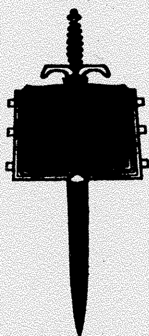

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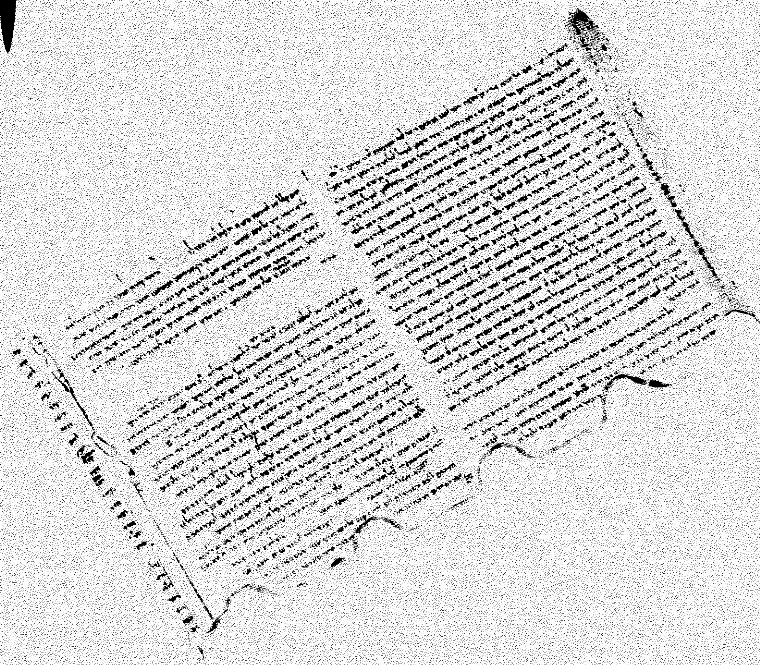

The Lutheran Synod Quarterly

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THE IMPORTANCE OF A SPIRIT OF INQUIRY IN CHRISTIAN HIGHER EDUCATION

Thomas A. Kuster

> "What has Athens to do with Jerusalem, The Academy with the church? ...We have no need for curiosity since Jesus Christ, nor for inquiry since the Gospel."[1]

So said the third century church father, Tertullian, in a passage frequently cited by those who stress an apparent incompatibility between the "wisdom of this world" and the spiritual wisdom God has provided us in Scripture. This apparent incompatibility becomes so absolute for some that the rejection of intellectual pursuits becomes a positive Christian virtue, and "Christian scholarship" is disparaged as if the two terms cannot stand together. Lesser strains of this anti-intellectual spirit find frequent voice in conservative Lutheran circles. Some, for example, express profound reservations concerning the practice in which faculty members in our Christian colleges receive advanced training and degrees in secular schools -- as if fearful that the Christian cannot meet the world's knowledge on its own ground. Others, on a different tack, reflect the same anti-intellectual spirit when they attempt to define the values of Christian education entirely in affective terms -- growth in love, a personal relationship with the Lord, commitment, fellowship -- as if the Christian has no need to encounter the world's knowledge on its own ground. Such voices, dedicated and well-meaning as they are, would

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[1] *De Praescriptione Haereticorum*, 7. *Ts. adapted from Alexander Roberts and James Donaldson, eds., The Antenicene Fathers, Vol. III (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans, 1957), p. 246.*

doubtless echo Tertullian's words approvingly. This paper intends instead to take issue with the father on this point: there is, in fact, an important need for curiosity since Jesus Christ, and since the Gospel inquiry is more necessary than ever.

In this paper, "inquiry" will be taken most often in its broad sense, synonymous with "scholarship." More specifically, scholarship is that kind of intellectual work that involves the higher orders of independent or "critical" thinking[2] -- i.e., thinking that does not stop with simple recall or even simple understanding of data, but soars beyond into analysis of thought structures, into synthesis of new structures, connections, and hypotheses, and finally into evaluation of thought structures against appropriate standards, and application of structures to new situations.[3] If a narrow definition is desired perhaps none will serve better than that of Jerome Bruner, who describes inquiry as a "matter of rearranging or transforming evidence in such a way that one is enabled to go beyond the evidence so reassembled to new insights."[4] Viewing inquiry in this sense against a backdrop of the college classroom, one can generate this contrast: on the one hand, there will be knowledge acquired by a student's

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[2]*The Watson-Glasser Critical Thinking Appraisal defines critical thinking in terms of "attitudes of inquiry" and their accompanying skills. R. J. Starr, "Structured Oral Inquiry Improves Thinking," American Biology Teachers, 34 (October 1972), p. 408.*

[3]*Harold G. Cassidy, "Liberation and Limitations," in Boston College Centennial Colloquim, The Knowledge Explosion: Liberation and Limitations, ed. Francis Sweeney (New York: Farrar, Straus & Giroux, 1966), pp. 183-84.*

[4]*On Knowing: Essays for the Left Hand (New York: Atheneum, 1970), pp. 82-83.*

own search and question -- by inquiry; on the other hand, there will be knowledge previously prepared by the professor, and served up to students cooked and garnished for their consumption. There is, of course, a place for both; the two even work in complementary fashion. But it will be the thesis of this paper that the former -- knowledge gained by the student's own inquiry -- should predominate in any school, including Christian schools.

The paper, then, will contain two major sections: the first and longer will defend the necessity of stimulating a spirit of inquiry in the Christian college student; the second will attempt to outline some means of doing so.

I.

If the spirit of inquiry among us is at times pale and wan, or even if there is some inertia among those of us who are in charge of nourishing it to a healthy vitality, it might prove helpful first to re-examine the necessity of stimulating such a spirit in our college and seminary students. Such a discussion, it seems, falls under the perview of several of the stated purposes of our Christian institutions of learning. For example:

Bethany ... aims to help students ...

2. To assume a responsible Christian attitude towards the talents God has given them and towards their obligation to develop and use their talents for the glory of God and the welfare of their fellow-men.

3. To progress in the development of critical and creative thinking.

4. To develop and increase an appreciation of man's expression through the fine arts.

5. To become responsible citizens, aware of social realities through the study of our American and world cultural heritage, and our contemporary social, economic, and political society.

6. To acquire the ability to use written and oral English effectively.

7. To secure a foundation in mathematics and the sciences for a better understanding of the world in which we live.

9. To acquire the necessary skills for achieving a satisfactory vocational adjustment.[5]

To fulfill such objectives effectively, our educational practice must be responsive to three factors:

-- First, our practice must be true to the nature of reality, and how we know it. We neither live nor teach in a dream world of our own making but rather in a world God has made, and in which He has placed us. This paper will argue that the nature of the world, and how we know it, necessitates inquiry.

-- Second, our practice must be true to the demands of the educational task, particularly on the college level. This paper will argue that the nature of education necessitates inquiry.

-- Third, our practice must be true to our Christian calling. This paper will argue that the task of the Christian necessitates inquiry.

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[5] *Bethany Lutheran College Catalog, 1971-73, pp. 8-9.*

-- The final consideration in this section, lest the case for inquiry seem too strong, will be the limits of legitimate inquiry.

A.

First, consider the claim that the nature of reality and how we know it necessitates inquiry.

The present structure of "knowledge" in Western Culture is based on a philosophy of realism, a view basically compatible on this point with revelation, and first extensively formulated by Aristotle. In brief, this philosophy holds that "there is a reality out there," and with that reality the individual mind engages somehow, and so "knows" it. The picture of knowing so produced is one of an active mind rather than a passive one; reality and knowledge of it are not already in the mind,[6] but the mind must, in effect, go out and investigate reality, in order to learn it.[7] The basic process of knowing, then, is "research," in its broad sense. The purpose of the scholar, according to a view with a tradition extending back through the Middle Ages to Aristotle,

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[6]*As would be claimed by a philosophical idealist, for example. My purpose here is not to argue the validity of Realism and its epistemology; there are of course many alternatives. But the fact is that the current structure of education is based on many of the premises of realism, and to function within that structure we must adopt thosé premises.*

[7]*A Christian knows that many aspects of reality lie beyond the power of his mind to search out and grasp by itself. Information about some of these is given us by revelation. A somewhat special relationship between revelation and inquiry is described in the third and fourth parts of this section, below.*

is to develop the various disciplines by uncovering the rational structure of reality -- to find out how things are, and why.[8]

Furthermore, the structure of that reality is so complex, and therefore so initially (and perhaps permanently) ambiguous, that it does not present itself for easy comprehension. To carry on the basic processes of knowing, then, must involve higher orders of thinking -- analysis, synthesis, evaluation, those processes we have earlier defined as inquiry.

It would seem, then, that all knowledge at least on a secular level, results from inquiry -- either one's own, or someone else's.[9] The nature of reality, and of how we come to know it, permits of no alternative. To advance the development of any discipline as well as to understand fully its present development, requires an understanding of, and experience with, inquiry.[10]

B.

Consider next that the nature of education necessitates inquiry. This necessity emerges in three specific areas: first, dealing effectively with the various disciplines requires inquiry; second, the process of effective learning requires inquiry; third, the activity of effective teaching requires experience with inquiry.

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[8] *Calvin College Curriculum Study Committee, Christian Liberal Arts Education (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans, 1970), p. 8.*

[9] *Calvin Committee, p. 48.*

[10] *A. C. Pugliese, "Meaning of Inquiry, Discovery, and Investigative Approaches to Science Teaching," Science Teacher, 40 (January 1973), p. 26.*

(i)

The contents of any academic discipline involve three elements: a core of hard data or fact, a conceptual framework into which those data are fit, and a methodology by which conclusions of various kinds are reached.[11] Inquiry, as we have defined it, operates extensively within the third element, methodology. A full understanding of any discipline can come only from an appropriate consideration of all three elements.

