

FOR YOU AND YOUR CHILDREN

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Introduction

Dear fellow combatants in the church militant, conquering with the word of peace given by our Lord Jesus Christ, for all the ages of this world, until He comes again, in glory. Dear parents, to whom is given the charge of precious bodies and souls. Dear members of Christ's church, who together provide for the nourishment of souls through word and sacrament:

The theme for our convention this year underscores this crucial work of our Savior, which He accomplishes through parents and through the ministry of His church – bringing the precious promise of the gospel to the next generation. This is the context in which we find it:

³⁶ “Therefore let all Israel be assured of this: God has made this Jesus, whom you crucified, both Lord and Christ.”

³⁷ When the people heard this, they were cut to the heart and said to Peter and the other apostles, “Brothers, what shall we do?”

³⁸ Peter replied, “Repent and be baptized, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins. And you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. ³⁹ The promise is **for you and your children** and for all who are far off—for all whom the Lord our God will call.” (Acts 2:36-39)¹

Part 1 – The Biblical Basis for Christian Education

All mankind has crucified Jesus by their sins. All mankind is called to repentance, to cry out, “What shall we do?” To all mankind the gospel imperative is given, “Repent and be baptized in the name of Jesus for the forgiveness of your sins.” To all mankind the promise is given of forgiveness and the gift of the Holy Spirit. And lest anybody think that this was just for one group of people and for one time, Peter goes on, “The promise is for you and your children and for all who are far off...”

As we would expect, we see the doctrine of Justification reflected in these words, because Peter is proclaiming to one and all that the promise is for them, something that can only be said in the light of Jesus' universal atonement, and God's universal declaration of justification, as John says, for example “He is the atoning sacrifice for our sins, and not only for ours but also for the sins of the whole world.” (1 John 2:2)

Christian Education Defined

So that we all have a common reference point, it helps to define what we mean by “Christian Education.”

Presuppositions: Christian education presupposes that Christ atoned for the sins of children² and desires that each one comes to know Him. Christian education presupposes that each child is a sinner, purchased and won by the blood of Jesus Christ. This makes each individual of immense value in an absolute sense. Christian Education presupposes that there is truth that is

both valuable and knowable, and therefore teachable.

Purpose: The purpose or objective of Christian education is to carry out the divine command to “[teach] them to observe all things that I have commanded you...” (Matthew 28:20) and to “bring them [children] up in the training and instruction of the Lord...” (Ephesians 6:4)

Content: The content of Christian education is the Christian faith, and when taught consists first and foremost of the Bible from beginning to end, of the teachings of the Bible as we confess them, of the applications of the Bible in the daily life of the Christian, and in the ramifications that the Bible has in the consideration of every other facet of knowledge and existence. Intrinsic to all of this is the right understanding of the Bible, particularly the right division of Law and Gospel.

Methodology: While most methods may be used by which teachers teach and learners learn, Christian education has within it an element of proclamation, in which the teacher bears witness to the truths of the Holy Scriptures, particularly of the gospel, knowing that the power of the Holy Spirit works effectively through the means of grace, even as the student comes to possess an academic knowledge of the truth. Certain methods of teaching do not serve well because of what they assume about mankind. For example, those methods which rely upon the “innate goodness” of the child, and seek to bring forth that goodness through self expression fail to recognize the need to instruct, to build into the child those things that are good.³

Christian Education Contrasted

It doesn't take long to see that there is not just a difference, but a conflict between Christian education and the default system of education in the United States.

If you speak with most parents, teachers, administrators, education officials, and politicians you will find agreement in this: Children are valuable. We tell that to children all the time, “You are valuable, you should value your self.” We talk in terms of “self-esteem,” and decry anything that would destroy the self-esteem of children. It is something we sense, this value of children.

At the same time, however, American schools teach almost unanimously that children are the chance product of random forces applied to inanimate matter. It is taught and reinforced overwhelmingly. Some typical examples:

- A common high school biology text: *Molecules to Man*, published by the Biological Sciences Curriculum Study.
- See any volume of National Geographic Magazine, any week's worth of Nova on PBS.
- Practically every National Parks Service information placard or lecture on the geology of the South Dakota Badlands, the Grand Canyon, or elsewhere.
- Court removal of stickers identifying evolution as a theory from Georgia textbooks.⁴

As one sixth grader asked me in a science class on matter, “If rocks are matter, and we are matter, what makes us more important than a rock?” Indeed, what? On what basis do we say that children are more important than parakeets or glaciers? The natural law still affects common thought, and many will say that it is axiomatic that children are valuable. Others will admit that the question is problematic, but that evolution seems to have equipped parents with some regard for their children, perhaps for the good of the species. Others will admit that there is no truly intrinsic value in a child, but perhaps only in the species⁵ or in the planet.⁶ So, while many believe that children are valuable, it may be difficult for them to explain why, based upon the all-pervasive philosophy of evolution. This philosophy by any name, I submit, has become the state religion. It is the presupposition upon which children are taught, laws are written, enforced, and

adjudicated, and from which common cultural values are derived.

God's Earnest Care for Children

Contrast this with what we confess as Christians, along with Peter. We confess that every child is worth the blood of God's own son, for that is the price paid for every living soul, and that the promise of the gospel is intended for every person, and for their children. So Paul encourages the elders of Ephesus in their labors, "Keep watch over yourselves and all the flock of which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers. Be shepherds of the church of God, which he bought with his own blood." (Acts 20:28) Jesus also spoke of our worth as His creatures, saying "Are not two sparrows sold for a penny? Yet not one of them will fall to the ground apart from the will of your Father. And even the very hairs of your head are all numbered. So don't be afraid; you are worth more than many sparrows." (Matthew 10:29-31)

The emphasis Peter gives to the promise being to children is not just an incidental remark. The reference is to the promise of salvation in general, and to baptism in particular. Like circumcision in the Old Testament, baptism is *especially* for children. Every child is born spiritually dead, blind, and an enemy of God, and will be lost forever unless reconciled to God, as Paul writes, "As for you, you were dead in your transgressions and sins," (Ephesians 2:1). It has been the concern of our loving Savior to bring children to a saving faith, and baptism is the only means that He has given us to regenerate infants. And Baptism does have regenerative power, as Paul writes to Titus, "He saved us, not because of righteous things we had done, but because of his mercy. He saved us through the washing of rebirth and renewal by the Holy Spirit," (Titus 3:5).

Just as physical life is given by God through the union of a man and a woman, so spiritual life is given by the Holy Spirit where and when He will. Just as we cannot choose our parents and our own conception where and when we will, but receive life as a gift, so we cannot choose spiritual life where and when we will, but must receive it as a gift. So Jesus teaches Nicodemus "... Most assuredly, I say to you, unless one is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God. That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit." (John 3:5-6)

The emphasis upon Baptism for children is not only in our thematic verses in Acts 2, but also in the all-inclusive great commission, Matthew 28:19-20⁷, and in the story of the jailer of Philippi,

²⁹Then he called for a light, ran in, and fell down trembling before Paul and Silas. ³⁰And he brought them out and said, "Sirs, what must I do to be saved?" ³¹So they said, "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and you will be saved, you and your household." ³²Then they spoke the word of the Lord to him and to all who were in his house. ³³And he took them the same hour of the night and washed their stripes. And immediately he and all his family were baptized. ³⁴Now when he had brought them into his house, he set food before them; and he rejoiced, having believed in God with all his household. (Acts 16:29-34, NKJV)

We see our Savior's solicitude toward children in sending Jonah to Nineveh, "But the LORD said, 'You have been concerned about this vine, though you did not tend it or make it grow. It sprang up overnight and died overnight. But Nineveh has more than a hundred and twenty thousand people who cannot tell their right hand from their left.... Should I not be concerned about that great city?'" (Jonah 4:10-11)

We see it in his insistence upon tending to children, “Jesus said, ‘Let the little children come to me, and do not hinder them, for the kingdom of heaven belongs to such as these.’” (Matthew 19:14) We see it in His warning lest anybody lead them astray, “But whoever causes one of these little ones who believe in Me to stumble, it would be better for him if a millstone were hung around his neck, and he were thrown into the sea.” (Mark 9:42)⁸

Our gracious Savior’s concern for children is seen not only in His command to baptize, but in His command to teach. While we often remark upon the fact that it takes only one generation to lose the promise, God’s command would prevent this from happening. God gives numerous commands to provoke the questions of children and to answer them⁹. Likewise, there are numerous commands to teach, and to train and to raise children in God’s word, specifically to children, and specifically so that the promise that is so important, that is given to you and to your children, will not be lost. One of the most quoted is Moses’ plea in Deuteronomy,

These commandments that I give you today are to be upon your hearts. Impress them on your children. Talk about them when you sit at home and when you walk along the road, when you lie down and when you get up. Tie them as symbols on your hands and bind them on your foreheads. Write them on the doorframes of your houses and on your gates. (Deuteronomy 6:6–9)

Another is Paul’s injunction to fathers in Ephesians, “Fathers, do not exasperate your children; instead, bring them up in the training and instruction of the Lord.” (Ephesians 6:4)

These commands are in harmony with Jesus’ warnings about misleading children, as well as the warnings against the deceitfulness of the world that we find repeatedly in the words of the apostles, as for example Peter, “Be self-controlled and alert. Your enemy the devil prowls around like a roaring lion looking for someone to devour.” (1 Peter 5:8) Consider also Paul’s warning to Timothy, “Timothy, guard what has been entrusted to your care. Turn away from godless chatter and the opposing ideas of what is falsely called knowledge, which some have professed and in so doing have wandered from the faith. Grace be with you.” (1 Timothy 6:20–21)

Christian instruction, at home, in school, in Sunday school, in Bible class, in personal reading and study, and in the divine service, is a God-ordained use of His Word, including the means of grace, to preserve the faith of all God’s people, especially children.¹⁰ The falling away of people from the faith is clearly a problem, as Christ said it would be in the latter days,¹¹ and as we see in simple statistics. In our fellowship, which is probably true of the ELS as well, only 64% of those who are baptized in the church reach confirmation. Of that 64%, only 32%, having attended Sunday school are still in the church at age 19. It is a little better if the children attended Lutheran elementary schools (38%) or area Lutheran high schools (73%). Overall, only 18% of those who are baptized into the church are still in the church (any Christian church) at age 30.¹²

While we live in a world in which children are viewed as expendable random products of the universe, the presumptive “creator” of all things, the real Creator and Redeemer of the world wraps children in His loving care, and above all seeks their salvation. He takes care of His children through means, especially through parents: It is His intent that His children be born into a families with two parents¹³ who are committed for life together,¹⁴ emotionally mature,¹⁵ prepared to care for the physical needs of the children,¹⁶ and committed to care for them spiritually as well.¹⁷ (How many of our young people are taught, when looking for a spouse, to ask, “Can I trust this person with the eternal welfare of our children?”)

He takes care of children also through His church. It is not only parents who are called upon

teach the children; it is the church as a whole that is commanded to baptize and to teach, as it has from the very first, on down to the synagogue schools of the Old Testament, and to the Christian schools of today. When Jesus told Peter, “Feed my lambs,” He may not have meant only children, but He certainly did not exclude them.

Having seen our Savior’s concern for children, can we fail to act upon it? Can we as members of Christ’s church say, “They aren’t my kids; my kids are grown and gone; I don’t have any children”? We are called upon to teach the children, for the promise is **for you and your children**.

Part 2 – When American Education Is an Adversary to the Faith

There is a widely accepted myth that American education is neutral toward religion in general and Christianity in particular. Some go farther to say it is biased toward Christianity. The argument is that we do have separation of church and state, after all, and teachers are taught to remain neutral, and not to impose their religion upon others. The argument then points out that it is hardly a religious tenant to say that Columbus sailed to the New World in 1492, or that $5+5=10$, or that chromosomes are made up largely of deoxyribonucleic acid, so education must be essentially religion-neutral.¹⁸

Christian Education Conflicts with Non-Christian at the Level of Presuppositions, Foundational Assumptions

To judge whether a school is neutral toward the Christian faith, or comprehensively Christian, for that matter, based on overt statements for or against Christianity really misses the point. Because all teaching *presupposes* certain truths, there is no such thing as religiously neutral education. The faith of our children (and ourselves!) is attacked, not so much by books, courses, teachers, programs, and instructional media that directly assault Christianity, but by the books, courses, teachers, programs, and instructional media that take it for granted that Christianity lies (for example) in the realm of personal superstition (materialism) or one’s personal construct of reality (post-modernism). It is at the level of presuppositions that the educational battles are really fought.

One of the clearest expressions of this appears in an essay by C.S. Lewis.

...The difficulty we are up against is this. We can make people (often) attend to the Christian point of view for half an hour or so; but the moment they have gone away from our lecture or laid down our article, they are plunged back into a world where the opposite position is taken for granted. As long as that situation exists, widespread success is simply impossible. We must attack the enemy’s line of communication. What we want is not more little books about Christianity, but more little books by Christians on other subjects – with their Christianity *latent*. You can see this most easily if you look at it the other way round. Our Faith is not very likely to be shaken by any book on Hinduism. But if whenever we read an elementary book on Geology, Botany, Politics, or Astronomy, we found that its implications were Hindu, that would shake us. *It is not the books written in direct defence of Materialism that make the modern man a materialist; it is the materialistic assumptions in all the other books.* In the same way, it is not books on Christianity that will really trouble him, But he would be troubled if, whenever he wanted a cheap popular introduction to some science, the best work on the market was always by a Christian. The first step to the re-conversion of this country is a series, produced by

Christians, which can beat the *Penguin* and the *Thinkers Library* on their own ground¹⁹

It is at the level of assumptions, of presuppositions, that life, thought, knowledge, and truth are unified.²⁰ We may pretend that we can compartmentalize life, so that we have a “school compartment” and a “faith compartment,”²¹ and we can make sure that in the school compartment we don’t have any prayers or overtly teach or attack any religious creed, and that in the church compartment we don’t talk about science or history. Nevertheless, at the level of assumptions these two worlds are very much connected. Just think, do we date events A.D.²² and B.C.²³ in school? What is the age of the Grand Canyon, and how was it formed? What are the causes of war? Are people by nature good? Are people in positions of authority or privilege always oppressors? If the character in the story is treated in a kindly way, will he reform? Do we have a right to have sex, so long as we can find a willing partner? Doesn’t my body belong to me, after all? Is the form of the family a sociological construct? Are unborn children persons, worthy of protection? If we start with a premise that the universe is eternal, can we just as logically posit that the universe had a beginning?

These presuppositions appear in ways that we may not expect. What books, for example, make it onto the American Library Association suggested lists? Which books receive the medals and awards? It used to be that the *Reader’s Guide to Periodical Literature* had a lock on which periodicals were considered “sound,” or “mainstream,” and which were beneath the consideration of anyone doing research.

