10 THE FAMILY AND THE DAY SCHOOL

The internal culture formed within the family gives evidence of -its historical function. In this cultural aspect of family life the pedagogical and educational tasks of the parents become most apparent. To nurture always means exercising formative power over the individual development of people's lives. "The term power (command, control, or mastery) as used in this connection," Arnold de Graaff points out, "must not be taken in the sense of physical force or psychical influence. Nurturing is fundamentally different from forcing someone to submit to one's will from `mental engineering,' or from persuading someone by logical argumentation."[69]

Parents have received from the Lord the divine charge to bring up their children "in the discipline and instruction of the Lord." Education thus remains always a fundamentally parental concern. The school may help parents in this task, but it cannot relieve them of their major share of responsibility. Of this tremendous responsibility Dooyeweerd writes:

> It is doubtless true that modern psychology and pedagogy to a considerable degree may help parents in the fulfilment of their task when they meet with particular difficulties due to an insufficient knowledge of the psychical and mental condition of the infant. But it would be dangerous overestimation of science if it should be supposed that the formative educational task of the parents had better be taken over by a skilled psychologist or pedagogue. The integral character of the education in the family sphere is irreplaceable and in many respects decisive for the whole further life of the children. The children belong to their parents in a personal sense as long as they have not reached the age of maturity necessary for them to be considered as responsible persons in human society.
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> This is also the reason why, according to the structural principle of the family, the determination of the spiritual direction of education continues to belong to the parental competence, even when the process of cultural moulding of the children has reached the phase of modern differentiation which exceeds the boundaries of the intimate family sphere.[70]

God's Word makes it clear that the rearing and education of children is fundamentally the task of parents (Exod. 20:12; Gen. 18:19; Ps. 78; Deut. 6:6; Eph. 6:4). Neither the state nor the

church may take over this task from parents, since children are born by reason of the natural powers of reproduction derived from God and not from any permission to procreate by the clergy or the civil servants. Every bit of this work of rearing the child is the responsibility of parents. The Lord is going to call them to account for it. It follows that parents are directly responsibile for the education their children receive and that the school should be regarded as a partner with the home and not an extension of the church or the state.

Through God's providential decree society .today has become so complicated that a very important part of the task of rearing the child, i.e., his education, can no longer be provided by the average parent at home. For this reason parents may rightly delegate part of their responsibility to the public Christian school on condition that such a school understands that education is more than the conveyance of mere factual knowledge. True education implies training the powers of interpretation and the judgment of the child in the perspective of the Christian outlook upon life. For the consistent Christian parent the education of his child must be implemented within the Christian concept of the child as created in God's holy image and sharing in the blessings of the New Covenant by reason of his baptism or dedication to God's service. The ends and methods of education for the Christian parent at any rate must be seen in relation to the ultimate problems of human life-problems that concern the nature and destiny of man, both as a member of human society and as a being in the presence of the eternal God. It is only at this level that the Christian parent can discuss the matter of the education of his children. What and who is man? Is he just a robot who exists for the benefit of big business or big government? Or is the child to be educated to become a good citizen of the American or the British or Canadian democracy? Howard Freeman, campaign director of Californians for Public Schools in 1958 made no bones about his answer when he openly stated that "The education of youth to prepare them for future leadership in a democracy is a function of government. Education is a state reserved power and the state may, therefore, control the education of its people."[71] If this is American democracy in action, then it hardly differs from the totalitarian democracy of Soviet Russia or Red China. It would seem that in education any deviation from the prevailing humanist faith in democracy is abhorred. All creeds must ultimately be reduced to the American democratic way of life. This attitude is plainly discernible in the words of Dr. Conant, former president of Harvard, who says in Schools Weighed in the Balance, "Our schools should serve all creeds. The greater the proportion of our youth who attend independent schools, the greater the threat to our democratic unity."[72] Where democracy has become one's idol, there is obviously no room for diversity of confession. Principle must be sacrificed for unity; unity must prevail at all cost. This is also the attitude of the Educational Policies Commission, who wrote *The Purposes of*

Education in American Democracy. The authors state, "Only from the methods of instruction which not only teach but which actually are democracy and cooperation, will the appeal to reason be heard and heeded. The spirit of democratic education must be one which is prepared to enthrone peace and reason. . . . Teachers must regard the study of mdoceracy as their first professional responsibility." [73]

Such a view is the negation of real liberalism as understood by John Stuart Mill in his famous essay, On Liberty. Mill pointed out:

> The objections which are argued with reason against State education do not apply to the enforcement of education by the State, but to the State's taking upon itself to direct that education; which is a totally different thing. That the whole or any large part of the education of the people should be in State hands, I go as far as any one in deprecating. All that has been said of the importance of individuality bf character, and diversity in opinions and modes of conduct, involves as the same unspeakable importance, diversity of education. A general State education is a mere contrivance for moulding people to be exactly like one another; and as the mould in which it casts them is that which pleases the predominant power in the government, whether this be a monarch, a priesthood, an aristocracy, or the majority of the existing generation; in proportion as it is efficient and successful, it establishes a despotism over the mind, leading by natural tendancy to one over the body. An education established and controlled by the State should only exist, if it exists at all, as one among many competing experiments, carried on for the purpose of example and stimulus to keep the others up to a certain standard of excellence... .
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> In general, if the country contains a sufficient number of persons qualified to provide education under government auspices, the same persons would be able and willing to give an equally good education on the voluntary principle, under the assurance of remuneration afforded by a law rendering education compulsory, combined with State aid to those unable to defray the expense .[74]

In *Repair the Ruins*, Harry Blamires proves by many illustrations that the educational philosophy underlying the curriculum of the present state controlled schools of England is anything but Christian in intention and content.[75] The purpose of these secular schools is not to raise up Christian citizens but humanists who will fit into an apostate humanistic society. In

America the Supreme Court has actually banned Christ from the public schools altogether. It is now illegal to say the Lord's Prayer in the state schools.[76]

It would thus seem that the education now being provided in the state schools both of Arherica and of Britain is more concerned to make its future citizens tractable members of a secular society in which the real values are efficiency, full stomachs, and "adjustment" to one's social environment, than good citizens of God's Kingdom. Writing in *Christian Education in a Secular Society*, Professor W. R. Niblett says: "There is evidence for supposing that the proportion of practising Christians on school staffs may not be over thirty per cent in these days, fifty per cent to sixty per cent being humanists or what may be called "residual Christians." No doubt the figures would be found comparable for the United States if investigated.[77]

Given this secularization of the state controlled schools of America, Britain, and Canada, as well as the fact that these nations have become pluralistic societies, justice surely requires that Christian parents who so wish may establish their own Christian public schools without any financial penalty.

Education, regardless in what type of school it is offered, cannot be conducted on a neutral basis. Niblett makes clear that the teaching of history, biology, literature, even physics and chemistry is colored and determined by the basic philosophical and religious presuppositions of the textbook writer and the teacher. One's view of most subjects in the school curriculum depends not merely on the "facts" but on the selection and interpretation of the facts.[78] Education deals with life itself, and therefore cannot avoid drawing from principles and ultimate presuppositions. Through the educational process a child's experiences deepen; his loyalties and attitudes are formed, ideals and values instilled. John Dewey was led by his belief system when he claimed: "The public school is the chief remedy for the ills of organized society."[79]

In a brief on "The Place of Non-Public Schools in a Pluralistic Society" submitted to the Honorable Harold Hughes, Governor of Iowa, in an audience on February 27, 1967, at Des Moines, Iowa, it was pointed out by the Christian Action Foundation of America:

> The U. S. Supreme Court safeguarded the legality of privately or parochially owned and operated schools. In 1925 it stated: "The child is not the mere creature of the state; those who nurture him and direct his destiny have the right, coupled with the

> high duty, to recognize this and prepare him for additional obligations." In 1927 the Court ruled as follows: "The right to conduct a private school, the right of parents to have their children taught where, when, how, and what and by whom they may judge best, are among the liberties guaranteed by Section 1 of the Fourteenth Amendment of the United States Constitution."
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> We submit that a nation stands to benefit greatly - both culturally and morally - when more than one ideology is given expression in a *bonafide* educational system. Schools forthrightly based on the Bible have consciously sought to make a contribution towards maintaining and enriching the cultural, moral and spiritual heritage of our nation. We feel that misunderstanding and confusion have shrouded the nature, ideals and goals of non public schools. It is our conviction that in the long run, no one benefits from the present monolithic system whereby one school system based on one ideology is entrusted with the monopoly on public benefits. We therefore, recommend that public authorities show appropriate sensitivity for the rights and responsibilities of parents in the education of their children.[80]

The family also functions in the remaining law-spheres, the logical, the typical psychical function expressed in the emotional relations between its members who are united to each other by a feeling of oneness; in the biological function which is the foundational function of the family; in the physical and chemical, since all members of the family have to eat and drink around the family table. By living in the same house, a family displays a spatial unity. And the feeling of homesickness is a psychical analogy of the spatial modality. In the numerical sphere the family is a unity in plurality joined together as we have seen by the structure of existence.

Finally the family, whether Christian or non-Christian, functions in the modality of faith. It worships and serves the Lord Jesus Christ or some idol of its own devising. No family can be religiously neutral. In contrast to the church the family is a community of common grace, and so it is not qualified as a community of faith and therefore it may never take the place of the church as an institution.

A family is truly Christian in its structure and policy if it reveals the Spirit of Christ in all that it does and says. Above all it is Christian when it remembers to read God's Word together and to pray together around the family altar. A bishop once visited an ancient English castle. When he came down to breakfast, he found the young owner of the castle, his family, and servants assembled for morning prayers, conducted by the head of the family. As the bishop lifted his

eyes, he noticed high overhead a massive beam that spanned the grand old hall and bore in old English the inscription:

> That house shall be preserved and never shall decay Where Almighty God
> is worshipped day by day.