Unfortunately, the third element, methodology, with its inevitable spirit of inquiry, is the one most often neglected in the classroom. Facts are easy to teach, concepts only a little harder. Methodology, however, is little understood, difficult and time-consuming to get into. As a result, the student learns to consider the discipline merely a collection of things to memorize, and never really gets the flavor of it, never feels its excitement--never, in short, fully understands it.

Prescription: a dose of methodology. To engage in the methodology of a discipline--to exercise inquiry within the limits a certain discipline imposes--turns the student from a mere memorizer into a practitioner (though of course an amateur one), and therefore one who is at least in a position to gain a full understanding of the discipline. Some fields do this routinely. On page 17 of The 1973-74 Dr. Martin Luther College Catalog, a picture bears this caption: "Embryonic scientists probe the mysteries of God's creation." If science labs make students into "embryonic scientists" who are engaged in the methodology of the discipline, then perhaps we should have other labs -- or lab-type experiences -- as well. The student of history should not learn just the facts and concepts of history; he should become an "embryonic historian" by writing some history himself,

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[11] *Calvin Committee, pp. 52-53.*

thereby learning, among other things, to be dissatisfied with the secondary and tertiary sources that characterize the footnotes of many a term paper. And what better goal for a Christian doctrine class than to produce "embryonic dogmaticians" who have gone beyond simply learning the pronouncements of the great dogmaticians (valuable as that is) to an ability to formulate, in view of some modern problems, a teaching of Scripture in fresh, clear, and faithful language. A full understanding of any discipline requires engagement with its methodology.

But if this is true, then inquiry becomes all the more necessary because of the impingement of alternative views. Authorities within any discipline differ regarding details of methodology, as well as of conceptual frameworks. Conclusions, then, are likely to be biased according to the viewpoint of their author. Enlightenment historians, we are told, set out to prove that the Middle Ages were dark because of the influence of the church, and they adjusted their methodology accordingly. A Catholic historian of philosophy may set out to prove that after St. Thomas, all was regrettable decline. And a Freudian literary critic will try to show that the key to understanding a poem lies in the subconscious of author and reader. The proliferation of viewpoints resulting is certainly not to be deplored; indeed, the chief characteristic of college-level instruction is the investigation of viewpoints and their presuppositions. But the fact of proliferation underscores the necessity of inquiry; it is simply not enough for a student to learn only his teacher's views. Regarding details of subject matter, regarding evaluations of results as well as of presuppositions and of perspectives of mind out of which aspects of the subject matter develop, the student himself must learn to discern and to judge, without being dependent on the teacher's pronouncements. True, there is often a Scriptural view which the teacher tries to present, but even here the teacher himself is often not fully apprised of all its implications--which Christian teacher has

not gained new Christian insights into his subject, and has therefore taught new things year after year? The student must be free to go beyond what the teacher says. Even his examination of non-Christian views can have the effect of avoiding a deadening parochialism; by understanding better the various spiritual kingdoms of mankind, he can come to a fuller awareness of the significance of his own membership in the Kingdom of God.[12]

If effective dealing with any discipline, then, involves engagement with its methodology, as well as the ability to investigate alternative views, individual inquiry is clearly required.

(ii)

Mention "inquiry" to an up-to-date educator and he will immediately think of a particular teaching method currently in vogue in some quarters. This paper considers "inquiry" a far broader term than just the "inquiry method" (sometimes, with slight variations, termed the "discovery method"). Yet a glance at this somewhat controversial method will reveal enough evidence to suggest that the process of effective learning may well require inquiry.

Numerous studies launched to compare instruction by inquiry methods with more traditional expository methods claim to have demonstrated that learning is more effective when inquiry methods are used. For example:

- In a St. Cloud state experiment in consumer education on the high school level, Nappi found that a traditional treatment was less effective than an inquiry mode.[13]

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[12] *Calvin Committee, pp. 57-62.*

[13] *Andrew T. Nappi, "A Project to Create and Validate Curriculum Materials in Consumer Education for High School Students," ERIC ED 072 514.*

- In a study of 9th grade biology teachers, Starr found that with many bright students, structured oral inquiry materials significantly improved students' critical thinking ability.[14]

- A study by Guthrie "of problem solving in cryptograms showed a marked advantage of the discovery method of instruction for transfer to a task involving new rules, suggesting that exploratory strategies relevant to such new learning may have been engendered by the discovery method of instruction."[15]

- In a study of 5th and 6th grade mathematics students, Worthen found that immediate recall was higher with expository instruction methods, but inquiry instruction resulted in better retention and transfer of concepts. The latter were judged a "more important practical outcome."[16]

In short, the studies suggest that while expository teaching is effective in direct and specific learning situations, inquiry makes for better and broader transfer of learning; learning by inquiry appears more effective from the standpoint of generalizability, applicability, and long-term retention. In addition, since the method is rich in

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[14] *Starr, pp. 408-9.*

[15] *Robert Gagne, The Conditions of Learning (New York: Holt, Rinehart, and Winston, 1965), p. 226.*

[16] *Blaine R. Worthen, "A Comparison of Discovery and Expository Sequencing in Elementary Mathematics Instruction," in Klaas Kramer, ed., Problems in the Teaching of Elementary School Mathematics (Boston: Allyn and Bacon, 1970), pp. 107-20; Gagne, p. 225.*

reinforcement and intrinsic motivation value, some suggest that it may create a love of learning and a thirst for knowledge.[17]

This brief summary of research on a somewhat controversial topic is admittedly one-sided, but perhaps further illumination can be drawn from some theorizing on why inquiry seems to be an effective learning process.

- Jean Piaget conceives of a child's cognitive development as a process of successive disequilibria and equilibria. When a child meets a new situation, he gets "out of balance." To restore cognitive balance he must modify his previous cognitive structure.[18] The similarity of this view to our earlier definition of inquiry ("a matter of rearranging and transforming evidence..." p. 2 above) suggests a close harmony between processes and general cognitive development. Inquiry may well be the "natural" way to learn, hence its effectiveness as an instructional method.

- Jerome Bruner notes four benefits accruing from learning by inquiry:

  1. An increase in intellectual potency -

     There are two "casts of mind" possible in students: "Episodic Empiricism" is characterized by gathering information bits as isolated units, without organizing them into larger structures; "Cumulative Constructionism" features

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[17]*Gagne, pp. 229, 288; Lee S. Shulman, "Perspectives on the Psychology of Learning and the Teaching of Mathematics," in Kramer, pp. 94-95.*

[18]*Shulman, pp. 87-88.*

persistence at maneuvers to connect information into larger structures. Inquiry learning encourages the development of the latter, resulting in an increase in intellectual potency.

2. A shift from extrinsic to intrinsic rewards -

   By exercising the "competence motive" (an inborn need to deal with one's environment competently), inquiry learning reduces the effects of extrinsic rewards (e.g. satisfy teacher, satisfy parents, get grades, do just enough to get by) and strengthens intrinsic rewards (e.g. achievement and a love of learning).

3. Learning of the heuristics of discovering -

   Inquiry learning develops by practice the ability to impose varying frameworks of discovery onto novel situations, thereby improving a student's skill at analysis and problem solving.

4. Aid to conserving memory -

   When a student organizes complex material by embedding it into a cognitive structure he has organized himself, that material is more accessible to his memory. Many studies are said to support this observation.[19]

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[19] *Bruner, pp. 83-96; on point 1, also Pugliese, p. 26.*

The studies and theorizing can be summed up as follows: if by "more effective" learning we mean that a student

1) understands what he learns, and so remembers and transfers it better,

2) learns strategies for discovering new principles on his own, and

3) develops an interest in what he has learned, as well as in learning itself,

then there might be good reason for concluding that the process of effective learning requires inquiry.[20]

(iii)

If the foregoing two sections demonstrate that the nature of education necessitates inquiry, it becomes obvious that the activity of teaching, in which almost all church workers are engaged in some form or other, requires experience with inquiry. Anyone who teaches, after all, must continue to learn, and experience with inquiry is, in effect, learning to learn on one's own.[21] If someone who teaches depends perpetually on the knowledge he got in his own student days 20, 30, or more years ago, he puts himself hopelessly out of touch with the current state of knowledge, and finds himself at a loss even to evaluate, let along teach, the new approaches to disciplines, such as math and English, as they appear. We are tempted to suspect this reason for the lately reported "failures" of the new math in some quarters.

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[20] *Bert Y. Kersh, "Learning by Discovery: Instructional Strategies," in Kramer, p. 96.*

[21] *Pugliese, p. 25.*

Further, if the adage holds true, despite methods courses, that "teachers teach as they were taught," and if as observed above effective learning (and so effective teaching) requires at least some concessions to inquiry, it follows that prospective teachers should be exposed to such methods in their training. Many of the new approaches to teaching science, mathematics, language, and social studies stress inquiry methods,[22] and often teachers unused to such methods are unable to make them work.[23]

In view of the current "knowledge explosion," where entire fields of knowledge are revised wholesale; in view of the rapid obsolescence of specific vocations, and resulting necessity of frequent job-changing and retraining in our society today; and in view of the climate of questioning and changing values current today, any teachers our schools produce and the students they lead should be well trained and experienced in sound methods of inquiry. The nature of education requires it.

Consider, finally, that the task of the Christian necessitates inquiry. To enlist understanding of this point, let us entertain "the vision of Christian Scholarship."