These are issues that arise even in the lower grades, likely without any discussion, as assumptions. Are we as a church even taking the battlefield in this conflict? Are we giving attention to the daily assault on the faith of our children? Let’s look at some frequent assumptions in more detail.

Assumptions Regarding Creation

From the earliest grades, students will be taught that the earth is millions of years old, that dinosaurs predate man’s existence by millions of years, that human beings have animal ancestors, that living things evolved from non-living things, and that the complex has evolved from the simple. This might not be taught specifically in class or in the textbooks, but will be found in countless library and media materials. It will also be found in non-science classes such as literature, language, and spelling.

One of the most basic religious questions is, “Where did we come from?” Although not treated as a religious question, the philosophy of education answers, “From time plus matter plus chance.” When we are taught in Sunday school that God created Adam and Eve in special ways, and gave them an immortal soul, but everything else in the world presumes that there were no Adam and Eve, and that we are descended from animals, are we surprised when our people grow up to view what they learned in Sunday school as “religious truth” that somehow never intersects the “real” world or “real” truth or “scientific truth”?

It is not only taken for granted that we are dust, but that this dust is what made us. Consider this wire services report on the Stardust spacecraft returning with dust from the comet Wild 2 in January 2006: “As such, the grains represent pristine samples of the primitive material that came together to form the sun, the nine planets and everything else in the solar system, including human beings.”²⁴ If this is assumed to be true, what room is left to even discuss the possibility that the Christian faith is true? Is man any different from non-man?

The evolutionary assumption, the assumption of naturalistic philosophy, is implicit in so many

of the ideas that hold currency in the marketplace of ideas, as the following examples illustrate.

- If a behavior is natural, it is above condemnation, as in “homosexuality is as natural for some as heterosexuality is for others.” (As this assumption becomes the rule, words and expressions will be considered homophobic if they even imply “that standard sexual relationships are only between males and females.”²⁵ While Christians may (naively) ignore the significance of assumptions embodied in language, the world does not.)
- Such intangibles as authority or monogamy or personal responsibility, lacking a natural rationale, cannot be mandated.
- One’s body belongs only to one’s self. (This leads to a hyper-individualistic idea of a right to privacy that gives rise to abortion and euthanasia.)
- Placing a higher value upon one culture or religion over another has no validity. (Because each is a natural outgrowth of social evolution, there is certainly nothing, no mere idea, that is worth fighting or dying for.)
- The terrorists of 9/11 are no more or less culpable than any lethal military operation.
- Death is to be accepted as one stage in the “great circle of life.”

Assumptions Regarding the Fallen Nature of Man

Next to “Where did we come from?”, “What is the nature of man?” must rank as the next religious question. Is man by nature good or evil, flawed or perfectible? Is man any different from non-man? Consider what assumptions are made in the following:

- History, especially American history, is taught without reference to the immense role that religion in general, and Christianity in particular, along with a high view of morality, all played in shaping our nation. It is no wonder that even conservative and confessional church bodies are silent regarding crucial moral and religious issues of the day.
- In a story, a violent delinquent turns into a model citizen when befriended by a sweet and loving classmate. (The cause of sin (anti-social behavior) is outside of us, a response to stimuli. Change the stimuli and behavior changes. Mankind is perfectible.)
- In teaching the causes of revolutions in the first half of the twentieth century, the textbook references the disproportion in wealth between classes. (Marxist economic determinism is assumed to be a prime cause for rebellion and the overthrow of governments, rather than such sins as envy, a search for power, or demagoguery.)
- In examining the causes of war, aggression is attributed primarily to fear. (People are not sinfully aggressive, but the existence of power in the hands of others makes them aggressive out of fear.)
- In a study of current events, violence against homosexuals is attributed to “fundamentalist” religious beliefs. (Religion or morality, due to its condemnation of certain behaviors inescapably invites a vendetta.) (The essence of religion is moral condemnation, not grace, redemption, or forgiveness.)
- In a social studies unit, pictures of family groupings include single adult and same-sex adult figures. (What makes a family is sociological consensus.)
- In a history unit, Christopher Columbus is presented negatively as an imperialist because he brought Christianity, which resulted in the destruction of Native Central American places of worship and (human) sacrifice. (All religions are equally valid. Those religions are viewed negatively which make the claim of being exclusively true.)
- Discussions of values or morals focus primarily on conundrums, for example the case of six

people in a sinking boat with only five life jackets. How do you decide who drowns? (Morality is defined by the situation and sociological consensus. In real life one cannot make absolute moral statements.)

Assumptions Regarding Authority

In discussing the roles of teachers and parents in the lives of children, education materials frequently speak of the importance of “guiding” children to make “good choices.” The assumption is that the person in authority has no right to require particular behavior, but that it is up to the child to make the choice. While wise parents and teachers certainly know that we guide and direct children toward independence, nevertheless, it is important to maintain the God-ordained right and responsibility of those whom He Himself has appointed as parents, and as those in the place of parents. Parents abdicate their authority when they fail to remember that God has placed them in their position to be His instrument in the lives of their children. It is an offense to God, really, when parents give their third grader the choice of going to church or not, of going to Sunday school or not, or of going to a Christian school or a non-Christian one.

The foregoing are all examples of concepts and ideas taught in American schools. Some ideas in themselves may not be objectionable, but the assumptions on which they are based paint a view of the world that is foreign to the truths we have come to know through the Holy Scriptures.

The Significance of American Education as an Adversary to the Faith

We need to face the reality that in general, the American educational system²⁶ is built upon assumptions inimical to the Christian faith and becomes an adversary to the faith. It is part of “the world” as John refers to it in 1 John 2:15–17, “Do not love the world or anything in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For everything in the world—the cravings of sinful man, the lust of his eyes and the boasting of what he has and does—comes not from the Father but from the world. The world and its desires pass away, but the man who does the will of God lives forever.”

The power and influence of the educational system in our country has been the subject of a number of books, over many decades, and I won’t take the time here to do more than remind you of what you already know. Every state has compulsory attendance laws. The vast majority of people in the country attend school for at least 13 years, beginning with kindergarten, and this will increase as preschool becomes the norm for children beginning at age three. Students directly interact with the school system far longer each day than they interact with their parents – especially if both parents work outside the home. In most counties in the country, the public schools are among the top five employers, and often they are first or second. In addition, the monolithic character of education in the country is increased by the following:

- Schools, public and non-public, are governed by state legislatures and departments of education.
- State legislatures and departments of education set certification standards of teachers and require schools to hire teachers certificated under these standards, guaranteeing that in some states every school, Christian or not, has teachers indoctrinated in the state philosophy.²⁷
- These standards implement a very similar philosophy of education from state to state, drawing upon schools of education whose philosophies are decidedly unchristian.
- Federal standards in all areas of education, but particularly in evaluation and curriculum

contribute further to the monolith.

- Curriculum materials are produced by a relatively small number of publishers, all of which are influenced by economics to obtain approval from large states, such as California, which maintain lists of approved curriculum materials.
- The National Education Association is one of the most powerful lobbying organizations in the country, and consistently promotes public education over alternatives.²⁸

Christian Teachers in Public Schools

Two questions that cry out at this point are, “How do Christian teachers serve the Lord well in public schools?” and, “Can Christian schools really be different?”

Christian teachers can be very effective in the public schools, but like Christians in Hollywood or any other part of the world, it is necessary to be counter-cultural, more or less depending upon the culture of the school system. Truly teaching critical thinking will break down the monolith of anti-Christian thought by equipping students to identify and examine the assumptions upon which many ideas are built. Once the presuppositions are identified they can be examined. Take the perfectibility of man, for example. Once we identify that as a presupposition in, say, a work of literature, we can ask the question, “What examples can you give of a human society where the people were perfectible?” While one is not free to use the authority of the teacher to mandate subscription to the Christian creed, we would not want to in any case. However, we can and should communicate the assumptions that are in accord with the truth that we confess.²⁹

It is at the level of assumptions and presuppositions that the Christian teacher engages the educational establishment.

Public School Influence in Christian Classrooms

If Christian teachers have to deal with the assumptions in the multitude of different materials in the public school classroom, an obvious question is whether Christian teachers have to do the same in Christian school classrooms. Of course they do. Our schools use many of the same materials as the public school down the street, sometimes even picking up the cast-offs from the local public schools. Even though many of our congregations have an article in their constitutions that no instructional materials used in the church and school are to contradict Scripture or the Lutheran confessions, we daily teach from materials that do contradict what we believe and teach.

If the teachers in our classrooms are critical thinkers, they will be able to use many of these materials to “immunize” the students against the falsehoods that are contained in them. We are not going to be able to leave the world, after all. It is analogous to the situation Paul presents in 1 Corinthians 5:9-10, “I have written you in my letter not to associate with sexually immoral people—not at all meaning the people of this world who are immoral, or the greedy and swindlers, or idolaters. *In that case you would have to leave this world.*” (*Emphasis mine.*) Therefore we should not automatically remove anything that is at odds with Christianity.

The problem, in my view, is when we use materials uncritically, or when it is unwieldy to deal with their bias, or when the teacher does not have or take the opportunity to intervene between the materials and the student.

One of the most common ways in which materials are used uncritically is to ridicule. So many times the evolutionary message is dismissed with a derisive chuckle, or a comment such as “Well I know I’m not part monkey!” This in no way prepares the student for the compelling arguments

for evolution; so when our students are immersed in a culture that unanimously ridicules Biblical creation, how do we expect them to discern the truth?

Another way in which teachers use materials uncritically is when they don't point out the assumptions upon which they are based. We may laugh them off as merely "politically correct," but in fact many are consistent with a view of the world that is simply not true. For example, to teach a course in American History at the Junior High level, relying on many of the texts available, is to ignore the role of religious faith in our country. As a result, teaching the "why" of history is going to be severely biased, and children will not understand that throughout history people have spent their whole lives in particular ways according to their deeply held religious beliefs. To teach the subject matter critically, the teacher will have to supplement what is in the text, as well as ask the questions, "Why was material such as this left out?" and "What assumption is the author making about you and about those who established our nation?" The material was left out because the author assumed that the children will not be ordering their lives according to their faith, because really nobody does. In fact, to an unbeliever it is unreasonable to think that religious faith has such an impact on a person's life anyway, so they will set forth other causes for the actions of historical figures.

Still another way in which teachers use the materials uncritically is when they follow them blindly. Back in 1970 I was a student teacher in a public high school in Washington. Besides working with my supervising teacher, I was able to circulate through the building to broaden my experience. One of these experiences was considered a "plum," because one of the teachers was field-testing a new social studies text. His main task, besides using the materials to teach the class in (sort of) American History was to evaluate the effectiveness of the study aids in leading the student to particular conclusions. The period we were studying was the "Age of Imperialism." He proudly demonstrated how, by leading the students through a series of questions he could predetermine their conclusion. Since this was during the Vietnam War, and since this teacher was very anti-American, the results were predictable. The students looked at pictures of dead Indians,³⁰ Mexicans, Spaniards, and Filipinos, as well as dead Vietnamese children. They read statements about Manifest Destiny, and about the inferiority of the colored races in the context of America's westward movement and "imperialist adventures abroad." They read little or nothing about establishing self-government in Cuba or the Philippines. They then answered questions that reminded them of all of America's wrongs, finally getting to the "critical thinking" (*sic*) question that went something like this: "Some say that the United States is essentially an imperialist country, committed to planting certain American values and institutions in other countries whether they want them or not. What do you think? What role might economic self-interest play in actions of the United States? What evidence can you provide to support your conclusions?"

Although this example deals with American History, my point is that if teachers do not plan on supplementing the textbook with additional information, and developing their own study aids, they are not thinking critically themselves, nor are they teaching the students critical thinking. They might as well turn the teaching over to somebody else. Add to this textbooks in every subject, plus web sites, plus audio-visual media, plus Weekly Reader and Scholastic Magazine, and the demands upon our Christian teachers to respond are massive.

A key consideration here is the way that such conclusion-directed teaching really undermines critical thinking in the ethical realm. It isn't earnestly seeking to pass on the truth about anything;

it is propaganda. This approach merely creates a “feeling for,” or a “feeling against,” without any ability to articulate why something is good or evil. Right and wrong become subjective, truth becomes relativistic, and tolerance becomes the only virtue. The focus turns from discovering and passing on what is true, and good, and beautiful to leveling what might be thought as true and good and beautiful to the same status as everything else. It is no surprise that relativism is not interested in passing on Western Culture, but in multiculturalism. The preference for multiculturalism implies that there is no way of identifying anything as somehow better than anything else. This is where education has gone in our day.

One final point about the influence of anti-Christian philosophy in the Christian classroom has to do with literature. I used to spend many class sessions on this one subject, so I will have to summarize drastically. It comes down to this: Art has its effect, even without our knowing it, and without our knowing how it has such an effect. When we import works of art – music, literature, cinema, and the like – into our Christian classrooms, and do not teach them critically, that is with understanding of the philosophical foundations involved, those works of art are going to have their own effect, regardless of whether they are in a Christian classroom or not.

Part 3 – What Education Has Lost and Where It Is Going

In adopting a relativist, and now post-modern view of reality, American education has lost even the concept of truth, and ultimately denies the special character of man. Having done that, it denies salvation, value of all kinds, and finally the very fact that man is different from non-man.

The Abolition of Man

Rather than provide an encyclopedia of outrages, showing what evils relativism has wrought, I am going to take us on a short excursion along the lines of thought set forth in a little book by C.S. Lewis, *The Abolition of Man*.³¹ In this little book, Lewis makes the point that if we truly adopt relativism (post-modernism takes relativism toward its logical conclusion) and reject a belief in transcendent values, that we abolish man, and reduce him to the same bundle of un-critiqued biological impulses that characterizes the animals. Lewis warns, “The practical result of education in the spirit of [relativism] must be the destruction of the society which accepts it.”³²

Relativism in the Very Bone and Sinew of Thought

His jumping-off-point is an unnamed book on English. He doesn’t name it. He just calls it *The Green Book*, by Gaius and Titius, because the name and authors aren’t important, while the idea they set forth is both important and typical. The authors quote a well-known story of Samuel Coleridge at a waterfall,³³ and the discussion following in which a tourist present there calls it “sublime,” a judgment Coleridge endorsed.

Gaius and Titius comment as follows: “When the man said *That is sublime*, he appeared to be making a remark about the waterfall.... Actually... he was not making a remark about the waterfall, but a remark about his own feelings. What he was saying was really *I have feelings associated in my mind with the word ‘Sublime,’* or shortly, *I have sublime feelings.*” Here are a good many deep questions settled in a pretty summary fashion. But the authors are not yet finished. They add: “This confusion is continually present in language as we use it. We appear to be saying something very important about something: and actually we are only saying something about our own feelings.”³⁴

How many times have we heard that kind of statement, that any value judgment is really about

us, and that nothing can really be said certainly about the thing outside of ourselves? Sometimes called *subjectivism* or *relativism*, it is the belief that there is no real intrinsic value in anything, so that all value judgments, rather than being observations are really only expressions of feelings. Lewis writes, “Until quite modern times all teachers and even all men believed the universe to be such that certain emotional reactions on our part could be either congruous or incongruous to it – believed, in fact, that objects did not merely receive, but could *merit*, our approval or disapproval, our reverence, or our contempt.”

