

“BRINGING INTO CAPTIVITY EVERY THOUGHT TO THE OBEDIENCE OF CHRIST.” 2 Corinthians 10:5. An essay on the proper standard of textbook evaluation for our Christian Day Schools.

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Arizona-California District Teachers' Conference,
Nov. 6-7, 1975 Tempe, Arizona

The Conflict

Kingdoms erect fortifications to protect their boundaries. Consideration is given to various ways to ward off enemy attacks and prevent inroads into territory already held. In order to overcome an enemy, the aggressor must be able to destroy the fortifications of the enemy and hold the territory newly won, As this is true of earthly, political kingdoms, so it is also true of the two spiritual kingdoms, the kingdom of Christ and the kingdom of the devil. If the kingdom of Christ is to be advanced, it is necessary for His kingdom to exert a power capable of bringing to ruin the fortifications of the devil and to hold the newly-won territory against the counter-attack of Satan.

In the Christian Day School we are constantly involved in both the attack of Satan's strongholds and the bolstering of our defenses against counter-attack. As a result, it is extremely important for us to understand the nature of this conflict: the weaponry that is deployed on each side, the strength of the two powers involved, and a knowledge of the two leaders. This is basic information a person will need before he can properly and effectively evaluate any part of the whole.

The textbooks we use in our classrooms indeed play a part in this struggle. They are a source of information. They present attitudes concerning knowledge and the use of knowledge. They play a significant role in training the combatants in this all-out struggle, and this is true whether it is for the forces of Christ or whether it is for the forces of Satan. But in order to see more clearly how textbooks play a part in this warfare, let us first review the general scope of the subject.

The Lordship of Christ

The Universal Dominion of Christ

The dominion of Christ is divided up into three kingdoms: The Kingdom of Power, the Kingdom of Grace and the Kingdom of Glory. Ephesians 1:20b-23 reads, "...and set him at his own right hand in the heavenly places, far above all principality, and power, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come: and hath put all things under his feet, and gave him to be the head over all things to the church, which is his body, the fulness of him that filleth all in all." This passage points out the unity of the three kingdoms. This unity is existent because of the single lordship of Christ over all three. In his *Christian Dogmatics*, F. Pieper states, "Scripture teaches that these realms form a unit inasmuch as they are under one and the same Lord; Christ's uniform will and purpose directs, and His divine power and majesty controls, all affairs." (Vol. II, pp. 385f, The doctrine of Christ.)

The Difference of the Three Kingdoms

At the same time Scripture teaches that the three kingdoms differ from one another. Christ sharply distinguishes His Kingdom of Grace from the Kingdom of this world: "My kingdom is not of this world; if My kingdom were of this world, then would My servants fight that I should not be delivered to the Jews; but now is My kingdom not from hence." (John 18:36). When Jesus says, "not from hence", He means that His kingdom is not of this world. The Church of Christ is in the world, but it is not of this world. This means that although the Church sojourns in this world (John 17:11, 15; 1 Tim. 2:2), it does not partake of the nature of the kingdoms of this world. Neither is it built and ruled after the manner of these kingdoms.

Christ shapes and preserves the kingdoms of this world through the ordinances of the civil government and whatever else belongs to this sphere (civil righteousness, external authority, inclusive of the parental

authority; in general, the arrangement of superiors and inferiors in the domain of social life). He builds up, maintains, and governs His Church exclusively through His Word and the Sacraments, by which He creates and preserves faith in the Gospel through the Holy Ghost. For the administration of the Church He gives it His gifts and has, particularly, instituted the office of the public ministry. (Ibid, p. 387f.)

The kingdom of power is an inclusive kingdom. It embraces the whole universe. The writer to the Hebrews states it this way, "He left nothing that is not put under Him", (Heb. 2:8b). Of necessity then, the kingdom of power must include the fallen angels, the unbelievers and all creatures. Christ exercises His dominion over this kingdom by means of His almighty power.

The Kingdom of grace, on the other hand, is an exclusive kingdom. It embraces only the believers, those who have received the Gospel of the grace of God through faith. Christ exercises His dominion over His kingdom of grace through the revealed Word. Those who persevere in faith through this life as subjects of this kingdom of grace will be translated into Christ's kingdom of glory.

We must keep these distinctions in mind in order that we might properly differentiate which authority Christ has delegated to the Church Militant, the Body of Believers; which authority He has given to the State; and which authority He has delegated to parents. Knowing properly what can rightfully be called "secular" and the constant awareness that there is no neutral ground between the believer and the unbeliever (Matthew 12:30) is contingent upon keeping the distinction relative to these kingdoms clear.