When God commanded Adam and Eve to have dominion over His creation, He was doing far more than granting them the right to farm, hunt, and fish. He was giving man the right to build a culture, to develop

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[22]*Starr, p. 408.*

[23]*Robert Keith Hanson, "A Comparison of the Alternate Theories Formed by Students in the Classroom and Those Held by Student Teachers," Ph. D. Dissertation, U. of Illinois, ERIC ED 072-935.*

arts and sciences -- in effect, it was a "Cultural Mandate."[24] If this is so, then the Christian should not hesitate, but rather eagerly plunge into investigation and inquiry in the arts and sciences, not only as an excellent means of praising God by examining His works, but also in an effort to exercise a corrective influence on the cultures of the world. Men of the world, even after the fall into sin, continue to exercise the "cultural mandate," but no longer to thank and praise God; man's research purposes, as well as his results, were perverted by sin. Behaviorism in psychology, Marxist materialism in philosophy and political science, irrationalism in the arts and literature, as well as in contemporary life styles -- all these represent fundamental distortions of the reality of God's creation.

But now, with redemption, it is once again possible for the Christian to fulfill God's cultural mandate properly -- to put all things in subjection the right way. And with the perspective he has from Scripture, the Christian can work to eliminate the distortions introduced into the arts, sciences and culture by the biased researches of the world. As one group of Christian curriculum developers put it:

> The Christian religion is not an irrational bias which we intend to hold onto at all costs, ignoring the facts. It is not an astigmatism which we resolve never to get corrected. On the contrary, it is the spectacles with which we are enabled to see the facts aright. But look at the facts we must.[25]

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[24]*Calvin Committee, pp. 63-64.*

[25]*Calvin Committee, pp. 57-61. The Committee lists seven effects of a Scriptural perspective on the various disciplines.*

The product of good Christian scholarship, then, is a truer perspective on the reality of God's creation. And this claim can be readily advanced against the views of those, such as were cited above as this paper began, who would shrink in fear from matching the Christian viewpoint up against the world's, and would instead draw the Christian's academic wagons into a circle. The intellectually gifted Christian's calling is not to withdraw into a spiritualized isolation, but to sally forth into the academic world with sound scholarship infused with the Christian perspective.

Accordingly, we should deplore picturing the academic Christian as at best a scholarly gleaner, following along in the wake of the unbelieving researchers who work at the cutting edge of the discipline, picking up a straw here and a stalk there that he can fit into his Christian classroom. The image is, perhaps, all too real. Consider, instead, the following vision of Christian scholarly leadership: Christians ought to be producing history -- not just parochial textbooks for our own elementary students, but history for the scholarly world at large, as well as for popular consumption. Christians ought to be providing the scholarly world with insights into language and criticism -- where is the authentically Christian critic of the arts or of public affairs whose voice is heard today? Christians ought to be producing art and music in today's idiom, and Christians ought to be furnishing breaks-through in science. Of course, one small faculty, or one small group of Christians cannot be responsible for all this. And there are, as we all know, more basic purposes for the Church than to produce scholarship. And yet if a small faculty or a small group of Christians catches the vision of Christian scholarly leadership viewed here, would it not spread through students and beyond, producing in our own circles a generation of sound Christian scholars?

It would be a worthwhile goal.

But so far, this paper has discussed inquiry and scholarship almost entirely in connection with secular subjects. Do they have a place in a study of religion as well? Most certainly.

An historical survey will show that scholarship has played an important, if not crucial, role in Christianity. As God raised up judges to lead His people when needed in Old Testament pre-Kingdom days, it seems as though He has raised up scholars when needed in these days of the new covenant. The Apostle John's Gospel has been described as "not only a biography of unparalleled beauty and insight, (but) it is a work of scholarship in the broadest sense of the word -- an attempt to relate the Gospel to its total cultural setting, both Hellenistic and Hebrew."[26] The Pauline epistles, when fairly considered, reveal a breadth of knowledge unparalleled in that day. St. Augustine, so much admired by Luther, while impressed with the essential irrelevance of learning to salvation, yet applied his considerable powers of inquiry to produce "one of the most comprehensive and enduring attempts to understand the Christian faith that has ever been made."[27] And of course Luther's own powers of scholarship need no elaboration for this journal's readers.[28] Even today, the struggle for authentic Lutheranism draws heavily on the scholarship of its leaders.

To be sure, Christian scholars have always been aware of, and frequently have warned against, the dangers of being influenced by anti-Christian views.

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[26] *Elmore H. Harbison, The Christian Scholar in the Age of the Reformation (New York: Scribner, 1956), pp. 3-4.*

[27] *Harbison, pp. 17-18.*

[28] *Harbison's chapter on Luther, pp. 103-35.*

But their warnings were generally not directed against scholarship itself, but against its misuse. Even Tertullian, quoted at this paper's start, was not advocating intellectual withdrawal for the Christian, but (as the context of the quotation shows) rather was warning against a spirit of syncretism, of attempting to harmonize Christian and pagan views.[29] Gregory of Nazianzen, in the 4th Century, is perhaps more representative when he said,

> As we have compounded healthful drugs from certain of the reptiles, so from secular literature we have received principles of inquiry and speculation, while we have rejected their idolatory, terror, and pit of destruction. Nay, even these have aided us in our religion, by our perception of the contrast between what is worse and what is better, and by gaining strength for our doctrine from the weaknesses of theirs.[30]

It is not from the Church that the main attack on scholarship has come, but, at least in our day, from the secular educational establishment itself, where the obsession so often has been with the immediate, the "relevant" in its trivial sense,

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[29] Cf. fn. 1; also Frank P. Cassidy, "The Patristic Attitude toward Pagan Learning," ch. V in Molders of the Medieval Mind: The Influence of the Church on the Medieval Schoolmen (Port Washington, NY: Kennikat Press, 1944), pp. 159-74.

[30] Panegyric on St. Basil, in A Select Library of Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers..., ed. Philip Schaff and Henry Wace, second series, Vol. VII (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans, n.d.), pp. 398-99.

with "appreciation," "life adjustment," and "sensitivity."[31]

E. H. Harbison suggests a specific function scholarship can play in Christian thought. There are always times, he says, when a need arises to stand off from our beliefs and practices, to analyze and order them, to attempt better understanding of them in light of their origins, growth, and possible conflicts with other beliefs and practices. More specifically, he suggests the Christian scholar may have these legitimate motives:

1. to purify religious tradition in a time of corruption --

   Luther applied his powers of scholarship to this end, as do the apologists today in the current crisis in confessional Lutheranism.

2. to bring faith into a more fruitful relationship with culture at a moment of crisis in secular history --

   We are living now in times of severe cultural and moral crisis, which affect our people (our students, and people of the E.L.S. in general) as well as others. Our culture is in desperate need of a meaningful injection of Christian insight, not to mention the balm of the Gospel in terms our culture can understand.

3. to re-examine faith in light of some new discovery about the universe or man --

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[31] *Howard Mumford Jones, Scholarship, Novelty, and Teaching: an Address... (Columbus: Ohio State University Press, 1968), p. 7.*

> To cite an example: though the controversy over Evolution has frequently generated more heat than light, the genuine scholarship into both science and Scriptures necessitated by that conflict has deepened our understanding of both.[32]

Working, then, with these legitimate motives, the Christian scholar can direct his inquiry into the Christian tradition itself (and especially, of course, the Scriptures), into the culture that forms the setting for Christian proclamation today, and into the intellectual casts of mind that characterize the state of popular as well as specialized knowledge. Each of these objects of legitimate inquiry should be held up before our students as direct personal challenges.

In the view of this writer, one of the biggest dangers the church faces today is the production of non-thinking Christians. Please don't misunderstand. This is not a suggestion that we train rationalists, but rather thinking people, who know not only what they believe, but why -- and can explain it, even to someone who disagrees. The Christian whose understanding of his beliefs has not penetrated blind acceptance of some professor's pronouncement is a person who may be easily stumped, shaken in his faith, and misled. The Christian college teacher cannot condone or encourage, even in religion, a willingness to relegate analysis and inquiry entirely to any other mortal -- be he an "expert," group of "experts," or even a synod. The Missouri Synod was characterized in the 30's by an intense synod pride and loyalty that was the occasion for many to be led astray over the next four or more decades. People there -- some of them friends and relatives of us all --

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[32] *Harbison, pp. 4-5.*

just wouldn't believe "Synod" could do anything wrong, and so they wouldn't look into it, or even discuss it. These characteristics of synod pride and loyalty are observable in many young people in some of our circles today. And gratifying as it may be to know that the young people have confidence in us, it might well be more often frightening. We are, after all, as has been said, training disciples, not sheep. What we should want is campuses and congregations full of Bereans, who would not even accept just the word of the Apostle Paul, but "searched the Scriptures daily, whether those things were so." (Acts 17:11)

For these reasons, then, both in fulfilling a "vision of Christian scholarship" and in continuing the lengthy tradition of bringing the powers of scholarship to bear on Scripture and its surrounding culture, the task of the Christian requires inquiry.

D.

At this point, after a lengthy unmitigated defense of inquiry, a word begs to be said of its limits.

We should point out first that inquiry is not all there is in educational theory. The studies cited above supporting its effectiveness are not conclusive, and certainly inquiry is not the only method by which learning -- even effective learning -- can occur.[33] Furthermore, authorities agree that successful inquiry must be preceded by "preparation" -- whatever that may involve.[34] It might well be that inquiry works effectively only with brighter

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[33]*Gagne, p. 58.*

[34]*Gagne, p. 226; Bruner, p. 82.*

students.[35] Considerations like these await the results of further research.