One great goal of education, then, is to impart values to the next generation that are transcendently true. Lewis writes, “St. Augustine defines virtue as *ordo amoris*, the ordinate condition of the affections in which every object is accorded that kind and degree of love which is appropriate to it.³⁵ Aristotle says that the aim of education is to make the pupil like and dislike what he ought.³⁶” This may amaze you. The idea that my teacher would tell me what value to place upon some writing by Shakespeare, or Aristotle, (or C.S. Lewis for that matter) is foreign to many and abhorrent and repugnant to others. But having lost both the willingness and the ability to discern what is good and what is better and what is virtuous, education no longer knows what to teach. In such a state it would be impossible to attend to Paul’s counsel, “Finally, brothers, whatever is true, whatever is noble, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is admirable—if anything is excellent or praiseworthy—think about such things. Whatever you have learned or received or heard from me, or seen in me—put it into practice. And the God of peace will be with you.” (Philippians 4:8–9)

Relativism Undermines All Values

As a result, the education that no longer knows what to teach must now teach skepticism toward all values – except the value of such skepticism. It must teach toleration of all vices, but teach intolerance of virtue.³⁷ It must teach the unfettered diversity of cultures, while rejecting the culture that appeals to virtue. Lewis comments, “Their skepticism about values is on the surface: it is for use on other people’s values: about the values current in their own set they are not nearly skeptical enough.”³⁸

The absurdity of relativism has been manifest before as “There is no truth, except this truth, that there is no truth.” Lewis makes the case (and it is worth reading) that really those who reject a natural law do so on the basis of that same natural law. “Only by such shreds of the [natural law] as he has inherited is he enabled even to attack it.”³⁹ How reminiscent of Paul in Romans, “You, therefore, have no excuse, you who pass judgment on someone else, for at whatever point you judge the other, you are condemning yourself, because you who pass judgment do the same things. Now we know that God’s judgment against those who do such things is based on truth.” (Romans 2:1–2) The very activity of judging, even according to corrupt values, reveals the innate existence of values. God Himself, however, is truth, and therefore He judges based on truth even when someone’s own values are corrupted.

In adopting relativism, American education has lost its connection to the natural law and a sense of value. So continues the great rebellion begun at the tree in Eden, as man sought to be like God. How ironic, that attributing to inanimate matter and the animals the creative power of the universe, man in his own mind becomes non-man, much less a god.

In adopting the current philosophical cocktail of relativism, subjectivism, secular humanism, and constructionism, education in the United States has lost all understanding of what is good⁴⁰ and excellent.⁴¹ To the extent that such education perseveres in this direction, it severs the

student's connection with the world as it is, a world created by our gracious God in His divine majesty, and redeemed through the sacrificial death and resurrection of God the Son. In such a world, God is for Sundays only, if then, because the church can only be viewed as anachronistic, irrelevant, out of touch with real life.⁴²

Is this what we want for our children? Is this what God wants for the immortal souls for whom He gave His Son?

Part 4 – The Unity of Truth

The Underlying Assumptions Are Crucial

You will notice that Lewis started with an almost trivial-seeming comment in an English book, and proceeded to indict an entire movement in education as giving up all connection with what is good and excellent, with what is moral and what is true. Observe some things.

First, note that he never engages the pseudonymous authors, Gaius and Titius on specific issues. He doesn't debate with them whether the falls on the River Clyde are actually sublime, or whether Shakespeare's *Hamlet* is better than his *Lear*. If they should chance upon agreement at one point or another, it would really be meaningless. It is the set of assumptions upon which *The Green Book* is written that makes such a discussion absurd, because even the appearance of agreement is not agreement.

Let's move this into a sphere where we can benefit from some familiarity – our local schools and sex education. A couple had made the choice to place their daughter in the local junior high school. In trying to dissuade them in favor of our own school, we talked about the assault that would take place on her faith on so many levels, not the least being appeals to the flesh. They breathlessly assured me that this was not a problem, that the school had a policy in favor of abstinence. Surely that put the school, the parents, and the church all on the same side, right?

No. We were worlds apart. It so happened that on the specific issue of whether a 13-year old should have sexual intercourse or not we all were in agreement that she should not; but that agreement was merely a coincidence. Vary a couple of incidental factors and the seeming agreement would vanish. What the school policy said was that “boys and girls have a right to not have sexual relations.” This implies, of course, that they also have a right to engage in sexual relations. Their abstinence education meant “abstaining until ready,” not “abstaining until married.” It amounted to “guiding” students to “make good choices,” that is, choices that were “good” for them according to no set standard, and if they chose to not have sexual relations then to equip them with skills necessary to decline, and to resist peer pressure.

How different this is from the Scripture, “But among you there must not be even a hint of sexual immorality, or of any kind of impurity, or of greed, because these are improper for God's holy people.” (Ephesians 5:3) “The acts of the sinful nature are obvious: sexual immorality, impurity and debauchery.” (Galatians 5:19) Social skills to resist peer pressure are helpful, but have real meaning only when serving a heart led by the spirit.

If there is no common foundation, no shared assumptions, there is no truth in common. We did not really hold any truth in common that young people must abstain from sex before marriage. There was just the appearance of it.⁴³ Unfortunately, the parents proceeded on the basis of the apparent agreement, and bad things happened. God is gracious, however, and the lost was found.

How can we even communicate in such a culture? Even if the schools to which we entrust our children seem to teach what we want them to, if they do not hold their presuppositions in common with us, then regardless of appearances, they are still hostile to our faith and assault the

souls of our children. Just to illustrate, look at the boxes below. In the left-hand set of boxes we see two common conclusions, but based on different foundational beliefs or assumptions. For all their seeming similarity, these two schools of thought are worlds apart.

Abstinence	Abstinence	Abstinence – wait to marry until out of school.	Abstinence – early marriage.
Usefulness	God’s Command	God’s Command	

It works the other way ‘round, also. Where differing views occur, it may appear that there is a great difference, when in fact there is not. In the right-hand set we see two conclusions which, though different in some ways, have the same basic truth in common; they are based on and value God’s command. Though seemingly different approaches, these two schools of thought are really one.

Basic Assumptions Determine Values

In *The Abolition of Man*, Lewis acknowledges that there are transcendent moral values as well as other values, such as beauty and excellence that are subordinate. Should I prefer *Hamlet* to *Lear*? Cranberries to apples? A career as a doctor, a pastor, or a plumber? Should I be vaccinated or not? Should I lower my cholesterol with Lipitor or oatmeal? To an extent, we would identify the transcendent values as revealed truth, and the subordinate values as derived from human knowledge and experience. Even in areas of liberty, we acknowledge there is a good, a better, and a best.

Put another way, *The Abolition of Man* is not a brief for pietism, even when strongly urging values apart from divine command. Once again, the important things are the presuppositions. We believe in truth. While we may prefer *Hamlet* to *Lear*, or cranberries to apples, we can agree that these judgments are not divinely revealed, while others are. Even when we differ in specific opinions, we are united in the common belief in truth. Truth is unified at the point of these assumptions, even if there may be disagreement at the particulars. Further, all truth is important, whether revealed and certain or discovered by fallen man and therefore tentative.

The existence of such values and truth in education is so important, because it means that we can teach what is good and what is best, what is beautiful and excellent and trustworthy. We can speak of the blessings of limited government or of liberty, or the lessons of history. Paul spoke of such things in Philippians 4:8–9, “Finally, brothers, whatever is true, whatever is noble, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is admirable—if anything is excellent or praiseworthy—think about such things. Whatever you have learned or received or heard from me, or seen in me—put it into practice. And the God of peace will be with you.”

Part 5 – Luther and Christian Education

Luther Recognized the Unity of Truth

One of the things that characterized Luther was that he recognized that all truth is connected, at least on the level of basic assumptions and understanding, so that we can often discover what is true and good and wise in life. For example, he writes regarding history,

But were [children] instructed in schools or elsewhere by thoroughly qualified male or female teachers, who taught the languages, other arts, and history, then the pupils would hear the history and maxims of the world, and see how things went with each city, kingdom, prince, man, and woman; and thus, in a short time, they would be able to comprehend, as in a mirror, the character, life, counsels, undertakings, successes, and failures of the whole world from the beginning. From this knowledge they could regulate their views, and order their course of life in the fear of God, having become wise in judging what is to be sought and what avoided in this outward life, and capable of advising and directing others.⁴⁴

From this we see that while history is not revealed truth, and therefore not inerrant, yet at a certain level it shares a truthfulness with the Scriptures, so that it may help us in ordering our course of life. This is just one illustration that Luther understood the unity of truth at an axiomatic level. As a result he could understand that revealed truth was more certain than what fallen man could apprehend, without at the same time compartmentalizing one from the other.

I believe that if we would follow Luther's line of thinking that we would be exerting more energy and effort to provide our own textbooks for our schools. It isn't that there is a Lutheran view of Arithmetic, Spelling, or Geography, as such, but that all such texts may still reflect the truth of Scripture, on the level of their assumptions. No subject is so compartmentalized that it doesn't relate to Scriptural truth on some level.

Because of this, Luther saw the importance of gathering and preserving good books.

Since God has so graciously and abundantly provided us with art, scholars, and books, it is time for us to reap the harvest and gather for future use the treasures of these golden years. For it is to be feared, (and even now it is beginning to take place,) that new and different books will be produced, until at last, through the agency of the devil, the good books which are being printed will be crowded out by the multitude of ill-considered, senseless, and noxious works. For Satan certainly designs that we should torture ourselves again with Catholicons, Floristas, Modernists, and other trash of the accursed monks and sophists, always learning, yet never acquiring knowledge.⁴⁵

I am concerned that in trying to avoid sectarianism in education, i.e. "Lutheran" grammar, arithmetic, etc., that we are too willing to let the devil write our textbooks, reflecting assumptions and foundational views that are contrary to the Holy Scriptures.

Luther and Education to Preserve the Faith

With his characteristic vigor, Luther urges the establishment of Christian schools, and he urges parents to send their children to them. Because the whole world was changing under the reformation, and schools had been the servant of the monastic culture of the Roman church, there was an attitude that schools were no longer necessary, except perhaps for earning a living. Luther sets forth such an opinion in this way: "And because selfish parents see that they can no longer place their children upon the bounty of monasteries and cathedrals, they refuse to educate them.

‘Why should we educate our children,’ they say, ‘if they are not to become priests, monks, and nuns, and thus earn a support?’”⁴⁶

He dispenses with such thoughts quickly, saying,

“For if they sought anything more than the temporal welfare of their children..., if they were deeply in earnest to secure the salvation and blessedness of their children, ... they would speak after this manner: ‘if it is true, as the Gospel teaches, that such a calling [the Roman Catholic priesthood] is dangerous to our children, teach us another way in which they may be pleasing to God and become truly blessed; for we wish to provide not alone for the bodies of our children, but also for their souls.’ Such would be the language of faithful Christian parents.”

So Luther makes it clear that the very provision for the souls of Christian children is the purpose and care of Christian parents, a purpose and care that they carry out through the schools. He says, “... learn that your children are not so entirely your own, that you can withhold them from God; He will have justice, and they are more His than yours.”⁴⁷ For this reason, any school that does not center upon the word of God is a school that serves to undermine the faith of the child. So Luther says,

I would advise no one to send his child where the Holy Scriptures are not supreme. Every institution that does not unceasingly pursue the study of God’s word becomes corrupt. Because of this we can see what kind of people they become in the universities and what they are like now. Nobody is to blame for this except the pope, the bishops, and the prelates, who are all charged with training young people. The universities only ought to turn out men who are experts in the Holy Scriptures, men who can become bishops and priests, and stand in the front line against heretics, the devil, and all the world. But where do you find that? I greatly fear that the universities, unless they teach the Holy Scriptures diligently and impress them on the young students, are wide gates to hell.⁴⁸

Luther and Education to Prepare Servants for God and Man

But while Luther sees the schools as important for the spiritual welfare of the children, he also sees the schools as important to prepare God’s people for service in the world by proclaiming God’s word faithfully, and by serving one another according to one’s vocation. In both his “Letter to the Mayors and Aldermen of the Cities of Germany in Behalf of Christian Schools” and in his “Sermon on the Duty of Sending Children to School,” Luther gives three reasons for the schools. The first is that there may be ministers, “pastors, preachers, and schoolmasters.”⁴⁹ The second is that there may be people prepared to govern in the civil service and other offices. The third is that there may be those who are prepared for the professions. These three areas of service are in contrast to the attitude that one should enter into whatever vocation simply to serve Mammon, the single-minded pursuit of which does not require more than the minimal education. It is not that Luther denigrates the trades, or any other useful art, but he objects to avoiding the cost and rigors of education for service in order to seek personal wealth instead, especially when we are called to service in the world, and to reach out with the truth of the gospel.

It is my own observation, having read hundreds of entries on school applications, that parents who sacrifice to send their children to Christian schools do so primarily so that their children will be preserved from the soul-destroying religion of the schools in their community. While their defensive efforts on behalf of their children are laudable, we see that Luther urges that we take the offensive rather than only the defensive. I therefore submit that the objective of our schools is

to prepare students not just to “save their faith,” but to go on the offensive to lead and to govern from a basis of Christian presuppositions.

While truly an important purpose of Christian education is to preserve our children in the true faith by building them up in the word of God, it is the purpose of our schools to develop in the children the ability to know and appreciate what is true and beautiful, to understand thoroughly, to think critically, to express themselves effectively, to lead conscientiously, and to conclude matters decisively. In this way and in whatever vocation, our children and young people are equipped to carry on in the cosmic battle in which the church is engaged.

In Matthew 16:18 our Lord said, regarding Peter’s confession of Christ, “...on this rock I will build my church, and the gates of Hades will not overcome it.” This figure of speech pictures Hades on defense, and implies that those who confess the truth are on the offense, praying, “Thy kingdom come,” and as Christ’s witnesses serving as His instruments to establish that kingdom. It is for this that our schools should seek to prepare our children.

These two themes, education for service and education to impart the faith to the world and to the generations to come, flow through Luther’s writings on education. Although he addresses what subjects should be taught and methods to be used from time to time, and even sketched them out in a letter written to Spalatin in 1524, it was Melancthon, who gathered up Luther’s ideas and laid them out in 1528 in his “Manual of Visitation.” There he communicated a full and complete plan for the organization of schools, such as Luther had sketched for Spalatin.⁵⁰ Always the purpose of education was to serve. It was not learning for learning’s sake, but learning for Christ’s sake.

