We have learned some very important facts about the older woman. She must show behavior that becomes holiness; she must not gossip or falsely accuse others; she must show good use of her time; and she must be a teacher of good things. The failure of the older woman to be a teacher of good things is a very serious error. When this happens it becomes a great handicap for the younger women. The younger women need the spiritual, biblical instruction of the older women.

Book Review

The Christian School: An Introduction by Noel Weeks. Carlysle, PA: Banner of Truth Trust, 1988. 204pp. $11.95 (paper) [reviewed by Gary VanDerSchaaf]

I have long wished that Protestant Reformed School boards would require new teachers, as well as parents who are enrolling their first child, to sign a statement saying, "I have read Prof. D. Engelsma's book *Reformed Education.* I understand it and agree with it, and will do my best to teach or support the school according to the principles and practices described therein." With certain reservations, I would recommend that *The Christian School* be added to that imaginary mandatory reading list.

The book has many strengths, not the least of which is its lucid style. Dr. Weeks is Senior Lecturer in History at the University of Sydney, Australia, and holds a number of academic degrees. I feared that the infamous "Inverse Understandability" law would be in effect; that is, "The more letters a person has behind his name, the less easy it is to understand what he says." Dr. Weeks is a happy exception to that sad rule; his writing is clear and forceful, and is completely free of "educationaleze."

And his ideas are not only well-stated, they are well-balanced. Dr. Weeks, speaking from his experience as both teacher and Christian school board president, addresses his remarks to the teacher in the classroom and to the parents whose labors provide the means to place and keep that teacher there. For instance, while teachers are warned that overmuch homework should not rob children of time for family fellowship and responsibilities, he also cautions parents, saying, "Parents who want a school which will just take care of their children, but not interfere in their private lives, should not choose a Christian School" (p. 102). Further, in stressing the need for communication and mutual understanding among

board, staff, and home, Weeks remarks, "Parents and teacher must be willing to listen to, esteem, and love one another. The teacher cannot use his supposed professionalism, the parent his supposed employer relationship to the teacher to set aside their relationship in Christ" (p. 177).

Yet another of the book's strengths is its refusal to fall prey to educational novelty and fad. Dr. Weeks is an Australian, writing to Australians, addressing the need and manner of establishing parent-controlled Christian schools in Australia, where the Christian school movement is in its infancy. Thus the book deals with very fundamental issues, fundamental *truths.* We in the United States, who in some cases are entering our third or even fourth generation of Christian school support, need reminding of these truths. Many of Weeks' observations would provide good discussion material in board, faculty, and PTA meetings. A few of his remarks are given below. See what you think of them.

"[The Christian school] exists to aid parents in their task of raising children in the fear of the Lord. . . it is supplementary. . . to be a help and adjunct to what the family itself is doing in the education of its children." p. 7

"[In the training of the child, Scripture places a] particular responsibility on the father. . . . we as Christians need to think and work towards a work-style that is more conducive to family life." p. 6

"Parents are to train their children. The school can supplement but cannot replace the home." p. 7

"While the school may contribute to the development of a child's personality or help in the management of personal relationships, it is quite unable to replace the parent in this training." p. 8

"A school is not well equipped to deal with personal problems and problems of behaviour which require a long term relationship between a mature Christian adult and a child." p. 8

"The school cannot set curriculum goals in terms of things which require the Holy Spirit's enlightenment." p. 36

"[For the home and school] to see physical punishment as the very last resort, never to be used except in some rare and extreme circumstance, is not taking Proverbs seriously." p. 70

"If people are not taking those responsibilities seriously [those of maintaining a Christian school], it may be that they are not growing in the Lord." p. 90

"Children need to be motivated to work at learning. For learning necessitates work. The prime motivation is that God requires it of us." p. 65

Regular readers of the *Perspectives* will understand the appeal of the following to the undersigned:

"We are not teaching morals under the cover of physical education." p. 174

And as a science teacher in a Protestant Reformed School, I found the following satisfying, exciting, and challenging:

"The relationship between God and creation is a covenantal relationship. That applies, not just for the human or even animate creation; it applies to the whole creation. It is the relation between the Lord who speaks commands and a creature who obeys." p. 123

Science teachers, can you see how this might change approach to "natural law"? Bible teachers, and all believers, what does this say about the nature of providence and miracles?

As I was gratified to find Weeks' covenantal view of creation, so was I disappointed to find no covenantal view of the child or of Christian education explicitly stated in the book. Given Dr. Weeks correct emphasis on the home's responsibility to educate its children, it is unclear, to this reviewer at least, how Weeks justifies the transfer of that responsibility to a school in the absence of any covenantal framework, particularly in the absence of the idea of *in loco parentis,* whereby the teacher stands in the place of the parent. Dr. Weeks stresses correctly, again and again, that the Christian school is an "adjunct," a "supplement," even an "extension" of the home; but I looked in vain for any Biblical grounds for that extension, any Scriptural justification for the existence of the very Christian school that Weeks elsewhere so ably and accurately describes.

Nevertheless, *The Christian School: An Introduction* remains worthwhile and necessary reading for all who have any connection to Christian schooling. I hope this book from "down under" is read "all over," and receives the wide readership which it richly deserves.

A teacher who grows
is one who uses his classroom
as a laboratory
in which to gain new and better experience.