Of greater importance, however, are the limits of inquiry viewed from a spiritual perspective. There are, clearly, two kinds of inquiry: bad and good. Both can be illustrated from Scripture. Bad inquiry goes way back: the serpent asked Eve, "Yea, hath God said...?" (Gen. 3:1). On the other hand, Scripture abounds with examples of commendable inquiry. Nicodemus came to Jesus full of questions ("How can these things be?"), and the Lord reproves him, not for asking, but for not having inquired into them before ("Art thou a master of Israel, and knowest not these things?") (John 3: 9-10). The Bereans have already been cited as commended examples of those who inquire into the Scriptures. The calling of Nathanael provides an excellent example of a "thinking Christian," one who "transforms evidence for new insights" (cf. the definition of inquiry, above); from two pronouncements of Jesus he concludes, "Rabbi, thou art the Son of God." Jesus does not reprove him for his analysis, but merely suggests, in effect, to wait until <u>all</u> the data are in: "Because I said unto thee, I saw thee under the fig tree, believest thou? Thou shalt see greater things than these." (John 1: 49-50)

And so inquiry itself is neither bad nor good, but the spirit behind it may be. Between the "bad inquiry" (of skepticism and doubt) and the "good inquiry" there is one essential difference: unbelief.

A student, then, does not need warnings against inquiry so much as understanding of it. To dismiss inquiry and scholarship wholesale is perverse. To dismiss whole disciplines, such as philosophy, anthropology, or psychology, and whole methodologies,

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[35] *Starr, pp. 408-9.*

such as the scientific method, is too simplistic. The student should be taught not to fear certain disciplines or certain methods, but rather to discriminate among presuppositions, as well as conclusions, according to Scriptural parameters. A total subjection of all intellectual processes to the truths of Scripture is the ultimate limit of inquiry. This subjection, in practice, has implications regarding conclusions reached through inquiry, as well as regarding attitudes entertained while engaging in it. When a conclusion is reached which contradicts Scripture, that conclusion is to be set aside as a product of fallen reason. Scripture is to be bowed to, on the grounds that human reason is limited by its nature as well as by sin, and Revelation is the more reliable source. Furthermore, the inquirer's attitudes are guided by Scripture as well. In frequent warnings the Lord reminds us not to glory in our own "wisdom" (even as we do not glory in our ignorance), nor come to depend on it totally, but rather to use our scholarly talents, after the example of the apostles, in humility, for the furtherance of His kingdom.

Taught, trained, and exercised in principles like these, the Christian student can wholeheartedly agree that "pedagogical principles based on the Word of God demonstrate that all knowledge in all areas of human thought and endeavor is worthy of inquiry when viewed in the light of human sin and divine grace."[36] The student will engage in inquiry as an exercise of his faith, as a commitment to his calling in education and learning, and as an expression of his confidence in the truth of Scripture, which both sets his limits, and permits him to search and inquire without fear of deception. For he knows that the reality described by Scripture, and the reality he searches, are the same reality.

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[36] *Dr. Martin Luther College Catalog, 1973-74, p. 12.*

II.

Having now found support in the realms of philosophy, education, and theology for the necessity of stimulating a spirit of inquiry in Christian students, we turn our attention to reviewing some means for doing so.

A.

On the theory that imitation is an important key to learning, many feel that students will not get really excited about a subject unless the teacher is. Similarly, we cannot expect students to be stimulated to inquiry unless they perceive the faculty involved in it as well. Assuming an interest on the part of individual faculty members in scholarship, what can be done to encourage the pursuit of such work? There is doubtless considerable give-and-take of ideas on an informal level on any faculty. Could this perhaps be formalized to the extent that individual faculty members so inclined could meet in an informal group, regularly enough to provide continuity and perhaps the pressure of deadlines necessary to encourage progress? The goal of such a group would be to encourage individual research. Members would present papers intended for discussion, revision, <u>and eventual publication</u> -- and publication not only in synodical outlets generally hungry for materials, but in the journals and at the conferences of the scholarly world at large. One need not read journals and attend conferences long before being convinced that any number of faculty members among us is fully capable of moving in those intellectual circles and substantially contributing to their quality.

And what administrative policies would encourage individual faculty members to write, to travel, to study. Every faculty has some policies that encourage and support faculty upgrading measurable by

the attainment of advanced degrees. But after that, what policies encourage the pursuit of scholarship at the cutting edge of the disciplines? We know that congregations must sometimes be trained to know that when a pastor comes in off the road to "just read" he is not wasting his time, but enriching his power to minister. So perhaps supervising boards and commissions must continue to be reminded that a professor who may spend some months out of his classroom (or with a lightened teaching load) engaged in pure research is not just on vacation, but enriching the whole educational posture of the church.

B.

At last we turn to some suggested means for stimulating a spirit of inquiry directly among Christian students. Two important needs can be supplied: our students need an understanding of inquiry, and they need opportunity for inquiry.

It may not be wise to drop students, unused to an inquiry emphasis, into the deep end of the inquiry pool. Students who are accustomed to being given all the answers by their teachers often become quite uncomfortable, and even, in their own way, rebellious, when the teacher begins to give them all the questions instead. If inquiry is to become a major educational feature of a school, perhaps the matter deserves specific discussion in freshman orientation sessions. If entering students are not oriented toward inquiry, perhaps a phasing-in process should be planned, either collectively or in individual courses.[37]

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[37] *R. J. Folstrom, "Experimenting with the Inquiry Approach," Music Educator's Journal, 59 (November 1972), 36-37.*

Perhaps specific attention to the purposes, limits, and goals of inquiry should find its way into introductory courses in each discipline. The student needs to learn what thinking is. He needs to learn that the scholarship that impresses and influences him must be divorced from the personality of the one advocating it. He needs to learn what research is. A former colleague refused to honor most college term paper assignments with the term "research paper"; he called them "reference papers" instead, insisting quite rightly that the mere collation of a number of authorities' views on a subject is not research. Students need specific training to help them understand and undertake inquiry.

To exercise their understandings of inquiry, students will then need opportunities. Furnishing opportunities will involve, on the part of a faculty, providing facilities, room, outlets, and encouragement.

Inquiry, of course, requires facilities. Library facilities come first to mind; access to an adequate library is of course essential to scholarship. Beyond that, a school needs to tune in to the facilities available in the immediate, as well as the greater community around it. Most schools have long ago moved away from the notion that all learning is to occur in the on-campus classroom. But they need to explore systematically what the wider-community facilities for inquiry are, whether they be opportunities for observation, or for hands-on in-service experience. The Reformation Lectures and Seminars at Bethany these past years are an excellent example of a school enriching its facilities for stimulating inquiry.

Along with a maximum exploitation of facilities, our students need room in which to inquire. That means the establishment of an intellectual atmosphere that permits questions to arise -- <u>any</u> questions -- and allows the students' minds to

expand. Chief enemy of such an atmosphere is the extremely autocratic teacher's role,[38] where, if a caricature is permitted, the teacher totally dominates all classroom plans and presentations; perhaps some feedback from students is occasionally permitted, but in it all the teacher is the expert, the manipulator, who supplies finally all the answers. In such an atmosphere the student is deemed working for the teacher (rather than, as is proper, the other way around); when a student works primarily to please the teacher, he learns to parrot, not inquire.

A more healthful classroom atmosphere might be one where teacher and student are considered to be engaging together in a discipline. The teacher, by virtue of his greater experience in the discipline, as well as his position, will be respected and important, but he will be an encouragement and guide to inquiry, rather than a barrier. The difference is subtle. It may not even mean, necessarily, that the teacher give up his major role in presenting material, or that the lecture method must be abandoned. Rather, the l ctures will change in tone. Bruner distinguishes helpfully between two modes of presenting material for learning. In the "expository mode," all the decisions about content, style, pace, mood, etc., are in the hands of the speaker. He has worked through the material, considered all the options, made his decisions, and presents the material in the form of pre-digested conclusions. The student is just a listener, unaware of the decisions that had to be made or the internal options the speaker had to consider. He is not at all participating in

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[38] *Don Dinkmeyer and Rudolf Dreikurs, Encouraging Children to Learn: The Encouragement Process (Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall, 1963), pp. 117-25.*

what the linguists call the "speaker's decisions." In the "hypothetical mode," on the other hand, the speaker and student are in a more cooperative position. The teacher lets the student in on the "decision points." The student is made aware of the alternatives and options, and may consider and evaluate them. In short, the student is taking part in the formulation of materials, and at times even plays a principal role in it.[39] As a result, in the hypothetical mode responsibility for learning belongs more to the student; learning becomes a more personal matter, and is therefore hopefully more effective and more permanent.[40] Piaget furnishes food for thought when he suggests that every time we teach a student something, we deprive him of the opportunity, and pleasure, of learning it for himself.[41]

Syllabi and assignments can provide room for inquiry if they permit both teacher and student to engage in real problems concerning real knowledge -- and all of the disciplines abound with such problems.[42] It is an artificial discipline that pretends that all the answers are in; students quickly detect artificiality, and lose interest.

A number of specific classroom procedures are suggested as engendering inquiry -- but recognize that students unused to inquiry may be made uncomfortable by some of these:

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[39] *Bruner, pp. 85 ff.*

[40] *Folstrom, p. 36.*

[41] *Shulman, p. 90.*

[42] *Pugliese, p. 26.*

-- Cultivate skills at leading discussions. Discussion is almost universally acclaimed as an effective teaching device, yet leading well requires specialized skills and experience.[43]

-- Avoid dogmatism, where it is not in place, by cultivating expressions like

we do not know for sure...
the evidence is not complete...
there are two points of view about this...
it is not certain why this happens...
this is an unsolved problem...
the evidence is contradictory on this...

and so on.