Luther’s Method and Approach to Education

In general, Luther’s plan was on the classical model. He favored simple and concrete concepts to be taught to the young. As they grew older, they would use what they had learned to grow to understanding, and from there would learn to adorn reasoning with persuasion. These three stages of leaning made up the *Trivium*⁵¹ of grammar, logic, and rhetoric, and were followed by the *Quadrivium*⁵² of mathematics, music, geometry (including visual arts), and astronomy. Luther’s approach was influenced by the humanists, but he clearly saw that the liberal arts included far more than merely the humanities. He valued the natural sciences as well, contrary to the view of Erasmus who, it seemed, would rather read what the classical authors said about flowers than actually look at them, and observe them closely. In registering his dissent from this view, Luther wrote,

We are now in the morning-dawn of a better life; for we are beginning again to recover that knowledge of the creation which we lost through Adam’s fall. By God’s grace we are beginning to recognize even in the structure of the humblest floweret his wondrous glory, his goodness, and his omnipotence. In the creation we can appreciate in some measure the power of Him who spoke and it was done, who commanded and it stood fast... But all this Erasmus passes by, not regarding it for a moment and views this new knowledge of the creature only as cows look upon a new gate.⁵³

These words are almost prophetic of the vast explosion of knowledge that came on the heels of the Reformation.

Because he was not over-awed by the humanists, Luther was not slavishly classical, even reading Aristotle only selectively, calling much of Aristotle, “Satanic filth,”⁵⁴ and recommending only three of his major works, including poetics.

The influence of humanism is clearly evident in the treatise, but Luther has in mind more than a humanist education. He would combine the best features of humanist education with history, literature, and the other liberal arts, and, above all, a thorough Christian training. Beyond anything even the humanists had considered before, the Reformation set as its goal universal, even compulsory, public education for everyone.¹³ Luther also advocates that municipalities found public libraries, and suggests principles for the selection of books to be placed on their shelves.⁵⁵

In favoring practically universal education, Luther was also realistic about the fact that different people have different gifts. He suggested that at a certain point some students be set toward more advanced scholarly studies, while others to more practical studies. This is not an elitist impulse, but recognition of different gifts, as he says in a commentary on Second Samuel, “If your son is suited for learning the liberal arts, let him learn them; if he is suited for a craft, let him learn that. The important thing is that you do not exceed your own limits, but commit the entire outcome and success to God.”⁵⁶ Both he and Melancthon warned against pursuing such a rigid and challenging course of study that it would do no good for the students, but only exalt the reputation of some schoolmaster.⁵⁷ In many ways, Luther was in some ways very modern in his approach to education, emphasizing the need to lead and inspire students, and to teach them what is meaningful as opposed to needless pedantry.

Luther recommended broad reading, but with discernment, especially rejecting the pedantic commentaries in favor of the work on its own merits.

First of all, there would be the Holy Scriptures, in Latin, Greek, Hebrew, and German, and any other language in which they might be found. Next, the best commentaries, and, if I could find them, the most ancient, in Greek, Hebrew, and Latin. Then, books that would be helpful in learning the languages, such as the poets and orators, regardless of whether they were pagan or Christian, Greek or Latin, for it is from such books that one must learn grammar.⁵⁶ After that would come books on the liberal arts,⁵⁷ and all the other arts. Finally, there would be books of law and medicine; here too there should be careful choice among commentaries.⁵⁸

His respect for the classical model is revealed in his discussion in *“To the Councilmen of all Cities in Germany that they Establish and Maintain Christian Schools”*, in which he writes respectfully of the education that patricians obtained for their children in ancient Rome.

So it was done in ancient Rome. There boys were so taught that by the time they reached their fifteenth, eighteenth, or twentieth year they were well versed in Latin, Greek, and all the liberal arts¹⁵ (as they are called), and then immediately entered upon a political or military career. Their system produced intelligent, wise, and competent men, so skilled in every art and rich in experience that if all the bishops, priests, and monks in the whole of Germany today were rolled into one, you would not have the equal of a single Roman soldier. As a result their country prospered; they had capable and trained men for every position. So at all times throughout the world simple necessity has forced men, even among the heathen, to maintain pedagogues and schoolmasters if their nation was to be brought to a high standard. Hence, the word “schoolmaster” is used by Paul in Galatians 4¹⁶ as a word taken from the common usage and practice of mankind, where he says, “The law was our schoolmaster.”⁵⁹

Luther always had high praise for skillful teachers, a skill that is so needed by every pastor,

who is supposed to be “apt to teach.” At one point, Luther suggested that it would be good if every pastor spent some of his early years in the classroom. In his “*Sermon on Keeping Children in School*”, he has high praise for the office of teacher.

At this point I should also mention how many educated men are needed in the fields of medicine⁷² and the other liberal arts.⁷³ Of these two needs one could write a huge book and preach for half a year. Where are the preachers, jurists, and physicians to come from, if grammar⁷⁴ and other rhetorical arts are not taught? For such teaching is the spring from which they all must flow. To speak of this here in detail would be too big a task. I will simply say briefly that a diligent and upright schoolmaster or teacher, or anyone who faithfully trains and teaches boys, can never be adequately rewarded or repaid with any amount of money, as even the heathen Aristotle says.⁷⁵ Nevertheless, this work is as shamefully despised among us as if it amounted to nothing at all. And still we call ourselves Christians! If I could leave the preaching office and my other duties, or had to do so, there is no other office I would rather have than that of schoolmaster or teacher of boys; for I know that next to that of preaching, this is the best, greatest, and most useful office there is. Indeed, I scarcely know which of the two is the better. For it is hard to make old dogs obedient and old rascals pious; yet that is the work at which the preacher must labor, and often in vain. Young saplings are more easily bent and trained, even though some may break in the process. It surely has to be one of the supreme virtues on earth faithfully to train other people’s children; for there are very few people, in fact almost none, who will do this for their own.⁶⁰

I emphasize the beginning of this quotation because it reveals again the impact that Luther hoped to have through education. It was not only that the souls of the students be preserved, but that they enter into the world as powerful instruments in God’s hands to accomplish his gracious will, within both kingdoms.

Part 6 – Remembering the Best in Christian Education

Like Luther, we should be preparing our young men and women not only to preserve their souls, but to equip them to serve our Savior powerfully in the world – in both kingdoms. In order to do this, I propose that we look at the best work that is done, and remember to do what has been done well over many years. We do well to consider the attributes of schools that are likely to have the effect that we desire, and to consider how we might establish these attributes within our existing schools and in schools yet to be established.

I have listened to many parents and teachers seek to identify such attributes, and so I offer my own distillation of a vision of Christian education that is shared by many, and try to draw that vision a little sharper, so that it may more easily serve to guide. I claim no originality, but serve more as an observer and compiler.

Some Attributes of Christian Education

If we are to prepare young men and women to take the battle to the enemy, to avoid being deceived and misled, and to be capable instruments to bring light into a dark world, then we need an educational system that...

- Has certain objectives.
 - Is carried out by certain means.
- Imparts to children the truths of God’s word faithfully and extensively in every dimension, in

- the history, the doctrine, the applications, and the ramifications, so that they can know Christ.
- o Schools teach and apply Gods word to the very assumptions of our lives.
 - Imparts to the next generation the best that we have received of culture and civilization.
 - o Schools serve as a repository of what is best of Western, Christian civilization, including an appreciation of all that is good in other cultures.
 - Trains and disciplines the mind to know and understand and remember.
 - o When schools recognize that there are certain truths and matters of value, so that they are taught year after year, they develop and define effective ways to teach and remember them. Some examples would be such “mental calisthenics” as memory work, précis-writing, debate, disputation, and the like.
 - Utilizes multi-sensory and kinesthetic methods to learn efficiently and effectively and to facilitate long-term memory.
 - o “Old fashioned” practices such as oral reading, choral reading, standing while speaking, gestures, and associating certain recitations with certain students take advantage of additional senses and learning styles.
 - Equips the mind with what is needed to grow further in learning and concentrate upon the tools of learning in a sequential, articulated curriculum; is concerned in the first instance, not with what is useful in the world, but with what is useful for learning.
 - o The polar opposite of “units,” which provide a dollop of facts and dissociated information. Schools develop skills, ways of thinking, and storehouses of information that are particularly suited for further learning, so grammar helps to learn any language, arithmetic makes algebra possible, and so on.
 - Teaches the student to devise questions which direct learning, and to formulate answers that achieve it.
 - o Pointedly teaches an activity that good learners discover on their own, of devising questions from the material to be learned, which when answered accomplish understanding and when remembered constitute learning. Luther would have been familiar with this as the *disputatio*.
 - Equips the student with the tools to discern what is right and good from what is wrong and evil at the level of assumptions and presuppositions.
 - o Effective questioning by the teacher teaches critical thinking, by which students learn to identify the presuppositions that underlie lines of thought.
 - Prepares the student to distinguish what is well-reasoned from what is fallacious, from what is well-documented from what is not, to create arguments that are logical and true, and to support arguments with sound evidence.
 - o Systematic and formal study of logic is an area that is often only barely touched on as an exercise or two in reading or language arts; this needs to be changed. Students are capable of learning and identifying statements which are logically correct, as well as the logical fallacies, which can be known and cataloged.
 - Prepares the student to grasp logical distinctions.
 - o Just as mathematical sentences require a form that permits the logical operations of algebra, so logical distinctions can be distinguished in statements of thought.
 - Teaches students to write and speak clearly, fluently, analytically, persuasively, and beautifully.

- o While some talented people are able to do this almost by accident, it is possible to teach such skills through identified rules and patterns of rhetoric.
- Equips students with a knowledge of language, so that they can learn languages; a knowledge of literary form, so that they can study literature; a knowledge of form in music and the visual arts, so that they can learn to sing and to play, to portray an idea concretely, and to appreciate beauty; a framework of time so that they can study history; a knowledge of place so that they may study geography; a knowledge of arithmetic so that they can study mathematics; a knowledge of elocution so that they can learn to speak effectively; a knowledge of logic so that they can learn to reason acutely; an ability to observe and categorize, along with a knowledge of physical principals, so that they can study science; and a knowledge the Bible, of Bible History and the Catechism, so that they can grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ.
 - o In every discipline there is a “grammar,” a learning necessary for further learning.
- Rigorously exercises critical thinking and logical construction through disputation and debate.
 - o While excellent teachers find ways on their own to challenge the thinking of students and foster critical thinking, over the generations they have arrived at similar effective methods. These methods, and others that have fallen into disuse or have been forgotten, may be rediscovered and applied.
- Exercise students in creating what is beautiful, in expressing and defending what is true, and in crafting, inventing, and designing what is excellent.
 - o Students who have been taught to learn, challenged to think, instructed in form, and experienced in the work of others are the ones best prepared to create.

These are attributes of many of our schools, or at least of many teachers within our schools, which is why I say that we are to “remember” what is best in Christian education. Such attributes are not a novelty. If not, then why after interminable years in education classes was I not taught these things? Why must our teachers by dint of selfless labor rediscover them and work them into curricula that are hardly friendly to such treatment? The reason is that these attributes all make an assumption, an assumption that is foreign to the relativistic philosophies most in vogue within education in general. These attributes all operate upon the assumption that there is truth that is to be taught and excellence to be sought;⁶¹ even more, that truth is revealed and excellence, loveliness, and goodness can be known in this world, and in that which is to come.

Attributes of Christian Education Have Roots in the Past

It should not surprise us that if we go back to the time of Luther, when such verities were taken for granted, we would find an approach to education that is closer to what we have just described. In fact that is the case. As we have seen, Luther described it as the seven liberal arts, the *Trivium* and the *Quadrivium*. While I don’t suggest that we slavishly adopt the medieval system, as though nothing has been learned in the last 500 years, I do suggest that we drink deeply of this heritage, for even when our contemporaries (re)discover what was known long past, it is poisoned by the non-Christian philosophies of our age.

Take for example the *trivium* of Grammar, Logic, and Rhetoric. According to this model of education these are the tools of learning – the basic facts, the understanding, and the expression. Benjamin S. Bloom became very influential in the 1950’s when he set forth the same sort of hierarchy in education, which he called “Major Categories in the Taxonomy of Educational

Objectives.”⁶² Although it is more “sophisticated” than the *trivium*, the most substantial difference is that it is cast in behavioral terms, and that it is clearly relativistic. This can be seen particularly in the category of evaluation.

We could shake the tree of modern educational theory, hoping that for once the bad tree will bring forth good fruit, and that we would find a systematic approach to education that we could adopt as a church body, or as a broader fellowship, that would accomplish what Luther sought, the development of men and women to hold forth the truth in the marketplace of ideas, and to serve in their vocations within the church and without. Better yet to go back to the better tree, understanding that always man is a fallen creature, and also his systems of education.

One way of going back is by means of an essay by Dorothy Sayers, entitled “The Lost Tools of Learning.” During the mid-20th Century, Sayers was of the same company as C.S. Lewis, J.R.R. Tolkien, Ralph Vaughn Williams, and others who upheld the truth of Christianity over against the materialist (we would say secular humanist) assault of the day. Her essay is meant to be thought-provoking rather than laying out a definite plan, though some in the classical school revival movement have treated it as such. It is in any case of sufficient value that I have included it as an appendix to this paper.

As I said, it is one way of going back to the better tree, the tree of Christian pedagogy with which Luther would have been familiar, which was common even up to the first part of the 20th century, and which never has fully disappeared. It was a way of teaching and a substance of education which enabled people who believed in truth to learn and to converse. In fact, the lack of such a common education made such learning and conversation difficult or impossible, as Luther said in the case of Zwingli, “I wonder what kind of a man Zwingli²⁰ is, since he is so ignorant of grammar and dialectic, to say nothing of the other [liberal] arts, yet ventures to boast of victories. That kind of glory quickly leads to embarrassment.”⁶³

“Some Attributes of Christian Education,” draws on the *Trivium*, the three tools of learning. What I described generically has long-established and well-understood components. The mastered elements upon which further learning is based form the grammar of every subject. The whole matter of understanding what we have memorized is logic. The ability to adorn or to persuade is rhetoric. The exercise of the mind by question and answer is the dialectic, and the classroom activity of such question and answer is the disputation. We could go on, but the point is that we know that there is a huge resource of educational understanding upon which we can draw, and combine with more recent additions to knowledge about learning.

