeat and would spell utter bankruptcy as well as the uselessness of Christian education.

*Teaching With Reference to God.* What sense is there in spending money for teaching arithmetic in a Christian school rather than in a so-called neutral school unless you are basically convinced that no space-time fact can be talked about and taught unless seen in its relationship to God? When speaking thus of the absolute antithesis that underlies the educational policies of our schools, it is not too much to say that if any subject could be taught elsewhere than in a Christian school, there would be no reason for having Christian schools. The only reason why we are justified in having Christian schools is that we are convinced that outside of a Christian-theistic atmosphere there can be no more than an empty process of one abstraction teaching abstractness to other abstractions. No teaching of any sort is possible except in Christian schools.

No, please do not say that this is an extreme statement or an overwrought accusation. Plato knew it and said so. He knew that he could do nothing with the profound notion that two times two are four if he looked at two horses and two cows. He found that he would somehow have to make a reference to the ideal world and speak of two-ness abstracted from horses and cows and everything concrete. But two-ness—what was it? Plato knew that he did not know. He knew that the ideal world was not within his grasp. But he also knew that he was helpless without it. And this was true with respect to everything that he saw in this world. It was true of mathematics but it was also true of ethics. Can virtue be taught? he asked. Well, to teach a thing we must know that thing. But do we know virtue by looking at it in this world? No, for there is no virtue here that is not mixed with vice. Any virtue driven to extremes becomes a vice. To get a true idea of virtue, then, we must look at the ideal world again. But even there we cannot find virtue totally by itself because among the ideas of good things there are those terrible ideas of mud and hair and filth. In the ideal world, too, Plato thought the positive does not exist without the

negative, the devil is just as old as God. So then the idea of virtue as Plato saw it remained an ultimate mystery. Plato admitted that he was before an ultimate dilemma of thought. He knew that he knew nothing and that he could therefore teach nothing.

As for modern philosophy, it knows still better than Plato did that it knows nothing, but the pity is that it is not willing to admit as Plato was willing to admit that it cannot teach anything. Bernard Bosanquet has labored to understand what it means that five plus seven are twelve. He calls it an eternal *novelty*. He also calls it an *eternal novelty*. By that he means that no law of arithmetic means anything to anybody unless such a law is related to a body of absolute truth. His argument was the same as Plato's when he said that to know what it means that two times two are four we must know what two-ness means. Now here we have a full admission of the indispensability of Christian schools. The ground for the necessity of Christian schools lies in this very thing, that no fact can be known unless it be known in its relationship to God. And once this point is clearly seen, the doubt as to the value of teaching arithmetic in Christian schools falls out of the picture. Of course arithmetic must be taught in a Christian school. It cannot be taught anywhere else.

### *Consciousness of Antitheses*

We have purposely taken up this matter of two times two are four because that seems to be the black beast in Christian instruction. Many are willing to admit that it is quite reasonable that the Christian religion and Christian ethics should be taught in Christian schools but are not willing to admit that subjects which lie on the educational periphery should be taught in Christian schools. The most they will admit is that of course it is nice to have the children in a Christian atmosphere at all times and that such a Christian atmosphere can be supplied by Christian teachers only. Sometimes some say sneeringly or at least doubtfully, "How can you be specifically Christian when you teach the children that two times two are four?" Well, our answer is that if you cannot teach arithmetic to the glory of God, you cannot do it any other way because it cannot be done any other way by anybody. And by this I do not mean that you have breathed a sort of Christian atmosphere about the problems of arithmetic in the sense that you have opened the school session with prayer a couple of hours before. By a Christian atmosphere I mean first of all that deep conviction on the part of the teacher that no fact is teachable except when brought into relationship with God. For it is not till the teacher has this conviction that he will

radiate any ethical atmosphere that is worth the having. Emotional Christianity does not flower well on a hard clay bottom of intellectual paganism.

Now, I well know that it is easy to figure this thing out in theory and most difficult to bring it into practice. Ah, how large a portion of the grace of God it requires to be a teacher of the children of the covenant! But do we not sometimes too lightly dismiss the matter as beyond our power altogether? When we say that arithmetic must be taught to the glory of God we do not mean that the child shall at once understand the full implication of all that it means that two times two are four because God has made the space-time world according to certain laws and that these laws express something of the very being of God. We need not at all despair when the first grades do not understand this matter. But you may as well despair if your eighth or tenth graders do not begin to get an inkling of it. They ought to begin to see these things, and if they do they will later learn to see more of them.