-- Use inductive approaches where appropriate. In simple form, this means being sure that the student has become aware of a concept before a name has been assigned to that concept.[44]

-- Use "Socratic questioning," i.e., the teacher, by a series of questions, leads the student into a trap from which he must then extricate himself.[45]

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[43] *Dinkmeyer, p. 115.*

[44] *Bruner, p. 102; an example of application to slower students is found in R. Sposet and T. Asad, "Surgery in the Classroom: ETI Program," English Journal, 62 (February 1973), pp. 278-80.*

[45] *Pugliese, p. 27. Note that students will probably need preparation for this technique.*

-- Use "torpedoing," i.e., teach students something until they are sure they know it, then provide a whopping counter-example. Hopefully, students will resolve their discomfort by thinking it all through.[46]

-- Give student a role in his own evaluation. Some theorists feel students learn through continuing cycles of manipulation followed by representation -- i.e., they construct or do something, then stand back to size up what they have done and determine what should be done next. Permitting self-evaluation encourages this cycle.[47]

Along with facilities and room for inquiry, students might be encouraged by perceiving outlets for their findings. Products of student research should be used in class, and if someone's project has added substance to a professor's lecture notes for perpetual use, it should be made known. There might be room for a periodic publication of outstanding academic work by students; most teachers have had work handed in that was worthy of campus-wide or even wider distribution.

Finally, a word about general understanding and encouragement of students who show an inclination toward inquiry. Embryonic thinkers are easily discouraged by criticism, especially if it creates fears that their investigations are going to get them "in trouble." A faculty interested in encouraging inquiry will recognize that many students are beginners at this. They will draw rash and improper conclusions from inadequate evidence; they will be immature in their judgments regarding

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[46] *Shulman, p. 87.*

[47] *Bruner, p. 101.*

research methods; they are in short just learning -- and learning, to a great extent, from their mistakes. Our attitude, as we guide and even correct them in their inquiry, should be one of calm and understanding, with "encouragement" the watchword. This might become particularly difficult when we find students questioning the very principles we are trying to teach them in class. This writer too has felt the sense of threat that comes from such inquiry, particularly when it involves some of his favorite principles. But with effort a teacher can try instead to feel flattered that a student considers something he said to be important enough to merit the effort of, at times, elaborate investigation. He can be assisted in this feeling by the conviction that no bad outcome of such inquiry is possible. If the student's investigation is slip-shod, the teacher will have a chance to teach him something about sound inquiry. If through sound inquiry he finds the teacher was right, it is of course a good outcome. If through sound inquiry he finds the teacher was wrong, both should be glad of it, and teaching should be adjusted accordingly. If through sound inquiry he finds that a legitimate difference of opinion is possible, this too contributes to the scope of our knowledge. There can be no bad outcome, unless one or the other of them subverts the process by refusing to face the facts. For reasons like these, honest inquiry is, in all cases, to be encouraged.

CONCLUSION

When our Lord looked into the future on Maundy Thursday evening, He foresaw His disciples in the world, but not of it. In so doing, He was not suggesting a monastic withdrawal from the world -- a kind of separateness, yes, but not isolation. On the contrary, He has "sent them into the world." (John 17: 14-19) As a result, He says, the world hates them. I submit that the world will not hate

what it can safely ignore. But it will hate those who are making telling and significant encroachments on what it considers its own territory, and that holds true, among other places, in the realm of scholarship. The Christian suitably gifted might well consider it his calling to make such encroachments, for the realm of sound scholarship and inquiry is after all not properly the world's territory -- it is God's territory. May we all strive to bring our scholarly voice, too, into conformity with the standard proposed by St. Paul: "...sound speech, that cannot be condemned; that he that is of the contrary part may be ashamed, having no evil thing to say of you." (Titus 2: 8)

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. . . The prophetic and apostolic word is the word of divine wisdom by which all the rationalism of man is summoned to repentance and renewal. The historical record of the Bible is the account of the divine dealings with man which alone can give meaning and direction to all other history. The theme of the Bible is the incarnate Word in whom alone we can find truth, freedom, and salvation, and to whom the written Word conforms in divine and human structure.

--- G. W. Bromiley

BOOK REVIEWS

Expository Sermons on the Book of Daniel, Volume 2, (Chapter 1-3) W. A. Criswell

Grand Rapids. Zondervan Publishing House. 1970. 147 pages. $3.50.

This is the second volume of a series of sermons on the Book of Daniel by the pastor of First Baptist Church in Dallas, Texas, one of the largest congregations in our country. Well known in conservative Protestant circles, the author served as president of the Southern Baptist Convention for a number of years. These sermons were taken down by two stenographers as they were preached. Only minor changes in grammatical construction were made.

The book contains eleven sermons. These sermons bear out the statement of the preacher-author in the Foreword that they were intended to be heard rather than read. The style is oral rather than written, and it reveals a man who undoubtedly has considerable powers of oratory and magnetic charisma. His use of illustration is good, and he has the ability to apply Scripture to the everyday lives of his people.

Dr. Criswell is staunchly committed to the inspiration and inerrancy of the Bible, a fact that comes out in these sermons even though he may not use those terms. He firmly believes in predictive prophecy. He also takes a strong stand against such as indulge in "speaking in tongues" (pp. 86, 87), and those who elevate subjective experience above the promise of God in the matter of certainty of salvation (pp. 99, 133). He makes a number of good statements throughout the series of sermons.

In his sermon on Daniel 1:12, entitled "Wine or Water," Dr. Criswell expresses his strong temperance views. The reader may be interested in evaluating his approach to the subject of alcoholic beverages. His manner of circumventing the use of wine in communion is highly questionable. (pp. 40, 41) He is also guilty of rather shallow exegesis at times, particularly in his repeated statement that Nebuchadnezzar forgot his dream of the great image. Daniel 2:5 cannot defensibly be interpreted that way. Rather, the words tell us that Nebuchadnezzar had made up his mind to test the magicians and fortunetellers by having them tell the dream as well as interpret it. Dr. Criswell also expresses millennealistic views. He states, "The Lord God shall personally appear out of heaven and shall set up in this new and glorified earth a kingdom that shall stand forever." (p. 81) Apparently he rules out the possibility of a heaven that will last to all eternity and not be located here on earth.

His sermons are generously sprinkled with references to the present world situation as well as quotations, including poetry. Dr. Criswell reveals himself to be widely read and well informed. He must be a man of many and varied talents as well as great capacity for work.

There can be no doubt about Dr. Criswell's ability to hold the attention of his hearers when he preaches. The eleven sermons in this book average about twelve pages each in length. To deliver them, even a fairly rapid speaker would need about forty minutes. In this day and age, when people become restless all too easily, we can only conclude that either he has a well-conditioned congregation or he is a man of great persuasive powers. Perhaps all of us could benefit by reading this book of sermons.

Rudolph E. Honsey

The Holiness-Pentecostal Movement in the United States. Vinson Synan.

Grand Rapids. William B. Eerdmans Publishing Co. 1971. 248 pp. $5.95.

Dr. Synan, a Ph.D. in history and a Pentecostal, has written a very complete history of the early Pentecostal movement. Students of the Pentecostal movement will find this book most helpful in keeping the many different types, strains, and movements within Pentecostalism distinct. He traces Pentecostalism back to the earlier Holiness movement and to Wesley. The Holiness people were not certain of the so-called gift of the Spirit. Synan then points out the appeal: "Pentecostalism thus succeeded in 'doing what the Holiness Movement could not do' in that it offered the believer a 'repeated and unmistakeable motor expression which, in effect, guaranteed his possession of the Spirit.'" (p. 122)

The movement has gone in many different directions. The movement is one of personalities and emphases rather than of theology. The movement is far from settled in its theology. Holiness is important in its thinking, but the movement is divided over the time of holiness, whether immediately at conversion -- "the Finished Work" -- or later -- "the second change." (p. 147f) Within some of the groups there is a modalistic unitarianism -- "the Jesus only question" (p. 153ff) Anyone who wishes to see where Pentecostalism has been -- its past -- will find this book most helpful.

Glenn E. Reichwald

Early Quaker Writings: 1650-1700. Hugh Barbour and Arthur Roberts.

Grand Rapids. William B. Eerdmans Publishing Co. 1973. 622 pp. $9.95.

The two editors, Quakers themselves, have edited a very fine selection of early Quaker writings. Many of the materials in the book obviously are not available to the average student, nor would he be able to distinguish their importance or setting in Quaker history. The editors have offered brief introductions to place the writings in their settings historically and theologically. A most helpful book for anyone working in this area.

Glenn E. Reichwald

God's No and God's Yes: The Proper Distinction Between Law and Gospel. C. F. W. Walther. Condensed by Walter C. Pieper.

St. Louis. Concordia Publishing House. 1973. 118 pp. $1.95.

As can be seen from the title, this book is an abridgement of Walther's Law and Gospel. On the whole, the editor has been successful. The division of the book is built around the theses themselves, and readers may miss some of the more pointed and pungent theological comments of Walther. But the flavor of the work is there. Pastors would find this book helpful in an adult Bible study group to present thoughtfully the great doctrines of Law and Gospel, a message so badly needed in these days of social Gospel, pietism, synergism, etc.

Glenn E. Reichwald

Concise Dictionary of Religious Quotations.
William Neil, Ed.

Grand Rapids. William B. Eerdmans Publishing Co.
1974. 214 pp. $7.95.

This book contains a number of striking quotations. However, the quality varies, since selections are offered from the Scriptures, Martin Luther, Nathan Soderblom, Rabbi Moshe Hakotun, and others.

Glenn E. Reichwald

What Christ Thinks of the Church. John R. W. Stott.

Grand Rapids. William B. Eerdmans Publishing Co.
1972. 128 pp. $1.50.