At this point in our synodical history, as we are launching a major initiative, Lutheran Schools of America, the question might well be asked whether this paper is a manifesto for that effort. In one way, it is, for what I have described here is a remembering of the best in Christian Education, and it is to remember and find and use what is best that will guide our efforts in the years ahead. Besides that, there is a sea change, a change in the tide,⁶⁴ so to speak, in which parents especially, but also educators, recognize that attempts to duplicate many aspects of the public school classroom in the Lutheran school, without importing the anti-Christian philosophy are not viable. A better way is being sought, and many are returning to that “better tree” of Christian pedagogy of which we have spoken. This certainly will affect the direction taken by the Lutheran Schools of America.

Conclusion

God our Savior has given us the promise of forgiveness of sins and life everlasting in His

glorious presence. This promise is not just for us, but for our children. To pass on this promise to our children we must by God's grace overcome not only our own spiritual inertia, and the natural rebellion of our children, but also a whole system of education that assumes what is not true. These assumptions undermine and erode the very idea of our faith, for the educational system has become an adversary to the faith. It is therefore incumbent upon us to establish and maintain institutions of Christian education whenever and wherever possible.

The adversarial character of education as an institution stems from the assumptions upon which it is based. The relativist foundation upon which education is based must ultimately abolish the manishness of man, and reduce him to an animal, to such a state that he is no different from non-man. If education is not to destroy man, then it must uphold the reality of a moral truth. It is therefore important that as individuals, as churches, as schools, and as a synod we take the offensive in the marketplace of ideas to proclaim the warnings of the law and the comfort of the gospel in such a way that we communicate also with those who believe that there is no truth.

We are urged on in this great task by Martin Luther, God's faithful spokesman. Although the times in which he lived were different, we can still understand his plea that our schools prepare men and women to serve as Christ's instruments in whatever vocation He has placed them, so that they may be real war-fighters in the church militant against the gates of Hell itself. Such a task demands a system of education that is different from that which is now in vogue, even in our church schools. It demands a system of education that reflects its roots in the assumption that there is an objective and absolute truth.

We as a synod, and LSA in its leadership position, must foster, encourage, and expedite such a system, paying close attention to key attributes. Such an effort will serve our hard-working teachers and the families that they serve. Such a system may well borrow from the past, and take from the good tree of Christian pedagogy as it has been passed down to us through the medieval and reformation church, and through the generations since.

If we do not follow such a vision as this, then who will contend for the faith in the marketplace of ideas? Who will prepare the leaders of the future? Just think! What if the best teacher in our local school, the most articulate person in the service club, the most caring and competent doctor or nurse in the clinic, the most charitable businessman, or the most effective manager were always the Christian? Would we not have opportunities then to confess our faith? We seek to prepare our children for that role in LSA schools. Granted, we are beginning with elementary schools, but we are laying a foundation.

For us to be successful in this we must foster schools of excellence, diligently preparing our children to be Christ's witnesses wherever they are in the world. God grant it, for His mercy's sake!

SDG

APPENDIX

The Lost Tools of Learning

Dorothy Sayers

<http://www.gbt.org/text/sayers.html> (May 18, 2006)

1. That I, whose experience of teaching is extremely limited, should presume to discuss education is a matter, surely, that calls for no apology. It is a kind of behavior to which the present climate of opinion is wholly favorable. Bishops air their opinions about economics; biologists, about metaphysics; inorganic chemists, about theology; the most irrelevant people are appointed to highly technical ministries; and plain, blunt men write to the papers to say that Epstein and Picasso do not know how to draw. Up to a certain point, and provided the criticisms are made with a reasonable modesty, these activities are commendable. Too much specialization is not a good thing. There is also one excellent reason why the veriest amateur may feel entitled to have an opinion about education. For if we are not all professional teachers, we have all, at some time or another, been taught. Even if we learnt nothing—perhaps in particular if we learnt nothing—our contribution to the discussion may have a potential value.
2. However, it is in the highest degree improbable that the reforms I propose will ever be carried into effect. Neither the parents, nor the training colleges, nor the examination boards, nor the boards of governors, nor the ministries of education, would countenance them for a moment. For they amount to this: that if we are to produce a society of educated people, fitted to preserve their intellectual freedom amid the complex pressures of our modern society, we must turn back the wheel of progress some four or five hundred years, to the point at which education began to lose sight of its true object, towards the end of the Middle Ages.
3. Before you dismiss me with the appropriate phrase—reactionary, romantic, mediaevalist, *laudator temporis acti* (praiser of times past), or whatever tag comes first to hand—I will ask you to consider one or two miscellaneous questions that hang about at the back, perhaps, of all our minds, and occasionally pop out to worry us.
4. When we think about the remarkably early age at which the young men went up to university in, let us say, Tudor times, and thereafter were held fit to assume responsibility for the conduct of their own affairs, are we altogether comfortable about that artificial prolongation of intellectual childhood and adolescence into the years of physical maturity which is so marked in our own day? To postpone the acceptance of responsibility to a late date brings with it a number of psychological complications which, while they may interest the psychiatrist, are scarcely beneficial either to the individual or to society. The stock argument in favor of postponing the school-leaving age and prolonging the period of education generally is that there is now so much more to learn than there was in the Middle Ages. This is partly true, but not wholly. The modern boy and girl are certainly taught more subjects—but does that always mean that they actually know more?
5. Has it ever struck you as odd, or unfortunate, that today, when the proportion of literacy throughout Western Europe is higher than it has ever been, people should have become susceptible to the influence of advertisement and mass propaganda to an extent hitherto unheard of and unimagined? Do you put this down to the mere mechanical fact that the press and the radio and so on have made propaganda much easier to distribute over a wide area? Or

do you sometimes have an uneasy suspicion that the product of modern educational methods is less good than he or she might be at disentangling fact from opinion and the proven from the plausible?

6. Have you ever, in listening to a debate among adult and presumably responsible people, been fretted by the extraordinary inability of the average debater to speak to the question, or to meet and refute the arguments of speakers on the other side? Or have you ever pondered upon the extremely high incidence of irrelevant matter which crops up at committee meetings, and upon the very great rarity of persons capable of acting as chairmen of committees? And when you think of this, and think that most of our public affairs are settled by debates and committees, have you ever felt a certain sinking of the heart?
7. Have you ever followed a discussion in the newspapers or elsewhere and noticed how frequently writers fail to define the terms they use? Or how often, if one man does define his terms, another will assume in his reply that he was using the terms in precisely the opposite sense to that in which he has already defined them? Have you ever been faintly troubled by the amount of slipshod syntax going about? And, if so, are you troubled because it is inelegant or because it may lead to dangerous misunderstanding?
8. Do you ever find that young people, when they have left school, not only forget most of what they have learnt (that is only to be expected), but forget also, or betray that they have never really known, how to tackle a new subject for themselves? Are you often bothered by coming across grown-up men and women who seem unable to distinguish between a book that is sound, scholarly, and properly documented, and one that is, to any trained eye, very conspicuously none of these things? Or who cannot handle a library catalogue? Or who, when faced with a book of reference, betray a curious inability to extract from it the passages relevant to the particular question which interests them?
9. Do you often come across people for whom, all their lives, a “subject” remains a “subject,” divided by watertight bulkheads from all other “subjects,” so that they experience very great difficulty in making an immediate mental connection between let us say, algebra and detective fiction, sewage disposal and the price of salmon—or, more generally, between such spheres of knowledge as philosophy and economics, or chemistry and art?
10. Are you occasionally perturbed by the things written by adult men and women for adult men and women to read? We find a well-known biologist writing in a weekly paper to the effect that: “It is an argument against the existence of a Creator” (I think he put it more strongly; but since I have, most unfortunately, mislaid the reference, I will put his claim at its lowest)—“an argument against the existence of a Creator that the same kind of variations which are produced by natural selection can be produced at will by stock breeders.” One might feel tempted to say that it is rather an argument for the existence of a Creator. Actually, of course, it is neither; all it proves is that the same material causes (recombination of the chromosomes, by crossbreeding, and so forth) are sufficient to account for all observed variations—just as the various combinations of the same dozen tones are materially sufficient to account for Beethoven’s Moonlight Sonata and the noise the cat makes by walking on the keys. But the cat’s performance neither proves nor disproves the existence of Beethoven; and all that is proved by the biologist’s argument is that he was unable to distinguish between a material and a final cause.
11. Here is a sentence from no less academic a source than a front- page article in the Times

Literary Supplement: “The Frenchman, Alfred Epinas, pointed out that certain species (e.g., ants and wasps) can only face the horrors of life and death in association.” I do not know what the Frenchman actually did say; what the Englishman says he said is patently meaningless. We cannot know whether life holds any horror for the ant, nor in what sense the isolated wasp which you kill upon the window-pane can be said to “face” or not to “face” the horrors of death. The subject of the article is mass behavior in man; and the human motives have been unobtrusively transferred from the main proposition to the supporting instance. Thus the argument, in effect, assumes what it set out to prove—a fact which would become immediately apparent if it were presented in a formal syllogism. This is only a small and haphazard example of a vice which pervades whole books—particularly books written by men of science on metaphysical subjects.

12. Another quotation from the same issue of the TLS comes in fittingly here to wind up this random collection of disquieting thoughts—this time from a review of Sir Richard Livingstone’s “Some Tasks for Education”: “More than once the reader is reminded of the value of an intensive study of at least one subject, so as to learn ‘the meaning of knowledge’ and what precision and persistence is needed to attain it. Yet there is elsewhere full recognition of the distressing fact that a man may be master in one field and show no better judgment than his neighbor anywhere else; he remembers what he has learnt, but forgets altogether how he learned it.”
13. I would draw your attention particularly to that last sentence, which offers an explanation of what the writer rightly calls the “distressing fact” that the intellectual skills bestowed upon us by our education are not readily transferable to subjects other than those in which we acquired them: “he remembers what he has learnt, but forgets altogether how he learned it.”
14. Is not the great defect of our education today—a defect traceable through all the disquieting symptoms of trouble that I have mentioned—that although we often succeed in teaching our pupils “subjects,” we fail lamentably on the whole in teaching them how to think: they learn everything, except the art of learning. It is as though we had taught a child, mechanically and by rule of thumb, to play “The Harmonious Blacksmith” upon the piano, but had never taught him the scale or how to read music; so that, having memorized “The Harmonious Blacksmith,” he still had not the faintest notion how to proceed from that to tackle “The Last Rose of Summer.” Why do I say, “as though”? In certain of the arts and crafts, we sometimes do precisely this—requiring a child to “express himself” in paint before we teach him how to handle the colors and the brush. There is a school of thought which believes this to be the right way to set about the job. But observe: it is not the way in which a trained craftsman will go about to teach himself a new medium. He, having learned by experience the best way to economize labor and take the thing by the right end, will start off by doodling about on an odd piece of material, in order to “give himself the feel of the tool.”
15. Let us now look at the mediaeval scheme of education—the syllabus of the Schools. It does not matter, for the moment, whether it was devised for small children or for older students, or how long people were supposed to take over it. What matters is the light it throws upon what the men of the Middle Ages supposed to be the object and the right order of the educative process.
16. The syllabus was divided into two parts: the Trivium and Quadrivium. The second part—the Quadrivium—consisted of “subjects,” and need not for the moment concern us. The

interesting thing for us is the composition of the Trivium, which preceded the Quadrivium and was the preliminary discipline for it. It consisted of three parts: Grammar, Dialectic, and Rhetoric, in that order.

17. Now the first thing we notice is that two at any rate of these “subjects” are not what we should call “subjects” at all: they are only methods of dealing with subjects. Grammar, indeed, is a “subject” in the sense that it does mean definitely learning a language—at that period it meant learning Latin. But language itself is simply the medium in which thought is expressed. The whole of the Trivium was, in fact, intended to teach the pupil the proper use of the tools of learning, before he began to apply them to “subjects” at all. First, he learned a language; not just how to order a meal in a foreign language, but the structure of a language, and hence of language itself—what it was, how it was put together, and how it worked. Secondly, he learned how to use language; how to define his terms and make accurate statements; how to construct an argument and how to detect fallacies in argument. Dialectic, that is to say, embraced Logic and Disputation. Thirdly, he learned to express himself in language—how to say what he had to say elegantly and persuasively.
18. At the end of his course, he was required to compose a thesis upon some theme set by his masters or chosen by himself, and afterwards to defend his thesis against the criticism of the faculty. By this time, he would have learned—or woe betide him—not merely to write an essay on paper, but to speak audibly and intelligibly from a platform, and to use his wits quickly when heckled. There would also be questions, cogent and shrewd, from those who had already run the gauntlet of debate.
19. It is, of course, quite true that bits and pieces of the mediaeval tradition still linger, or have been revived, in the ordinary school syllabus of today. Some knowledge of grammar is still required when learning a foreign language—perhaps I should say, “is again required,” for during my own lifetime, we passed through a phase when the teaching of declensions and conjugations was considered rather reprehensible, and it was considered better to pick these things up as we went along. School debating societies flourish; essays are written; the necessity for “self-expression” is stressed, and perhaps even over-stressed. But these activities are cultivated more or less in detachment, as belonging to the special subjects in which they are pigeon-holed rather than as forming one coherent scheme of mental training to which all “subjects” stand in a subordinate relation. “Grammar” belongs especially to the “subject” of foreign languages, and essay-writing to the “subject” called “English”; while Dialectic has become almost entirely divorced from the rest of the curriculum, and is frequently practiced unsystematically and out of school hours as a separate exercise, only very loosely related to the main business of learning. Taken by and large, the great difference of emphasis between the two conceptions holds good: modern education concentrates on “teaching subjects,” leaving the method of thinking, arguing, and expressing one’s conclusions to be picked up by the scholar as he goes along’ mediaeval education concentrated on first forging and learning to handle the tools of learning, using whatever subject came handy as a piece of material on which to doodle until the use of the tool became second nature.
20. “Subjects” of some kind there must be, of course. One cannot learn the theory of grammar without learning an actual language, or learn to argue and orate without speaking about something in particular. The debating subjects of the Middle Ages were drawn largely from

theology, or from the ethics and history of antiquity. Often, indeed, they became stereotyped, especially towards the end of the period, and the far-fetched and wire-drawn absurdities of Scholastic argument fretted Milton and provide food for merriment even to this day. Whether they were in themselves any more hackneyed and trivial than the usual subjects set nowadays for “essay writing” I should not like to say: we may ourselves grow a little weary of “A Day in My Holidays” and all the rest of it. But most of the merriment is misplaced, because the aim and object of the debating thesis has by now been lost sight of.