Then, too, there is a sense in which the subject of arithmetic lies at the periphery of the Christian school curriculum. Not as though arithmetic should take less time than other subjects. It is quite possible that a subject should take a large share of the available time and yet lie at the periphery of the curriculum. Arithmetic and all other subjects that emphasize the space aspect of the space-time world lie in the nature of the case at the periphery of the whole area of the creation of God. This is due to the arrangement God has made in his creation, namely, that man should stand at the center of it. And since man is a self-conscious and active being, his most characteristic human traits will manifest themselves more fully in the movement of time, that is in history, than in the immovable atmosphere of space. Accordingly it is easier to bring out the more specifically human and the more specifically Christian interpretation of reality when teaching history than when teaching nature. Consequently, we cannot expect the same intensity of emotional response to a really Christian instruction of arithmetic that we can expect to a Christian instruction of history. And for that reason, too, we should again realize the close connection between the facts of space and the facts of time. Since the more definitely temporal facts lie closer to the center of the glory of God, we should connect the spatial facts with the temporal facts and use the latter as media of transmission of the glory of the spatial facts to God. In a symphony every individual instrument need not be individually conspicuous. In a good picture there is much background that is little noted but nonetheless indispensable. The curriculum of a Christian

school should be an organism in which some members seem less important but cannot be amputated.

Let me interject again that when I have maintained that no teaching is possible except in Christian schools, I have not forgotten the doctrine of common grace. Of course in a non-Christian context arithmetic (and for that matter everything else, including religion and Christianity) is teachable if by being teachable you mean nothing more than making susceptible to a temporary pragmatic manipulation by unbelievers. But we are not speaking of that now. We are speaking only of specifically Christian instruction and of absolutely ultimate matters.

*The Natural Precedes the Spiritual.* While speaking of the curriculum we have emphasized the all-important point that every space-time fact must be set before the absolute personality of God because we feel that, if this point is once clearly seen, all other problems can be solved in the light of it. We cannot speak of many of these problems. Let us, however, look for a moment at this question of centrality in the curriculum on which we have already touched. It goes without saying that if there is centrality in our Christian life-and-world view, there is of necessity also centrality in our educational curriculum. We have spoken of the lack of centrality in the educational *policies* that surround us and found that such a lack of centrality was due to the lack of centrality in the educational *philosophy* that surrounds us. So also there is a lack of centrality in the *curricula* of the schools that surround us. It could not be otherwise. No one can make a curriculum that has a center if he has no center for his own life-and-world views.

We are all familiar with the mad rush for the study of nature at the expense of the classics and the humanities a number of years ago. Now we are not interested in the details of this question. We only wish to point out that this tendency was indicative of an emphasis upon man's environment at the expense of man himself. And if now we recall that according to modern educational philosophy man does after all know nothing about his environment, it becomes apparent that the modern educational curriculum is built upon the silent admission that we do not know who man is and that we do not know what his surroundings are. Accordingly man is wholly adrift, and all that he can do is to turn as fast as he can to anything that he may fancy himself to see in the distance.

The curriculum of a Christian school will naturally maintain the exact opposite of all this. We know who man is and what his surroundings are. Moreover we know that man is the center of the curriculum-building program. As builders of a curriculum for Christian schools, therefore, we

do not dash wildly back and forth, first in this and then in that direction. We will always place man at the center of the curriculum. God has made man's environment subject to man instead of man subject to his environment. It follows that history can never be relegated to the background. It is in history that the acts of man appear most conspicuously. Note well, we are not speaking first of all of the quantity of time required to teach these subjects. Nature study is good and useful if only it is not separated from the study of history.

*All Things Are Ours.* But we have not said enough if we say that man must always be at the center of the curriculum. We must add that man as the Christian must stand at the center of the curriculum. Hence sacred history, which focuses on the program of redemption, is at the center of all the teaching of history. Again I speak not primarily of a quantity of time. To say that sacred history should stand at the center of the curriculum is not inconsistent with spending many hours on subjects other than sacred history. It means that only when nature is brought into connection with history and secular history is brought into connection with sacred history does man as redeemed stand at the center of the curriculum, and only thus can any and every fact of the space-time world be brought into relation with the absolute personality of God. Only thus is there no abstract separation of the *that* of education from the *what* of education. Only thus can teaching become really concrete. Only thus can the emphasis be laid where it ought to be laid. It will enable us to set forth the really important figures in the history of the human race and in the history of the redemption of the human race without being all the while afraid that we are spending too much time on Moses rather than on Mussolini. Only thus can nature be set forth as the picture book of God, that is, as the moving picture book of God. Only thus can we provide the atmosphere that is so indispensable if Christian education is to be worth its name.