This delightful commentary in paperback is a reprint of the earlier 1958 edition. But time has not eroded the value of this book. The book is a commentary on the letters to the seven churches of Asia Minor in Revelations 2 and 3. While the author's Calvinism is evident, as when he refers to the Lord's Supper -- "To eat bread and drink wine is but a physical representation of the spiritual feast with Christ which His people are privileged continuously to enjoy" (p. 124) -- the book is full of thoughts for a preacher. Anyone thinking of preaching a series of sermons on these two chapters in Revelation will find this book most helpful. It contains background, comments on the situation, and applications for today.

Glenn E. Reichwald

A History of Fundamentalism in America.
George W. Dollar.

Greenville, S. C. Bob Jones University Press.
1973. n.p.

For a variety of reasons some people seem to shy away from anything connected with the name of Bob Jones University. Since the school is connected with a rather regorous and vigorous Fundamentalism, many people will not take time to even consider reading this book. That attitude would be most unfortunate, for this book is a history of the Fundamentalist movement by a Fundamentalist. Furthermore, the name Fundamentalist is hurled in a pejorative sense at conservative Lutherans. Dr. Dollar, as a Fundamentalist, defines just what a Fundamentalist is. Finally, older members of the Synod will remember some of the names in the book, such as William B. Riley, who led a struggle against liberalism in the Twin Cities. Dr. Dollar traces the origins of the Fundamentalist movement to a reaction against modernism in especially the Baptist churches combined with an interest in prophecy and particularly the millenium. One gains the impression that if one is not a chiliast, then he does not deserve the title Fundamentalist. In fact, a sharp line is drawn between the Fundamentalist and the conservative. Dr. Walter A. Maier is specifically classed as not being a Fundamentalist. Dr. Dollar also sees a weakening of the movement. As he traces its history, he points to a willingness of some to compromise their older positions. To him a Fundamentalist also is one who identifies error and separates from it. Billy Graham and others thus are criticized. As one reads the history of the Fundamentalist movement in the 1920's and 1930's, it is evident that this was a movement of personalities. People rallied to the leaders, but no really lasting impression seems to have been made. Helpful at

the end of the book is a glossary of terms to help one understand the vocabulary of Fundamentalism and also a biographical index to identify the host of people involved in the Fundamentalism movement. There seems to be no generally recognized theologian for the movement.

Glenn E. Reichwald

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As a test of our preaching we might apply the following remark of Emerson with respect to a sermon he had heard. He stated that one could not tell from it "whether the preacher had ever lived, loved, sinned, or suffered, had ever known the tug of temptation or the torment of dismay, had ever heard the laugh of a child or looked into an open grave." -- Quoted in the CTM, Feb. 1937, p. 87

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REASONS FOR PREACHING ON TEXTS*

1. The preacher is to preach the Word of God, that is, something definite out of the Word. of God.
2. The preacher is to preach on some biblical theme.
3. The text is to be the real source from which the substance of the sermon is drawn.
4. The text limits the sermon.
5. A real text prevents the sermon from degenerating into a lecture.
6. Texts open up an inexhaustible fountain for sermons.

* Lenski, <u>The Sermon</u>, pp. 9-12

OBJECTIVITY IN JUDGING OUR OPPONENTS

B. W. Teigen

I presume that this topic was assigned for conference study because we all want to be scrupulously honest in our judgments, so that the truth of God will prevail among us. I presume, further, that the topic was also assigned because it is recognized that language can be used by our "opponents" and by us to distort or conceal the truth or to make an idea more attractive or repellent, as the case may be. Ever since the serpent in Paradise said to the woman, "Ye shall not surely die," and the man said to God when confronted with his own personal guilt, "The woman whom Thou gavest to be with me, she gave me to the tree, and I did eat," there has been a deep-seated tendency in mankind to maximize what we would like to see maximized and to minimize what we would like to see minimized.

We may be misled by not recognizing and peeling away the layers of language that can conceal the truth. And even we may be guilty (unknowingly, of course) of doing faulty reasoning. And, by the same token, it is possible, even if not probable, that we can use language as a cloak which may cover the real facts in the case so that people are misled by failure to detect faulty reasoning. We conceivably could conceal the truth. Language is one of God's greatest gifts to mankind, but, as all other useful tools, it can be employed carelessly and dangerously. We so easily forget

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three important truths about language: 1) Meanings are complex, 2) Meanings are always changing, and 3) Meanings convey both information and attitude.

I also presume that the topic was assigned for study on the supposition that an intelligent person can improve his methods of thinking and writing and that he can improve his ability to readn and listen more perceptively and objectively. Information is actually communicated between human beings, but the fact that it is not always communicated or received accurately does not mean that we should reject everything that is written by either our friends or opponents. When, for example, we see language abused by the unscrupulous politician, we can become quite skeptical about language in general. Hence, as a necessary precaution against complete skepticism, I would like to quote what Richard Altick has to say with respect to this:

"It is probably just as easy to believe nothing as it is to believe everything. It is harder, but in the long run infinitely more satisfying, to be able to separate the true from the false -- to detect opinions masquerading as facts, as well as half truths and distortions of the truth. The practiced reader, while he always remains alert for these evidences of careless or deliberately abused logic, discovers that plenty of truth remains in the world; there is no dearth of things for him to believe, or to believe it." (Preface to Critical Thinking, page 112.)

Since the suggested topic reads, "Objectivity in Judging Our Opponents," this paper won't have much to do with how the opponents judge us, although perhaps a book should be written about that so that the record can be set straight for posterity. I suppose that we are all much like the dying Hamlet, who besought his bosom friend, Horatio, to absent himself from felicity awhile

so that he would "report me and my cause / To the unsatisfied."

I take the word "objectivity" to be the main word of the theme, and hence I am simply going to review with you what you already know; namely, the pitfalls into which uncritical thinking can lead us. The examples I shall refer to may be in the field of church polemics and they may be of a general nature. Perhaps by way of discussion you can supply the examples as we go along. Certainly the examples are not intended to be a general catalog of our sins and weaknesses. They are merely illustrative and suggestive of further study and thinking; they are not definitive.

I. Inductive Reasoning

In judging our opponents we want to obtain reliable information. We do that mainly by what the logicians call "inductive reasoning." When we reason inductively we begin with what we think is reliable information or with particular facts and then proceed to larger statements of general truth and to apply them. In inductive reasoning we move from the part to the whole, or from the result to the cause. The first thing we do is to accumulate statistical evidence. We may want answers to questions such as these: Is there a correlation between the sex of a baby and the month in which it is born? Is there any correlation between the average salaries of synod ministers and the price of aquavit? Do members of the Norwegian Synod on the average know more about objective justification than the members of the Missouri Synod? etc., etc.

Now the primary way or the so-called scientific method to settle such questions is to collect and to analyze all the available evidence, and sometimes, we must admit, the evidence may not be

very clear cut. We are forever performing such inductions in our daily life. Many of them that we make are tentative, but we make them nevertheless. Unconsciously, almost, our minds form questions about general truths and our experiences gradually answer them. We all know that a burning electric light bulb gets hot, and we generalize. Besides, the results of such inductions on the part of others are constantly brought to our attention, and we are expected to believe these generalizations.

I would like to point out now two dangers that are present in generalization. One is that of unconscious or deliberate exaggeration. If we are honest with ourselves, we must admit that when we generalize from our own experience we often go further than we are entitled to. We prefer the sweeping generalization. It is easier to make and it seems to be somewhat more satisfying and startling than the qualified one. When we make general statements we tend to erase the qualifying words, such as, "nearly all, usually, few, seldom," etc. For example, quite often heavy black clouds in the west mean a thunderstorm is coming. But that can become a generalization such as this: "Those black clouds in the west mean we are in for a bad storm."

It is of the greatest importance then that we always apply a test to a generalization. We should ask ourselves -- Are there really no exceptions? Is the speaker or writer justified in saying "all," "always," "never?"

A second danger ever present in a generalization is that it may be based on insufficient or weighted evidence. What evidence lies behind a general statement? Is it the only evidence? Is there any evidence that would nullify the evidence at hand? A generalization must be based on a sufficiently large number of pertinent instances.

For example, during Christmas vacation I heard of two ELC pastors who turned down a funeral because the person was a practicing Mason. Should I deduce from that that ELC pastors never have masonic funerals? You could adduce considerable evidence to the contrary. If at the church door on Sunday morning after a service one of your parishoners may say, "Pastor, you preached a wonderful sermon this morning; that's the kind of sermons this congregation needs," you might for the moment develop an inward glow of satisfaction (at least until your wife got hold of you at the dinner table). But at best it would be fringe evidence. One nice old lady could possibly not be representative of 300 church-goers, and you would no doubt have a gnawing feeling that other criteria are necessary for judging what is the best food for a Christian congregation. You will recall that professional public opinion pollsters are very careful to get a cross section that is representative of the group being examined and then to be very cautious in what they say.

We must check the evidence against other evidence. For example, the Missouri Synod has a tract called "God's Verdict Not Guilty," and on page 9 of that tract there is this one sentence, "Not all are justified." Now, I have heard it suggested that the Missouri Synod's position on objective justification has deteriorated so much in the last few years that they are blatantly denying objective justification in their tracts used for general information and mission work. The ALC has really influenced them. But if you will look at the whole tract, you will see that on page 4 it says, "God justifies the ungodly," and the context for the statement on page 9 shows that the writer is speaking about personal justification. So, one must be careful lest he use insufficient or weighted evidence.