21. A glib speaker in the Brains Trust once entertained his audience (and reduced the late Charles Williams to helpless rage by asserting that in the Middle Ages it was a matter of faith to know how many archangels could dance on the point of a needle. I need not say, I hope, that it never was a “matter of faith”; it was simply a debating exercise, whose set subject was the nature of angelic substance: were angels material, and if so, did they occupy space? The answer usually adjudged correct is, I believe, that angels are pure intelligences; not material, but limited, so that they may have location in space but not extension. An analogy might be drawn from human thought, which is similarly non-material and similarly limited. Thus, if your thought is concentrated upon one thing—say, the point of a needle—it is located there in the sense that it is not elsewhere; but although it is “there,” it occupies no space there, and there is nothing to prevent an infinite number of different people’s thoughts being concentrated upon the same needle-point at the same time. The proper subject of the argument is thus seen to be the distinction between location and extension in space; the matter on which the argument is exercised happens to be the nature of angels (although, as we have seen, it might equally well have been something else; the practical lesson to be drawn from the argument is not to use words like “there” in a loose and unscientific way, without specifying whether you mean “located there” or “occupying space there.”
22. Scorn in plenty has been poured out upon the mediaeval passion for hair-splitting; but when we look at the shameless abuse made, in print and on the platform, of controversial expressions with shifting and ambiguous connotations, we may feel it in our hearts to wish that every reader and hearer had been so defensively armored by his education as to be able to cry: “*Distinguo.*”
23. For we let our young men and women go out unarmed, in a day when armor was never so necessary. By teaching them all to read, we have left them at the mercy of the printed word. By the invention of the film and the radio, we have made certain that no aversion to reading shall secure them from the incessant battery of words, words, words. They do not know what the words mean; they do not know how to ward them off or blunt their edge or fling them back; they are a prey to words in their emotions instead of being the masters of them in their intellects. We who were scandalized in 1940 when men were sent to fight armored tanks with rifles, are not scandalized when young men and women are sent into the world to fight massed propaganda with a smattering of “subjects”; and when whole classes and whole nations become hypnotized by the arts of the spell binder, we have the impudence to be astonished. We dole out lip-service to the importance of education—lip-service and, just occasionally, a little grant of money; we postpone the school-leaving age, and plan to build bigger and better schools; the teachers slave conscientiously in and out of school hours; and yet, as I believe, all this devoted effort is largely frustrated, because we have lost the tools of learning, and in their absence can only make a botched and piecemeal job of it.

24. What, then, are we to do? We cannot go back to the Middle Ages. That is a cry to which we have become accustomed. We cannot go back—or can we? *Distinguo*. I should like every term in that proposition defined. Does “go back” mean a retrogression in time, or the revision of an error? The first is clearly impossible per se; the second is a thing which wise men do every day. “Cannot”—does this mean that our behavior is determined irreversibly, or merely that such an action would be very difficult in view of the opposition it would provoke? Obviously the twentieth century is not and cannot be the fourteenth; but if “the Middle Ages” is, in this context, simply a picturesque phrase denoting a particular educational theory, there seems to be no a priori reason why we should not “go back” to it—with modifications—as we have already “gone back” with modifications, to, let us say, the idea of playing Shakespeare’s plays as he wrote them, and not in the “modernized” versions of Cibber and Garrick, which once seemed to be the latest thing in theatrical progress.
25. Let us amuse ourselves by imagining that such progressive retrogression is possible. Let us make a clean sweep of all educational authorities, and furnish ourselves with a nice little school of boys and girls whom we may experimentally equip for the intellectual conflict along lines chosen by ourselves. We will endow them with exceptionally docile parents; we will staff our school with teachers who are themselves perfectly familiar with the aims and methods of the Trivium; we will have our building and staff large enough to allow our classes to be small enough for adequate handling; and we will postulate a Board of Examiners willing and qualified to test the products we turn out. Thus prepared, we will attempt to sketch out a syllabus—a modern Trivium “with modifications” and we will see where we get to.
26. But first: what age shall the children be? Well, if one is to educate them on novel lines, it will be better that they should have nothing to unlearn; besides, one cannot begin a good thing too early, and the Trivium is by its nature not learning, but a preparation for learning. We will, therefore, “catch ‘em young,” requiring of our pupils only that they shall be able to read, write, and cipher.
27. My views about child psychology are, I admit, neither orthodox nor enlightened. Looking back upon myself (since I am the child I know best and the only child I can pretend to know from inside) I recognize three states of development. These, in a rough-and-ready fashion, I will call the Poll-Parrot, the Pert, and the Poetic—the latter coinciding, approximately, with the onset of puberty. The Poll-Parrot stage is the one in which learning by heart is easy and, on the whole, pleasurable; whereas reasoning is difficult and, on the whole, little relished. At this age, one readily memorizes the shapes and appearances of things; one likes to recite the number-plates of cars; one rejoices in the chanting of rhymes and the rumble and thunder of unintelligible polysyllables; one enjoys the mere accumulation of things. The Pert age, which follows upon this (and, naturally, overlaps it to some extent), is characterized by contradicting, answering back, liking to “catch people out” (especially one’s elders); and by the propounding of conundrums. Its nuisance-value is extremely high. It usually sets in about the Fourth Form. The Poetic age is popularly known as the “difficult” age. It is self-centered; it yearns to express itself; it rather specializes in being misunderstood; it is restless and tries to achieve independence; and, with good luck and good guidance, it should show the beginnings of creativeness; a reaching out towards a synthesis of what it already knows, and a deliberate eagerness to know and do some one thing in preference to all others. Now it

seems to me that the layout of the Trivium adapts itself with a singular appropriateness to these three ages: Grammar to the Poll-Parrot, Dialectic to the Pert, and Rhetoric to the Poetic age.

28. Let us begin, then, with Grammar. This, in practice, means the grammar of some language in particular; and it must be an inflected language. The grammatical structure of an uninflected language is far too analytical to be tackled by any one without previous practice in Dialectic. Moreover, the inflected languages interpret the uninflected, whereas the uninflected are of little use in interpreting the inflected. I will say at once, quite firmly, that the best grounding for education is the Latin grammar. I say this, not because Latin is traditional and mediaeval, but simply because even a rudimentary knowledge of Latin cuts down the labor and pains of learning almost any other subject by at least fifty percent. It is the key to the vocabulary and structure of all the Teutonic languages, as well as to the technical vocabulary of all the sciences and to the literature of the entire Mediterranean civilization, together with all its historical documents.
29. Those whose pedantic preference for a living language persuades them to deprive their pupils of all these advantages might substitute Russian, whose grammar is still more primitive. Russian is, of course, helpful with the other Slav dialects. There is something also to be said for Classical Greek. But my own choice is Latin. Having thus pleased the Classicists among you, I will proceed to horrify them by adding that I do not think it either wise or necessary to cramp the ordinary pupil upon the Procrustean bed of the Augustan Age, with its highly elaborate and artificial verse forms and oratory. Post-classical and mediaeval Latin, which was a living language right down to the end of the Renaissance, is easier and in some ways livelier; a study of it helps to dispel the widespread notion that learning and literature came to a full stop when Christ was born and only woke up again at the Dissolution of the Monasteries.
30. Latin should be begun as early as possible—at a time when inflected speech seems no more astonishing than any other phenomenon in an astonishing world; and when the chanting of “*Amo, amas, amat*” is as ritually agreeable to the feelings as the chanting of “eeny, meeny, miney, moe.”
31. During this age we must, of course, exercise the mind on other things besides Latin grammar. Observation and memory are the faculties most lively at this period; and if we are to learn a contemporary foreign language we should begin now, before the facial and mental muscles become rebellious to strange intonations. Spoken French or German can be practiced alongside the grammatical discipline of the Latin.
32. In English, meanwhile, verse and prose can be learned by heart, and the pupil’s memory should be stored with stories of every kind—classical myth, European legend, and so forth. I do not think that the classical stories and masterpieces of ancient literature should be made the vile bodies on which to practice the techniques of Grammar—that was a fault of mediaeval education which we need not perpetuate. The stories can be enjoyed and remembered in English, and related to their origin at a subsequent stage. Recitation aloud should be practiced, individually or in chorus; for we must not forget that we are laying the groundwork for Disputation and Rhetoric.
33. The grammar of History should consist, I think, of dates, events, anecdotes, and personalities. A set of dates to which one can peg all later historical knowledge is of enormous help later

on in establishing the perspective of history. It does not greatly matter which dates: those of the Kings of England will do very nicely, provided that they are accompanied by pictures of costumes, architecture, and other everyday things, so that the mere mention of a date calls up a very strong visual presentment of the whole period.

34. Geography will similarly be presented in its factual aspect, with maps, natural features, and visual presentment of customs, costumes, flora, fauna, and so on; and I believe myself that the discredited and old-fashioned memorizing of a few capitol cities, rivers, mountain ranges, etc., does no harm. Stamp collecting may be encouraged.
35. Science, in the Poll-Parrot period, arranges itself naturally and easily around collections—the identifying and naming of specimens and, in general, the kind of thing that used to be called “natural philosophy.” To know the name and properties of things is, at this age, a satisfaction in itself; to recognize a devil’s coach-horse at sight, and assure one’s foolish elders, that, in spite of its appearance, it does not sting; to be able to pick out Cassiopeia and the Pleiades, and perhaps even to know who Cassiopeia and the Pleiades were; to be aware that a whale is not a fish, and a bat not a bird—all these things give a pleasant sensation of superiority; while to know a ring snake from an adder or a poisonous from an edible toadstool is a kind of knowledge that also has practical value.
36. The grammar of Mathematics begins, of course, with the multiplication table, which, if not learnt now, will never be learnt with pleasure; and with the recognition of geometrical shapes and the grouping of numbers. These exercises lead naturally to the doing of simple sums in arithmetic. More complicated mathematical processes may, and perhaps should, be postponed, for the reasons which will presently appear.
37. So far (except, of course, for the Latin), our curriculum contains nothing that departs very far from common practice. The difference will be felt rather in the attitude of the teachers, who must look upon all these activities less as “subjects” in themselves than as a gathering-together of material for use in the next part of the Trivium. What that material is, is only of secondary importance; but it is as well that anything and everything which can be usefully committed to memory should be memorized at this period, whether it is immediately intelligible or not. The modern tendency is to try and force rational explanations on a child’s mind at too early an age. Intelligent questions, spontaneously asked, should, of course, receive an immediate and rational answer; but it is a great mistake to suppose that a child cannot readily enjoy and remember things that are beyond his power to analyze—particularly if those things have a strong imaginative appeal (as, for example, “Kubla Kahn”), an attractive jingle (like some of the memory-rhymes for Latin genders), or an abundance of rich, resounding polysyllables (like the *Quicunque vult*).
38. This reminds me of the grammar of Theology. I shall add it to the curriculum, because theology is the mistress-science without which the whole educational structure will necessarily lack its final synthesis. Those who disagree about this will remain content to leave their pupil’s education still full of loose ends. This will matter rather less than it might, since by the time that the tools of learning have been forged the student will be able to tackle theology for himself, and will probably insist upon doing so and making sense of it. Still, it is as well to have this matter also handy and ready for the reason to work upon. At the grammatical age, therefore, we should become acquainted with the story of God and Man in outline—i.e., the Old and New Testaments presented as parts of a single narrative of

Creation, Rebellion, and Redemption—and also with the Creed, the Lord’s Prayer, and the Ten Commandments. At this early stage, it does not matter nearly so much that these things should be fully understood as that they should be known and remembered.

39. It is difficult to say at what age, precisely, we should pass from the first to the second part of the Trivium. Generally speaking, the answer is: so soon as the pupil shows himself disposed to pertness and interminable argument. For as, in the first part, the master faculties are Observation and Memory, so, in the second, the master faculty is the Discursive Reason. In the first, the exercise to which the rest of the material was, as it were, keyed, was the Latin grammar; in the second, the key-exercise will be Formal Logic. It is here that our curriculum shows its first sharp divergence from modern standards. The disrepute into which Formal Logic has fallen is entirely unjustified; and its neglect is the root cause of nearly all those disquieting symptoms which we have noted in the modern intellectual constitution. Logic has been discredited, partly because we have come to suppose that we are conditioned almost entirely by the intuitive and the unconscious. There is no time to argue whether this is true; I will simply observe that to neglect the proper training of the reason is the best possible way to make it true. Another cause for the disfavor into which Logic has fallen is the belief that it is entirely based upon universal assumptions that are either unprovable or tautological. This is not true. Not all universal propositions are of this kind. But even if they were, it would make no difference, since every syllogism whose major premise is in the form “All A is B” can be recast in hypothetical form. Logic is the art of arguing correctly: “If A, then B.” The method is not invalidated by the hypothetical nature of A. Indeed, the practical utility of Formal Logic today lies not so much in the establishment of positive conclusions as in the prompt detection and exposure of invalid inference.
40. Let us now quickly review our material and see how it is to be related to Dialectic. On the Language side, we shall now have our vocabulary and morphology at our fingertips; henceforward we can concentrate on syntax and analysis (i.e., the logical construction of speech) and the history of language (i.e., how we came to arrange our speech as we do in order to convey our thoughts).
41. Our Reading will proceed from narrative and lyric to essays, argument and criticism, and the pupil will learn to try his own hand at writing this kind of thing. Many lessons—on whatever subject—will take the form of debates; and the place of individual or choral recitation will be taken by dramatic performances, with special attention to plays in which an argument is stated in dramatic form.
42. Mathematics—algebra, geometry, and the more advanced kinds of arithmetic—will now enter into the syllabus and take its place as what it really is: not a separate “subject” but a sub-department of Logic. It is neither more nor less than the rule of the syllogism in its particular application to number and measurement, and should be taught as such, instead of being, for some, a dark mystery, and, for others, a special revelation, neither illuminating nor illuminated by any other part of knowledge.
43. History, aided by a simple system of ethics derived from the grammar of theology, will provide much suitable material for discussion: Was the behavior of this statesman justified? What was the effect of such an enactment? What are the arguments for and against this or that form of government? We shall thus get an introduction to constitutional history—a subject meaningless to the young child, but of absorbing interest to those who are prepared to

argue and debate. Theology itself will furnish material for argument about conduct and morals; and should have its scope extended by a simplified course of dogmatic theology (i.e., the rational structure of Christian thought), clarifying the relations between the dogma and the ethics, and lending itself to that application of ethical principles in particular instances which is properly called casuistry. Geography and the Sciences will likewise provide material for Dialectic.