### *III. The Antithesis in Regard to the Child*

And now that we come to a consideration of the child that is to be educated, we can be very brief. We have already discussed what the modern educational philosophy thinks of man. It will naturally think the same thing of the child. Out of the maze of the void and out of the infinite depths of irrationality there has somehow come forth upon this world these specks of rationality that we call human beings. And each human being recapitulates this process of the race as a whole. The adjustments that the tiny speck of developing rationality must learn to

make seem all to deal with temporal things, but there is a misty haze of possibilities surrounding him. Accordingly the child must be placed before an infinite series of open possibilities. The most common term used for this supposed process of adjustment is the phrase, the "integration of personality" into its surroundings. The concept of personality is used over and over again. The whole of education is said to be the development of personality. And it is said that only now that education is liberated from the trammels of medievalism, which made the child subject to the curriculum instead of the curriculum subject to the child, has personality any real chance for development.

### *The Non-Christian Idea of Personality*

This question, then, of personality and the possibility of its development is the point in dispute between our opponents and ourselves. What shall we say in answer to the charge that in our type of curriculum personality cannot develop at all? It is clear that we are once more face to face with an ultimate alternative.

*Vacuum-Fed Babies.* When discussing the philosophies of education we saw that our opponents in the nature of the case think our position wholly untenable and that we think our opponents' position to involve nothing short of chaos. When discussing the curriculum we saw that the real issue was whether upon a nontheistic basis anything at all was teachable. And we have maintained that upon the educational foundation of our opponents nothing at all is teachable. That was our answer to the charge made by our opponents that we cannot teach because we are hide-bound in the formation of the curriculum. Our answer now to the charge that personality cannot well develop in our system of education can be nothing other than that on their system of education personality cannot develop at all. Here, as along the whole front, we must begin with an absolute negation before we can be positive and constructive at all.

*Genuine Nurture.* Our reason for holding that personality cannot develop in the educational system of our opponents is that on their view finite personality is, as we have seen, placed in the midst of an absolutely impersonal atmosphere. Our claim is that finite personality cannot develop unless it is placed face to face with absolute personality. We have contended that no space-time fact in general can have any significance except when placed in its proper relation to God. And personality is a space-time fact. But more specifically than that, the fact that nothing in this universe can be known except when placed into its

relationship to God appears most clearly in the case of human personality. You cannot think of personality without thinking of rationality, and finite rationality is by itself unthinkable and without meaning. To think of finite personality by itself is to think meaning into the void. The impersonal cannot be a foil to the personal. Taken in an absolute sense personality must be completely self-sufficient. And taken in a finite sense, personality may have the impersonal as its foil only if back of this impersonal foil is the absolute personality of God.

It was the impersonalism of the non-Christian educational philosophies that reduced all antitheses to nothing and reduced the universe to a neutral universe in which nothing would happen. So now again it is this same ultimate impersonalism that reduces finite personality to nothing. Consequently, nothing will happen in the way of the development of personality. If, then, the finite personality is not placed face to face with God, and the "facts" about which the finite personality is to learn or the environment to which it is to be adjusted is not placed face to face with God, there cannot possibly be any fruitful contact between the subject and the object of knowledge. To have knowledge at all, both the knower and the known must be in contact with God. Only through God can the two be brought together.

### *The Non-Christian Denial of Authority*

And this brings us finally to remark on the question of authority in education. The relation of one person teaching another brings out at once the question whether the one has any authority to present his interpretation as absolute truth. Is there any authority at all? Will not authority when exercised by one upon the other hamper the freedom of the other? Our opponents hold that strictly speaking authority and freedom are mutually exclusive. True, they will allow for the authority of the expert in the sense that one person knows a little more about the actual performance of the universe than another; but authority in the ultimate sense, that is authority in the juridical as well as the expert sense, they will not allow.

*Expert Authority.* Now we are not pleading for the substitution of juridical for expert authority. But what we do claim is that on the basis of our opponents there is no authority at all and that without authority no teaching is possible. That there is no authority on the basis of our opponents is clear from the fact that on their basis there is no knowledge at all. And if there is no knowledge possible, no expert knowledge is possible.



*Real Authority.* Authority is nothing but the placing of the absolute personality of God before the finite personality of man. It follows, then, that if nothing can be taught unless it is taught in relation to God, nothing can be taught unless it is taught with authority.

It is this that makes the position of the teacher so infinitely difficult and at the same time so infinitely valuable. On the basis of our opponents the position of the teacher is utterly hopeless. He knows that he knows nothing and that in spite of this fact he must teach. He knows that without authority he cannot teach and that there are no authorities to which he can appeal. He has to place the child before an infinite series of possibilities and pretend to be able to say something about the most advisable attitude to take with respect to those possibilities, and at the same time he has to admit that he knows nothing at all about those possibilities. And the result for the child is that he is not furnished with an atmosphere in which he can live and grow. In contrast with this the Christian teacher knows himself, knows the subject, and knows the child. He has the full assurance of the absolute fruitfulness of his work. He labors in the dawn of everlasting results.