Further, if you have set up a hypothesis regarding a body of fact, you will have to test

the hypothesis to see whether it actually explains the phenomena. Physicians are constantly doing that by diagnosis. If one sees symptoms A, B, and C in a patient, he will say the patient probably has scarlet fever if symptom D and E should show up later. If symptom D and E do not appear, the doctor may have to revise his thinking and look for some other cause. A hypothesis can be considered confirmed only if it alone can explain the effects noted. If somebody has the hypothesis that a certain pastor is not mission-minded and says this congregation lost ten members after he came, such an hypothesis surely would need to be tested.

Quite a few unreliable generalizations are emotive, and emotive generalizations from the nature of the case arise in politics and, unfortunately, religion. For example, "All Americans are brave," or "All Norwegian Synod people love pure doctrine and holy living." Such statements are reliable only as an index of the feelings of the speakers. I might add a little bit and say "All Americans are brave because we saw them fighting the Nazis," or "All Norwegian Synod people love pure doctrine and holy living because we know that the congregations subscribe to Luther's Small Catechism." These statements now depend upon some reasons that vouch for their reliability. Yet they are far from being absolutely reliable. They can be contradicted by individual statements and experiences. They are, in other words, subjective generalizations.

Then there are what we call popular generalizations. If the statement, "All Americans are brave" is universally affirmed, then this statement would seem to be verified. One individual could be wrong, but certainly not one hundred and sixty million Americans. Likewise, if we say that all Norwegian Synod people love

pure doctrine and holy living, this could hardly be wrong when twelve thousand of us utter it with one voice and possibly even publish it in the official organ. We might put a note here by asking the question, "Do words such as 'everyone' sometimes mean 'I'?" But even if twelve thousand of us hold such a view of the members of our Synod, it still doesn't make it reliable. Very often the one man has been right, and you know all about the "despised minority." You have recently seen how the Lutheran Herald points to the little minority as opposed to a respectable majority, or at least a "sizeable minority." Is it necessary to add that it is possible that the majority in some cases may be right also and one man may be wrong?

One of the great and trying problems facing us when we study and discuss inter-synodical questions is to thread our way carefully through the maze of generalizations that arise, and then to mark for our own those that have validity. You, yourself, can supply all the examples that might be beneficial to analyze and discuss.

II. Deductive Reasoning

Deductive reasoning is simply reasoning from a general truth to a particular conclusion. Deductive logic shows us what necessarily follows when we endorse a given set of ideas. The classic way of analyzing this process is the use of the syllogism. The major premise is a statement of general truth. The minor premise is the statement that a single individual or thing belongs to the larger class mentioned in the major premise. The conclusion infers that what is true of the greater class is also true of the individual member of that class. For example, look at these three statements: "All Roman Catholics are obligated to attend mass,"; "The Pope is a "Roman Catholic"; "The Pope is obligated to attend mass."

The system seems quite simple and foolproof. It should be noted, however, in analyzing the logic of paragraphs or essays, that these premises and conclusions are sometimes difficult to extract. Sometimes the conclusion appears at the beginning or the middle of the paragraph. Sometimes the premises contain an abundance of facts and data which have no bearing on the argument. The writer is frequently governed by the desire to make his argument more persuasive through his choice of words and through his illustrations. To the critical reader, therefore, the main importance of a syllogism is that it gives him a quick way of testing and perhaps exposing the fallaciousness of a statement which is assumed to follow logically from certain other premises or evidence. Let us, therefore, briefly call to mind some of the errors that may arise in syllogistic thinking.

First, the terms must be accurately defined. The wording must be exact and clear. If someone says, "The intelligence level of Negroes is higher than that of Whites," what does that statement mean? "Intelligence" has never been accurately or satisfactorily defined. What does the phrase "intelligence level of Negroes" mean? Is it the overall average I.Q. of southern Negroes tested in 1925, or is it the I.Q. of Negroes now in the colleges and universities of the Upper Midwest? And what does the "Whites" refer to? Then, one must keep in mind that words may have similar but not quite identical meanings. Meanings overlap, and they are in constant danger of changing. You all remember from your college days the one that was used to illustrate that. For example: Nothing is better than bread; sawdust is better than nothing; therefore, sawdust is better than bread.

What is the difference between a depression, a recession, and a slump? What should we call this rising tide of unemployment creeping over

our nation during these winter months? Getting into the field of theology, just what is unionistic prayer fellowship? What is a question of casuistry? These things are not easy to answer, and they certainly cause a great deal of concern for all who are serious in trying to learn to do the Lord's will.

A second thing to be on guard is that we must remember that any qualification in a premise must be faithfully retained in the conclusion. If a generalization in one of the premises admits the possibility of an exception, then the conclusion must also admit the possibility. Sometimes a premise has a tacit exception. For example: The crime rate is the highest in the slums. I presume that the crime rate in most cities is meant, or in the large cities, or something like that.

There are also times when either deliberately or because of fuzzy thinking such words as "always," "never," "only," "none but," "every," "all," etc., are omitted. Let me illustrate by an article I read in a church paper recently. As a matter of fact, it appears in the Northwestern Lutheran for January 5, 1958, page 3. There you will find an article with a take-off on an advertisement from a catalog of used books, where the condition of the book is listed. One title was "Formal Weddings" and then in parentheses "Soiled." Without any qualifications, the author lists six types of weddings, or, I suppose I should say, six things that can occur around a wedding which would make them soiled. We would surely agree that a wedding is "soiled when it develops that groom and bride have not led a chaste and decent life in word and deed during their courtship days," since this would be a flagrant transgression of God's commandment. But without any qualifications the author lists

several other types of "soiled weddings." He says: "A wedding is soiled when the incidental music is secular and operatic or even pagan, and does not serve to glorify the Lord, who is to be a daily guest in the home of the newlyweds." This statement can lead me to a syllogism like this: Weddings which have secular music are soiled. At the wedding I attended last Saturday, the processional was "Lohengrin." Therefore, I attended a soiled wedding. Now the bride was a sweet and pure Christian Day School teacher of the highest moral standards, and the groom was a fine, outstanding young farmer, who, even as a young man, is a bulwark in the church. The organist may not have studied with Dupre but she means well. Now, did this writer mean that <u>all</u> weddings which have secular music are soiled? That is inconceivable to me. Or, did he mean that some, a few, weddings which have secular music are soiled? The way it is written there is no qualification in the conclusion which I, the reader, have to draw.

I might say that I think this is a particularly bad example of fuzzy theological thinking, i.e., to put along-side the sixth commandment, given by God directly, a human opinion about what is secular or pagan music, an opinion which will change from generation to generation and from century to century, and from region to region, and even person to person. Suppose this young bride had said to the orthodox Lutheran pastor: "I would like to have the original music for this song played as the processional for my wedding because on our first date we heard this music. The song is 'My Peace of Mind is Shattered by the Charm of a Tender Maiden.'" Do you think that this orthodox pastor would permit such goings-on in his sanctuary? Well, for your information, you know the original music for this ballad as "O Sacred Head, Now Wounded." Maybe you might object that it isn't fitting wedding music since

it is basically Good Friday music. This matter of what is "secular" music is not so easy to settle. Martin Luther is supposed to have remarked when looking around for melodies for hymns, "The devil shouldn't have all these good tunes." (See Saturday Review, Jan. 25, 1958)

To round off this part of the discussion, I shall note the third way in which deductive logic may go awry. The first and second terms in a universal premise must not be assumed to have the same scope. This is what the logic books call "the fallacy of the undistributed middle." If you say all X is Y, then reference is made to all of X but not to all of Y. Thus the statement, "All humans are mammals," says something about all humans but not about all mammals. The statement does not imply that all mammals are humans. The point is that one must always guard against the assumption that in a major premise X and Y have a one-to-one relationship, or, to put it in other words, that they are connected as if by an equal sign. You have to watch that elusive word "is."

III. Other Sources of Misunderstanding, Confusion and Disagreement Which May Arise in Communication Situations

First of all, there is the ever-present danger of introducing irrelevant and irrational evidence. Years ago Aristotle spelled them out and somewhere along the line they picked up Latin terms. Since the members of this conference are very much at home in the Latin language, I'll give all eight of them to you that way -- you'll feel more at home:

argumentum ad hominem -- appeal to personal prejudices
argumentum ad populum -- appeal to the prejudices of the masses
argumentum ad misericordiam -- exploitation of pity
argumentum ad baculum -- appeal to brute force ("to the club")
argumentum ad crumenam -- appeal to money ("to the purse")
argumentum ad verecundiam -- appeal to prestige or "authority"
argumentum ad ignorantiam -- the stress upon ignorance
argumentum as captandum vulgus -- anything "to catch the crowd"

Let me quote to you from Flesch's, The Art of Clear Thinking, chapter 9, "How Not to Be Bamboozled":

"The logicians traditionally use examples from debating. Today it is more instructive to use examples from advertising. Let's imagine an advertising campaign for "Durtee Soap," and examples for each of the Latin tags will suggest themselves. An argumentum ad hominem might be: 'Look at yourself in the mirror; only Durtee Soap will get you real clean.' Ad populum: 'The easiest way to be loved by everybody is to use Durtee Soap.' Ad misericordiam: 'Don't make your children unhappy by not washing their ears with Durtee Soap.' Ad baculum: 'Durtee Soap is being advertised every hour on the hour on all major networks.' Ad crumenam: 'Durtee Soap costs 2 per cent less and is 50 per cent more floatable than any other soap.' Ad verecundiam: 'All five Rockefeller boys were brought up exclusively on Durtee Soap.' Ad ignorantiam: 'Only Durtee Soap contains the miracle ingredient Lodahocum. If you've never heard of Lodahocum, you ought to be ashamed of yourself.' Ad captandum vulgus: 'Durtee Soap is the favorite of everybody from coast to coast.' (page 67)