44. But above all, we must not neglect the material which is so abundant in the pupils' own daily life.
45. There is a delightful passage in Leslie Paul's "The Living Hedge" which tells how a number of small boys enjoyed themselves for days arguing about an extraordinary shower of rain which had fallen in their town—a shower so localized that it left one half of the main street wet and the other dry. Could one, they argued, properly say that it had rained that day on or over the town or only in the town? How many drops of water were required to constitute rain? And so on. Argument about this led on to a host of similar problems about rest and motion, sleep and waking, *est* and *non est*, and the infinitesimal division of time. The whole passage is an admirable example of the spontaneous development of the ratiocinative faculty and the natural and proper thirst of the awakening reason for the definition of terms and exactness of statement. All events are food for such an appetite.
46. An umpire's decision; the degree to which one may transgress the spirit of a regulation without being trapped by the letter: on such questions as these, children are born casuists, and their natural propensity only needs to be developed and trained—and especially, brought into an intelligible relationship with the events in the grown-up world. The newspapers are full of good material for such exercises: legal decisions, on the one hand, in cases where the cause at issue is not too abstruse; on the other, fallacious reasoning and muddleheaded arguments, with which the correspondence columns of certain papers one could name are abundantly stocked.
47. Wherever the matter for Dialectic is found, it is, of course, highly important that attention should be focused upon the beauty and economy of a fine demonstration or a well-turned argument, lest veneration should wholly die. Criticism must not be merely destructive; though at the same time both teacher and pupils must be ready to detect fallacy, slipshod reasoning, ambiguity, irrelevance, and redundancy, and to pounce upon them like rats. This is the moment when *précis*-writing may be usefully undertaken; together with such exercises as the writing of an essay, and the reduction of it, when written, by 25 or 50 percent.
48. It will, doubtless, be objected that to encourage young persons at the Pert age to browbeat, correct, and argue with their elders will render them perfectly intolerable. My answer is that children of that age are intolerable anyhow; and that their natural argumentativeness may just as well be canalized to good purpose as allowed to run away into the sands. It may, indeed, be rather less obtrusive at home if it is disciplined in school; and anyhow, elders who have abandoned the wholesome principle that children should be seen and not heard have no one to blame but themselves.
49. Once again, the contents of the syllabus at this stage may be anything you like. The "subjects" supply material; but they are all to be regarded as mere grist for the mental mill to work upon. The pupils should be encouraged to go and forage for their own information, and so guided towards the proper use of libraries and books for reference, and shown how to tell

which sources are authoritative and which are not.

50. Towards the close of this stage, the pupils will probably be beginning to discover for themselves that their knowledge and experience are insufficient, and that their trained intelligences need a great deal more material to chew upon. The imagination—usually dormant during the Pert age—will reawaken, and prompt them to suspect the limitations of logic and reason. This means that they are passing into the Poetic age and are ready to embark on the study of Rhetoric. The doors of the storehouse of knowledge should now be thrown open for them to browse about as they will. The things once learned by rote will be seen in new contexts; the things once coldly analyzed can now be brought together to form a new synthesis; here and there a sudden insight will bring about that most exciting of all discoveries: the realization that truism is true.
51. It is difficult to map out any general syllabus for the study of Rhetoric: a certain freedom is demanded. In literature, appreciation should be again allowed to take the lead over destructive criticism; and self-expression in writing can go forward, with its tools now sharpened to cut clean and observe proportion. Any child who already shows a disposition to specialize should be given his head: for, when the use of the tools has been well and truly learned, it is available for any study whatever. It would be well, I think, that each pupil should learn to do one, or two, subjects really well, while taking a few classes in subsidiary subjects so as to keep his mind open to the inter-relations of all knowledge. Indeed, at this stage, our difficulty will be to keep “subjects” apart; for Dialectic will have shown all branches of learning to be inter-related, so Rhetoric will tend to show that all knowledge is one. To show this, and show why it is so, is pre-eminently the task of the mistress science. But whether theology is studied or not, we should at least insist that children who seem inclined to specialize on the mathematical and scientific side should be obliged to attend some lessons in the humanities and vice versa. At this stage, also, the Latin grammar, having done its work, may be dropped for those who prefer to carry on their language studies on the modern side; while those who are likely never to have any great use or aptitude for mathematics might also be allowed to rest, more or less, upon their oars. Generally speaking, whatsoever is mere apparatus may now be allowed to fall into the background, while the trained mind is gradually prepared for specialization in the “subjects” which, when the Trivium is completed, it should be perfectly well equipped to tackle on its own. The final synthesis of the Trivium—the presentation and public defense of the thesis—should be restored in some form; perhaps as a kind of “leaving examination” during the last term at school.
52. The scope of Rhetoric depends also on whether the pupil is to be turned out into the world at the age of 16 or whether he is to proceed to the university. Since, really, Rhetoric should be taken at about 14, the first category of pupil should study Grammar from about 9 to 11, and Dialectic from 12 to 14; his last two school years would then be devoted to Rhetoric, which, in this case, would be of a fairly specialized and vocational kind, suiting him to enter immediately upon some practical career. A pupil of the second category would finish his Dialectical course in his preparatory school, and take Rhetoric during his first two years at his public school. At 16, he would be ready to start upon those “subjects” which are proposed for his later study at the university: and this part of his education will correspond to the mediaeval Quadrivium. What this amounts to is that the ordinary pupil, whose formal

education ends at 16, will take the Trivium only; whereas scholars will take both the Trivium and the Quadrivium.

53. Is the Trivium, then, a sufficient education for life? Properly taught, I believe that it should be. At the end of the Dialectic, the children will probably seem to be far behind their coevals brought up on old-fashioned “modern” methods, so far as detailed knowledge of specific subjects is concerned. But after the age of 14 they should be able to overhaul the others hand over fist. Indeed, I am not at all sure that a pupil thoroughly proficient in the Trivium would not be fit to proceed immediately to the university at the age of 16, thus proving himself the equal of his mediaeval counterpart, whose precocity astonished us at the beginning of this discussion. This, to be sure, would make hay of the English public-school system, and disconcert the universities very much. It would, for example, make quite a different thing of the Oxford and Cambridge boat race.
54. But I am not here to consider the feelings of academic bodies: I am concerned only with the proper training of the mind to encounter and deal with the formidable mass of undigested problems presented to it by the modern world. For the tools of learning are the same, in any and every subject; and the person who knows how to use them will, at any age, get the mastery of a new subject in half the time and with a quarter of the effort expended by the person who has not the tools at his command. To learn six subjects without remembering how they were learnt does nothing to ease the approach to a seventh; to have learnt and remembered the art of learning makes the approach to every subject an open door.
55. Before concluding these necessarily very sketchy suggestions, I ought to say why I think it necessary, in these days, to go back to a discipline which we had discarded. The truth is that for the last three hundred years or so we have been living upon our educational capital. The post-Renaissance world, bewildered and excited by the profusion of new “subjects” offered to it, broke away from the old discipline (which had, indeed, become sadly dull and stereotyped in its practical application) and imagined that henceforward it could, as it were, disport itself happily in its new and extended Quadrivium without passing through the Trivium. But the Scholastic tradition, though broken and maimed, still lingered in the public schools and universities: Milton, however much he protested against it, was formed by it—the debate of the Fallen Angels and the disputation of Abdiel with Satan have the tool-marks of the Schools upon them, and might, incidentally, profitably figure as set passages for our Dialectical studies. Right down to the nineteenth century, our public affairs were mostly managed, and our books and journals were for the most part written, by people brought up in homes, and trained in places, where that tradition was still alive in the memory and almost in the blood. Just so, many people today who are atheist or agnostic in religion, are governed in their conduct by a code of Christian ethics which is so rooted that it never occurs to them to question it.
56. But one cannot live on capital forever. However firmly a tradition is rooted, if it is never watered, though it dies hard, yet in the end it dies. And today a great number—perhaps the majority—of the men and women who handle our affairs, write our books and our newspapers, carry out our research, present our plays and our films, speak from our platforms and pulpits—yes, and who educate our young people—have never, even in a lingering traditional memory, undergone the Scholastic discipline. Less and less do the children who come to be educated bring any of that tradition with them. We have lost the tools of learning

—the axe and the wedge, the hammer and the saw, the chisel and the plane—that were so adaptable to all tasks. Instead of them, we have merely a set of complicated jigs, each of which will do but one task and no more, and in using which eye and hand receive no training, so that no man ever sees the work as a whole or “looks to the end of the work.”

57. What use is it to pile task on task and prolong the days of labor, if at the close the chief object is left unattained? It is not the fault of the teachers—they work only too hard already. The combined folly of a civilization that has forgotten its own roots is forcing them to shore up the tottering weight of an educational structure that is built upon sand. They are doing for their pupils the work which the pupils themselves ought to do. For the sole true end of education is simply this: to teach men how to learn for themselves; and whatever instruction fails to do this is effort spent in vain.

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ENDNOTES

- ¹ Unless otherwise noted, all Scripture references are from *The Holy Bible : New International Version*. 1996, c1984 (electronic ed.) Grand Rapids: Zondervan.
- ² Of course, Christian education should never cease this side of heaven, but we are limiting our attention to the Christian education of children.
- ³ It is sometimes useful to distinguish between instruction, from the Latin, to build into, and education, from the Latin, to draw out from.
- ⁴ (Associated Press Georgia Textbook Evolution Stickers Removed May 24, 2005) Associated Press. "Georgia Textbook Evolution Stickers Removed." Fox News: U.S. & World. May 24, 2005. Fox News. May 27, 2006 <<http://www.foxnews.com/story/0,2933,157477,00.html>>.
- ⁵ "Peter Singer." Wikipedia, The Free Encyclopedia. 5 Jun 2006, 00:45 UTC. Wikimedia Foundation, Inc. 8 Jun 2006 <http://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Peter_Singer&oldid=56917907>.
- ⁶ Dr. Eric R. Pianka recommends reducing the population of the planet by 90% through the use of Ebola. (Meeting Doctor Doom March 31, 2006) Meeting Doctor Doom. March 31, 2006. The Citizen Scientist. May 27, 2006 <http://www.sas.org/tcs/weeklyIssues_2006/2006-04-07/feature1p/>.
- ⁷ And Jesus came and spoke to them, saying, "All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth. "Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, "teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, *even* to the end of the age." Amen. (Matthew 28:18-20) (NKJV)
- ⁸ It is true that can mean adult catechumens, or those small in the faith, or dear. Children qualify!
- ⁹ (Exodus 12:26-27) "And it shall be, when your children say to you, 'What do you mean by this service?' "that you shall say, 'It *is* the Passover sacrifice of the Lord, who passed over the houses of the children of Israel in Egypt when He struck the Egyptians and delivered our households.' " So the people bowed their heads and worshiped. (Joshua 4:4-7) Then Joshua called the twelve men whom he had appointed from the children of Israel, one man from every tribe; and Joshua said to them: "Cross over before the ark of the Lord your God into the midst of the Jordan, and each one of you take up a stone on his shoulder, according to the number of

the tribes of the children of Israel, “that this may be a sign among you when your children ask in time to come, saying, ‘What do these stones *mean* to you?’ “Then you shall answer them that the waters of the Jordan were cut off before the ark of the covenant of the Lord; when it crossed over the Jordan, the waters of the Jordan were cut off. And these stones shall be for a memorial to the children of Israel forever.”

¹⁰ To the Jews who had believed him, Jesus said, “If you hold to my teaching, you are really my disciples. Then you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free.” (John 8:31-32) Also “Therefore everyone who hears these words of mine and puts them into practice is like a wise man who built his house on the rock. (Matthew 7:24) Cf. also Luke 8:11-15 (The Parable of the Sower).

¹¹ Let no one deceive you by any means; for *that Day will not come* unless the falling away comes first, ... (2 Thessalonians 2:3) (NKJV)

¹² “WELS Statistical Data for Parish ministry Planning,” Compiled by the Board for Parish Services. Not dated.

¹³ [The Creator] said, ‘For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife, and the two will become one flesh’? So they are no longer two, but one. ...” (Matthew 19:5-6)

¹⁴ Has not the LORD made them one? In flesh and spirit they are his. And why one? Because he was seeking godly offspring. So guard yourself in your spirit, and do not break faith with the wife of your youth. “I hate divorce,” says the LORD God of Israel, So guard yourself in your spirit, and do not break faith. (Malachi 2:15-16)

¹⁵ [The Creator] said, ‘For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife... (Matthew 19:5)

¹⁶ But if anyone does not provide for his own, and especially for those of his household, he has denied the faith and is worse than an unbeliever. (1 Timothy 5:8) (NKJV)

¹⁷ Fathers, do not exasperate your children; instead, bring them up in the training and instruction of the Lord. (Ephesians 6:4)

¹⁸ For the purposes of this essay, we are talking about the institution of American education as shaped by the philosophies of John Dewey, B.F. Skinner and others, as formed by the Progressive Education Association, later the National Education Association, as taught by Columbia Teachers’ College and successor institutions, as implemented by state legislatures and departments of education, as equipped by textbook publishers, and as implemented by teachers molded by all of the above. We are particularly focused upon elementary and secondary education, but must realize that the same issues involve all education. We are not thinking only of public education, because private and parochial education, particularly in Roman Catholic and Episcopal schools may be even more “progressive.” This is a decided generalization, and of course does not imply that every teacher subscribes to the worldly philosophies we critique, or (sadly) is even aware of how he or she is enabling the philosophies in the classroom.

In order to keep perspective, remember that on the one hand, the institution of American education is like the media or the entertainment industry – a heterogeneous institution in which some good can be found next to much that is not good. But also remember that every state has compulsory attendance laws for schools, and in terms of employment and expenditure, education dwarfs these other institutions.

- ¹⁹ Lewis, C.S.(Hooper Walter Lewis C.S. Christian Apologetics 1970)Lew “Christian Apologetics.” Essays on Theology and Ethics. Ed. Walter Hooper. Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans, 1970. 93. (*Emphasis mine.*)
- ²⁰ Lewis’ theology relative to the power of Christ in the gospel is wanting; nevertheless, his overall point is well taken. It is alone by the grace of God that anybody’s faith remains, given the unanimity of unbelief in some quarters, as the Bible says “If those days had not been cut short, no one would survive, but for the sake of the elect those days will be shortened. At that time if anyone says to you, ‘Look, here is the Christ!’ or, ‘There he is!’ do not believe it. For false Christs and false prophets will appear and perform great signs and miracles to deceive even the elect—if that were possible. See, I have told you ahead of time.” (Matthew 24:22-25)
- ²¹ Or compartments for media, home life, work, etc.
- ²² *Anno Domini*, “in the year of the Lord.” *Anno Domini Nostri Iesu Christi* (“In the Year of Our Lord Jesus Christ”)
- ²³ In English, “before Christ.”
- ²⁴ (Associated Press Researchers Dig into Comet Dust Samples from Spacecraft February 21, 2006)Associated Press. “Researchers Dig into Comet Dust Samples from Spacecraft.” HeraldNet. February 21, 2006. Everett Herald. 21 May 2006 <http://www.heraldnet.com/stories/06/02/21/100wir_a2comet001.cfm>.
- ²⁵ David Frum, “A New World, A New Day,” *National Review*, March 28, 2006.
- ²⁶ It bears repeating that for the purposes of this essay, we are talking about the institution of American education as shaped by the philosophies of John Dewey, B.F. Skinner and others, as formed by the Progressive Education Association, later the National Education Association, as taught by Columbia Teachers’ College and successor institutions, as implemented by state legislatures and departments of education, as equipped by textbook publishers, and as implemented by teachers molded by all of the above. We are particularly focused upon elementary and secondary education, but must realize that the same issues involve all education. While public education is most influential, we are not thinking only of public education, because private and parochial education, particularly in Roman Catholic and Episcopal schools may be even more “progressive.” This is a decided generalization, and of course does not imply that every teacher subscribes to the worldly philosophies we critique, or (sadly) is even aware of how he or she is enabling the philosophies in the classroom.
- ²⁷ As a representative of the Washington Federation of Independent Schools, I worked closely for a time with the state board of education and with “program units” which implemented the state regulations within colleges of education. Without knowing who they were talking to, state board members bluntly referred to proponents of Christian education as “ayatollahs,” and viewed teacher preparation as a key element in thwarting what they considered the egregious harm that such religious teaching would cause. It went so far in one instance that representatives of the state not only determined course content at a “Lutheran” university, but required course syllabi to document that the content was taught, and even threatened to interview students to confirm it.
- ²⁸ Priorities for the 109th Congress, Second Session. 2006. NEA National Education Association, Great Public Schools for Every Child, Legislative Action Center. 18 May 2006 <<http://www.nea.org/lac/priorities.html>>.
- ²⁹ After all, the enemy knows the importance of presuppositions and enforces them whenever

possible. For example, efforts are well advanced in California and Massachusetts to remove from textbooks references to fathers and mothers as male and female figures, respectively. See footnote 35. As we go to press, the Motion Picture Association of America has given a movie a PG rating because of the strongly religious thematic elements. Mattingly, Terry. "Narrow focus Draws 'PG' Rating for Baptist-backed Film." Scripps Howard News Service. 7 May 2006. Scripps Howard News Service. 7 June 2006 <http://www.shns.com/shns/g_index2.cfm?action=detail&pk=RELIGION-FAITH-06-07-06>.