Perhaps two or three of these catagories might merit special attention. First of all, the argumentum ad hominem, that is prejudicing your audience against the opponent. It's common in politics and, unfortunately, it has happened in theology. I suppose the classic example is found in John 1,46, "Can there any good thing come out of Nazareth?" Then there is the argumentum ad populum. This is the appeal to the passions and prejudices of the people rather than to their common sense and better judgment. It is so easy to use emotionally weighted words to bias an audience in favor of or against a person. Some label this gimmick "snarl words and purr words." There are "capitalistic war-mongers," the "rich Wall Street gangsters," the "unionistic Lutherans," th "liberals," and "conservatives," and, I guess, also the "orthodox." Then there is the argumentum ad verecundiam. That is the appealing to an authority who is held in great reverence by everybody. It's trying to capitalize on the prestige of a great name. You can call on the Declaration of Independence, or James Madison, or Thomas Jefferson, or you can say that in 1883 Franz Pieper said at the Atlantic District Convention so and so, and so and so. Needless to say, we might again stress the importance of critically analyzing any appeal which uses quotations from men and women who have achieved fame in one field or another. We must be ready to ask the crucial question, "Is the quotation appropriate here?" and then these questions, "Does it have real relevance to the point at issue?", "Is the statem nt sound and correct in itself?" In this connection I would like to quote some pertinent words by Prof. John P. Meyer in his review of The Abiding Word (See Quartalschrift, April, 1948 (45,2), pp. 151,152.):

"Children always do well to profit by the labors of their fathers. The fathers' 'expositions of the Holy Scriptures, refutations of errors,

explanations of doctrinal articles' should be studied carefully and gratefully by their children.

"Yet, a caution may not be out of place. In a controversy all statements of the truth will naturally be pointed against the error, and will be formulated and phrased accordingly. Thus, when the Buffalo Synod insisted that a Synod as such possesses, by divine right, certain authority over its member congregations, Dr. Walther, while vindicating for a synod that it is a 'part of the Church of God on earth' and that also 'to it is given the command' by the ascending Savior to 'teach them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you,' rightly maintained that even the smallest congregation was endowed by Christ with all spirital power and is not in the least dependent on the authority of some super-church body.

"These truths must be upheld in their full extent. But there is danger that, while the phraseology is maintained as it was pointed against the error of the day, the truth itself may be imperfectly presented; yes, when the phraseology that was pointed against a very definite error is pointed in another direction, there is danger of warping the truth. A valuable truth is lost when divine institution is claimed for a local congregation over against a larger church body, such as a synod, which is declared to be 'not a divine but a human institution.' A synod is a church.

In the same category come these appeals to the majority or the minority. We mentioned those in the first part of our paper.

Secondly, there is always this possibility that we (or someone else) are begging the question, that is, the proposition to be proved is actually assumed as already being proved: "A is good because

A is good." Name-calling and the glittering generality involve question begging. If someone says that the only way to escape disaster is to do what I tell them to do, that is in a way begging the question because the whole situation stands very much in need of proof.

Thirdly, we have the pitfall of the false analogy. This fallacy consists of presenting a situation which is considered to be true, and then, on the basis of it, commenting on another situation which is said to be similar. An ever-present danger is that the analogy will assume an important or vital resemblance between the two objects of comparison where actually none exists. The one that the political orators use, especially when the second term of a president is up for consideration, is "don't change horses in the middle of a stream." Now, of course, that can be a dangerous situation and it should generally be avoided; although sometimes you may have to do it and take a calculated risk. But in reality there is only a superficial similarity between the two situations of changing horses in the middle of a stream and changing public officials at certain times in national affairs. I don't want to be understood as implying that analogies do not sometimes suggest new and fruitful approaches to problems; but they are satisfactory only if they compare two elements that have very few differences, and then one must be alert to look for some vital differences that will change the picture. I suppose that the writer of the "Soiled Weddings" editorial was thinking in terms of analogies and didn't think too sharply about them.

Fourthly, we are constantly in danger of over-simplification. We are naturally lazy, and we tend, therefore, to over-simplify. Also, we are so completely oriented to the two-valued situation, the either-or situation, that we are

not quite ready to look for a third or fourth possibility. It seems to me that we are generally too eager to view questions in their simplest terms and to make our decision on only a few of the many aspects which the problem involves.

In the field of theology I suppose one shouldn't even mention this, but there is the possibility that there can be a distortion or the actual suppression of the truth. This is invited by our intellectual laziness and possibly by our desire to fulfill the Scriptural precept that charity shall cover a multitude of sins. If distortion and suppression of truth doesn't happen in theological circles, it at least could happen. I believe that the crypto-Calvinistic controversy in the 16th century involved the actual suppression of facts. The system can be a little more refined today. For example, there are the card-stacking and the smoke-screen devices. These devices are used by groups to divert attention from certain issues and by laying heavy and insistent emphasis upon certain select topics, discussion of which probably can do our side no harm, and at the same time soft-peddaling a discussion which might prove embarrassing to us. Then we have the "red-herring," an irrelevant issue drawn across the path of an argument, when one is becoming slightly embarrassed. Particularly from the advertising world, we have the wrenching from context. A sentence or phrase can easily mean one thing when it is quoted alone and when it is read against the background of the whole discussion to which it belongs. You who have written a book review that was not entirely complimentary have, no doubt, suffered from this. And then we can also set up a lot of strawmen to knock down. That quite often involves a going past of the other person's point and then trying to make your own point, on which perhaps

your opponent does not disagree at all with you. I suppose we ought to take note of the use of proverbs, axioms, and well-known quotations. Someone has said that these folk-truths have a gently narcotic effect on the critical intelligence. Many of them may be true, others may be only partially true or true under certain conditions only. Or, if it is an old axiom, it may be completely misunderstood. We live so long with such generalizations that we never bother to examine them critically. For example, how many people understand what is meant with the proverb "The exception proves the rule"? Our elders were just succinctly stating the point set forth in the first part of this paper: If you have started to generalize and find that further evidence does not support your generalization, you had better recheck the facts and hold your final judgment in abeyance. Is all fair in love and war, and is it true that to the victor belongs the spoils? Suppose someone pushed to the extreme this quotation from the Bible, "A soft answer turneth away wrath." Well, we wouldn't have any blasts in our church papers, but I am not so sure that we would always escape the wrath of our opponents even then. This statement, however, is generally true in your normal conversation, where a soft answer will calm people down and not cause them to explode.

To return to the title of the paper, "Objectivity in Judging our Opponents," I would like to make an observation or two about the words "objectivity" and "subjectivity." In general, they represent two different things, but it seems to me that somewhere they begin to overlap. Objective data are data which everyone will agree upon, such as, "Columbus discovered America in 1492." Subjective data depend upon one's personal feelings or opinions. For example, "Roquefort cheese is repellent." For the first one we can bring proof that will probably be acceptable to most people.

We have Columbus' journal; and there is other independent supporting evidence. But it is pretty hard to produce any objective proof for the second statement. Many will agree that Roquefort cheese is repellent. Twenty-five years ago I agreed with it, but today I disagree. There is then no plain division between the realm of the objective and that of the subjective. Perhaps scientists could set up some standard of measuring odor and taste which, if used, would force us to classify Roquefort cheese as repellent.

Now we have a standard by which we judge: God's Word, and we firmly believe that "in all things that are necessary to know in order to be saved, the Bible is plain enough to those who use it aright." (Explanation, question 10) But problems do arise in a few particular passages and in the application of passages. Doesn't subjectivity then come in to a certain extent, as in the case of judging an appetizing cheese? Dr. Robert Preus in his book on the inspiration of Scripture says, "The Lutheran thesis (that is, of the clarity of Scripture) does not pertain to every verse of Scripture. There is much in Scripture which is obscure and difficult to understand, not only because of the _rerum sublimitas_ but also because of the Holy Spirit's wording in Scripture." Preus states further, "In other words, it is the Lutheran position that, although many passages in Scripture are not clear, all necessary doctrines and precepts are clearly revealed in Scripture." (p. 157) And Dr. Dau in his dogmatic notes has statements such as these: "Not all parts of Scripture are alike perspicuous." "The property of perspicuity belongs indeed to the entire Scriptures; however, it admits of degrees." "The perspicuity of Scripture is not absolute, but regulated by a certain order and dependent upon the proper application of that order." (pp. 44,45) Such statements by our theologians do not nullify

the doctrine of the clarity of Scripture, but they serve to put us on our guard lest we confuse our subjective generalizations with clear statements of Scripture and declare something to be clear which may not be so clear. Prof. John P. Meyer, in the book review previously alluded to in this paper, illustrates how "one's reading of the Scriptures may be affected by certain fixed preconceptions." In applying some particular passage of Scripture, have we ever foisted upon our people some subjective generalization which we may have drawn from this particular passage, but which in reality is partly subjective? It seems to me that here part of our problem lies. To go back to our "Soiled Wedding" editorial, how many flowers, costumes, attendants must there be before the wedding is classified as soiled, and on what particular Bible passage can you classify a particular wedding like that as soiled?

In summing up, let me say that as we use God's gift of language to do His will, to glorify Him and to serve our neighbor, we must confess that we haven't always used it as it ought to be used and that we too must pray with David, "Create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a right spirit within me." (Ps. 51, 10) And having prayed that, surely all of us will pray as Solomon did when God appeared to him and said, "Ask what I shall give thee": "Thou hast showed great mercy unto David my father, and hast made me to reign in his stead. Now, O Lord God, let thy promise unto David my father be established: for thou hast made me king over a people like the dust of the earth in multitude. Give me now wisdom and knowledge, that I may go out and come in before this people: for who can judge this thy people, that is so great?" (II Chronicles 1, 8-10)