- ³⁰ I chose not to use the politically correct term, "native American," because after all, I am a native American. Most of us are. A native is someone who originates, is born in, a particular place. Now, class, what does the current use of "native American" assume or imply?
- ³¹ Lewis, C.S., *The Abolition of Man, or Reflections on Education with Special Reference to the Teaching of English in the Upper forms of Schools*, University of Durham, Riddell Memorial Lectures, Fifteenth Series, 1947, Macmillan Publishing Co., Inc., New York.
- ³² Lewis, *Abolition of Man*, p. 39.
- ³³ Wordsworth Dorothy. "Recollections of a Tour in Scotland, A.D. 1803." The Falls of the Clyde. 2006. aboutScotland. 10 May 06 <<http://www.aboutscotland.com/water/clyde.html>>.
- ³⁴ Lewis, *Abolition of Man*, at page 14. He references *The Green Book* pp. 19,20.
- ³⁵ *De Civ. Dei*. XV. 22. Cf. *ibid.* ix. 5. xi.28, quoted Op. Cit. at page 26.
- ³⁶ Eth. Nic. 1104 B., quoted Op. Cit. at page 26.
- ³⁷ As I am writing this, California Senate Bill 1437 is in the news. The bill would remove gender-specific titles from all textbooks, so there would be no Mom or Dad, Mother or Father. At the same time it would add history lessons on "the contributions of people who are lesbian, gay, bisexual or transgender to the economic, political, and social development of California and the United States of America." <http://www.worldnetdaily.com/news/article.asp?ARTICLE_ID=50044>, accessed on 5/4/2006.
- ³⁸ Lewis, *Abolition of Man*, p. 41.
- ³⁹ Lewis, *Abolition of Man*, page 54 Lewis uses the word "Tao" for "natural law."
- ⁴⁰ All that is morally virtuous and right.
- ⁴¹ All that is worthy of praise, of great and surpassing value, besides the moral realm.
- ⁴² As I write this the movie, "The DaVinci Code" has just been released. I counted at least two dozen programs on television and articles in the print media hyping the "alternative view of the Bible and Christianity" all based on the assumption that Christianity was itself just as much a product of some religious idea as was Gnosticism.
- ⁴³ There are variations of this type of situation. This case was when two institutions (family and school) had different foundational beliefs, but agreement in a particular instance, so the particular instance brought the student over to adopt the foundational beliefs of the school. It is a common occurrence. It may also be that two institutions have common foundational beliefs, but differ in a particular instance, perhaps causing unnecessary rejection of one another. In his book, *God and Man at Yale* and in discussion afterward, William F. Buckley observed that the more obvious the differences in beliefs between a student and the educational institution, the less likely the student was to be undermined in his faith. A catholic, for example, was more likely to forsake the Christian faith at a liberal catholic institution, for example, than at an overtly anti-Christian one.
- ⁴⁴ Luther Martin. "Letter to the Mayors and Aldermen of All the Cities of Germany in Behalf of

Christian Schools.” Luther on Education. Ed. F.V.N. Painter. Eugene, OR: Wipf and Stock Publishers, 1889. 197.

⁴⁵ “In Behalf of Christian Schools,” Painter, p. 208.

⁴⁶ “In Behalf of Christian Schools,” Painter, p. 171.

⁴⁷ Luther Martin. “Sermon on the Duty of Sending Children to School.” Luther on Education. Ed. F.V.N. Painter. Eugene, OR: Wipf and Stock Publishers, 1889, p 223.

⁴⁸ Luther, M. (1999, c1966). “*To the Christian Nobility of the German Nation Concerning the Reform of the Christian Estate.*” *Vol. 44: Luther’s works, vol. 44 : The Christian in Society I* (J. J. Pelikan, H. C. Oswald & H. T. Lehmann, Ed.). Luther’s Works. Philadelphia: Fortress Press, p. 207

⁴⁹ “Duty of Sending Children to School.” Painter, p. 224.

⁵⁰ Von Raumer, Karl, “Luther’s Views of Education and Schools, quoted in *Readings from Luther On Schools and Education; Primary and Secondary Sources*, an unpublished collection by Joel Brondos.

⁵¹ **triv•i•um** *noun*; *plural triv•ia*. [Medieval Latin, from Latin, meeting of three ways, crossroads] (1804) : a group of studies consisting of grammar, rhetoric, and logic and forming the lower division of the seven liberal arts in medieval universities — compare QUADRIVIUM - Merriam-Webster, I. (1993; Published in electronic form by Logos Research Systems, 1996). *Merriam-Webster’s collegiate dictionary*. (electronic ed of the 10th ed.). Springfield, MA: Merriam-Webster, Incorporated.

⁵² **qua•driv•i•um** *noun*. [Late Latin, from Latin, crossroads, from *quadri-* + *via* way — more at WAY] (1804) : a group of studies consisting of arithmetic, music, geometry, and astronomy and forming the upper division of the seven liberal arts in medieval universities — compare TRIVIUM - Merriam-Webster, I. (1993; Published in electronic form by Logos Research Systems, 1996). *Merriam-Webster’s collegiate dictionary*. (electronic ed of the 10th ed.). Springfield, MA: Merriam-Webster, Incorporated.

⁵³ Von Raumer, quoted in Brondos, p. 105

⁵⁴ “In Behalf of Christian Schools,” Painter, p. 199.

¹³ Karl and Barbara Hertz and John H. Lichtblau (trans.), Karl Holl’s *Cultural Significance of the Reformation* (“Living Age Books” [New York: Meridian, 1959]), pp. 110–111.

⁵⁵ Luther, M. (1999, c1962). “*To the Councilmen of Germany...*” *Vol. 45: Luther’s works, vol. 45 : The Christian in Society II* (J. J. Pelikan, H. C. Oswald & H. T. Lehmann, Ed.). Luther’s Works. Philadelphia: Fortress Press, p 343

⁵⁶ Luther, M. (1999, c1972). *Vol. 15: Luther’s works, vol. 15 : Ecclesiastes, Song of Solomon, Last Words of David, 2 Samuel 23:1-7* (J. J. Pelikan, H. C. Oswald & H. T. Lehmann, Ed.). Luther’s Works. Saint Louis: Concordia Publishing House.

⁵⁷ Melancthon, Phillip. “Instructions to the Parish Visitors on Schools.” Quoted in Brondos, pp. 40 ff.

(Please observe that in the next footnote, and others following footnotes that occur within quotations, are included in normal text (not super-script) and may appear to be out of sequence.)

⁵⁶ *Grammatica*, the most basic of the liberal arts, included much more than we understand by the term “grammar” today. Perhaps “English” would be the closest modern equivalent, for it included besides the rules of a language such things as vocabulary, reading, interpretation, and

- creative expression. Albrecht, *Studien zu ... "die Ratsherren,"* p. 711.
- 57 See p. 356, n. 15.
- 58 Luther, M. (1999, c1962). "To the Councilmen of Germany..." *Vol. 45: Luther's works, vol. 45 : The Christian in Society II* (J. J. Pelikan, H. C. Oswald & H. T. Lehmann, Ed.). Luther's Works. Philadelphia: Fortress Press, p 376
- 15 The liberal arts were traditionally seven in number. Grammar, rhetoric, and dialectic comprised the trivium of the medieval elementary schools; music, arithmetic, geometry, and astronomy comprised the quadrivium of the secondary schools. *BG* 3, 32, n. 6. Luther's description has reference to Roman education in the shape it took after the end of the republic, as he had come to know it through his own reading of Cicero, Quintilian, and others. Albrecht, *Studien zu ... "die Ratsherren,"* p. 710.
- 16 Luther consistently rendered the *paidagogos* of Gal. 3:24 (literally, "attendant" or "custodian"; cf. RSV) as *Zuchtmeyster* (literally, one who educates, trains, or disciplines in home, court, or school; cf. KJV). *WA*, *DB* 7, 182–183; Grimm, *Deutsches Wörterbuch*, VII, 275.
- 59 Luther, M. (1999, c1962). "To the Councilmen of all Cities in German that they Establish and Maintain Christian Schools" *Vol. 45: Luther's works, vol. 45: The Christian in Society II* (J. J. Pelikan, H. C. Oswald & H. T. Lehmann, Ed.). Luther's Works. Philadelphia: Fortress Press, p 356
- 72 *Ertzney*, i.e., all the medical arts, which in the academic situation of Luther's time were taught in connection with the liberal arts. *MA*³ 5; , 443, n. 290, 1. 28.
- 73 The liberal arts were traditionally seven in number. Grammar, rhetoric, and dialectic comprised the trivium of the medieval elementary schools; music, arithmetic, geometry, and astronomy comprised the quadrivium of the secondary schools. *LW* 45, 356, n. 15.
- 74 *Grammatica*, the most basic of the liberal arts, included much more than we understand by the term "grammar" today. It included, besides the rules of a language, such things as vocabulary, reading, interpretation, and creative expression. *LW* 45, 376, n. 56.
- 75 In his *Large Catechism* of 1529 (I:130) Luther quotes the full Latin proverb, ascribing it to the "wise men of old": "*Deo, parentibus, et magistris non potest satis gratiae rependi.*" Cf. *WA* 30¹, 151; cf. also Theodore G. Tappert (ed.), *The Book of Concord* (Philadelphia: Muhlenberg Press, 1959), p. 383.
- 60 Luther, M. (1999, c1967). "A Sermon on Keeping Children in School" *Vol. 46: Luther's works, vol. 46 : The Christian in Society III* (J. J. Pelikan, H. C. Oswald & H. T. Lehmann, Ed.). Luther's Works. Philadelphia: Fortress Press, p 252 (*Emphasis mine.*)
- 61 That we can seek such excellence without being pietistic, that is, without confusing revealed truth with truth that we discover as part of our sanctified life, is difficult. Some would relegate all that is not revealed truth to "mere human opinion," with the result that they can scarcely contend against the corruption of truth that is so much a part of modern education.
- 62 **Categories in the Cognitive Domain: (with Outcome-Illustrating Verbs)**
1. **Knowledge** of terminology; specific facts; ways and means of dealing with specifics (conventions, trends and sequences, classifications and categories, criteria, methodology); universals and abstractions in a field (principles and generalizations, theories and structures): Knowledge is (here) defined as the remembering (recalling) of appropriate, previously learned information.

- o defines; describes; enumerates; identifies; labels; lists; matches; names; reads; records; reproduces; selects; states; views.
- 2. Comprehension:** Grasping (understanding) the meaning of informational materials.
 - o classifies; cites; converts; describes; discusses; estimates; explains; generalizes; gives examples; makes sense out of; paraphrases; restates (in own words); summarizes; traces; understands.
- 3. Application:** The use of previously learned information in new and concrete situations to solve problems that have single or best answers.
 - o acts; administers; articulates; assesses; charts; collects; computes; constructs; contributes; controls; determines; develops; discovers; establishes; extends; implements; includes; informs; instructs; operationalizes; participates; predicts; prepares; preserves; produces; projects; provides; relates; reports; shows; solves; teaches; transfers; uses; utilizes.
- 4. Analysis:** The breaking down of informational materials into their component parts, examining (and trying to understand the organizational structure of) such information to develop divergent conclusions by identifying motives or causes, making inferences, and/or finding evidence to support generalizations.
 - o breaks down; correlates; diagrams; differentiates; discriminates; distinguishes; focuses; illustrates; infers; limits; outlines; points out; prioritizes; recognizes; separates; subdivides.
- 5. Synthesis:** Creatively or divergently applying prior knowledge and skills to produce a new or original whole.
 - o adapts; anticipates; categorizes; collaborates; combines; communicates; compares; compiles; composes; contrasts; creates; designs; devises; expresses; facilitates; formulates; generates; incorporates; individualizes; initiates; integrates; intervenes; models; modifies; negotiates; plans; progresses; rearranges; reconstructs; reinforces; reorganizes; revises; structures; substitutes; validates.
- 6. Evaluation:** Judging the value of material based on personal values/opinions, resulting in an end product, with a given purpose, without real right or wrong answers.
 - o appraises; compares & contrasts; concludes; criticizes; critiques; decides; defends; interprets; judges; justifies; reframes; supports.

Major Categories in the Taxonomy of Educational Objectives. Ed. Gunter Krumme. 1956.

University of Washington. 19 May 2006

<<http://faculty.washington.edu/krumme/guides/bloom1.html>>.

²⁰ Ulrich Zwingli; see p. 88, n. 12. Luther arrived at this judgment on the basis of his study of Zwingli's work cited on p. 172, n. 6.

⁶³Luther, M. (1999, c1972). *Vol. 49: Luther's works, vol. 49 : Letters II* (J. J. Pelikan, H. C. Oswald & H. T. Lehmann, Ed.). Luther's Works. Philadelphia: Fortress Press.

⁶⁴ There is a tide in the affairs of men,
Which, taken at the flood, leads on to fortune;
Omitted, all the voyage of their life
Is bound in shallows and in miseries.
On such a full sea are we now afloat;
And we must take the current when it serves,
Or lose our ventures. (William Shakespeare, *Julius Caesar, Act 4, Scene 3*)