Under the Kingdom of Power, Christ gives the authority to the State to exercise the power of the sword to protect the citizenry and to keep order. This is what is meant by the secular realm. Just as Christ has not given the power of the sword to the Church, He has not given to the State the authority to educate those belonging to and living in the Kingdom of Grace. It is true that parental authority is delegated by Christ under the Kingdom of Power, but our concern here is with those children whom God has given to the Church. Parents may delegate to the state the authority to teach their children, as is done in a collective society or in public education; but the state does not have the authority to take this power upon itself and usurp or undermine parental authority. Children who are educated by the State are taught according to the rule and norm of the standard of collective society, whatever that standard may be at any given time in the history of the world. Simply stated, that standard is always materialistic.

Under the Kingdom of Grace, Christ has given the authority to educate children to the parents and to the Church. Here the rule and norm must be the Word of God as revealed to us in the Holy Scriptures. Any other standard is worldly and contrary to the command of God. Listen again to that upon which God insists, "Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God is one Lord: And thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thine heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy might. And these words which I command thee this day, shall be in thine heart: And thou shalt teach them diligently unto thy children, and shalt talk of them when thou sittest in thine house, and when thou walkest by the way, and when thou liest down, and when thou risest up. And thou shalt bind them for a sign upon thine hand, and they shall be as frontlets between thine eyes. And thou shalt write them upon the posts of thy house, and on thy gates." Deut. 6:4-9. In the New Testament, Saint Paul wrote to the Philippians 4:8-9, "Finally, brethren, whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are of good report; if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think on these things. Those things which ye have both learned and received, and heard, and seen in me, do: and the God of peace shall be with you."

We are to teach our children the Word of God diligently, and only then is our teaching God-centered. Our thinking is to be God-centered; that is, our whole outlook on life and the philosophy of life should center and rest on the truth of God as revealed in the Bible. This is in direct opposition to the philosophy of life that is man-centered, which is materialistic. For Saint Paul would never have been inspired to instruct the Church to think on things which are true, honest, just, etc., in the eyes of man; but on those things which are true honest, just, etc., in the sight of God. The attitude of the unregenerate heart and the thinking of the world is based on a philosophy of life of which Pontius Pilate gave a good example when he said, "What is truth?"

Hostility to the Kingdom of Grace

In contrast to this, Christ prayed in His high priestly prayer, “I have given them thy word; and the world hath hated them, because they are not of the world, even as I am not of the world. I pray not that thou shouldest take them out of the world, but that thou shouldest keep them from the evil. They are not of the world, even as I am not of the world. Sanctify them through thy truth: thy word is truth.” Here it is plainly stated by Christ that the world is actively hostile toward those belonging to Him because they are not of the world. Where the Church is and where the truth of the Gospel is preached, the deeds of the world are brought to light and the people of the world are seen for what they really are, namely, children of the father of all lies and deceit. For this reason the evil world is at war against the Church. It is Christ against Satan and Satan against Christ. It is the children of light against the children of darkness and the children of darkness against the children of light, the children of obedience against the children of disobedience. It is a matter of the religion *for* the world in conflict with the religion *of* the world. And again it needs to be said that there is no middle ground, no neutral ground.

Professor Meyer wrote, “The most impregnable fortifications are erected on inaccessible heights of land, the more inaccessible the better. The natural difficulties of approach are elaborately developed and supplemented artificially. Satan fortifies his kingdom by developing the natural tendencies of the world (enumerated by John as the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life) to their highest potential, by undergirding them with sophistry, making them appear as reasonable, as beneficial, as desirable, and their opposites as foolish.” This is exactly what the Holy Spirit is referring to when He caused Saint Paul to write, “Casting down imaginations, and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ,” II Corinthians 10:5. The *New International Version* reads, “We demolish arguments and every pretension that sets itself up against the knowledge of God, and we take captive every thought to make it obedient to Christ.”

Every true Christian and the whole Church is involved in a warfare that is carried on in the spiritual realm. Hence it is neither basically physical nor political. Nor are the weapons the Church is given to use the weapons of the world. Human ability, intellect and power are weapons which the Church of Christ will not even try to use. Nor will the motives for engaging in this fight be carnally oriented, love of honor, of riches, of influence and the like.

When we use any standard, or allow any pretension or thought to set itself up against the knowledge of God, then we are adhering to the standards of the world and meeting the world on its own terms. This the Church is not to do. The Church is indeed in the world, but it is not to be of the world. And yet the world is in the church. For just as the world is not neutral toward the believer, neither is his own flesh. Therefore, we are attacked from without and from within.

Keep the Line of Battle Clear

The believer is constantly being warred upon through his carnal nature. Therefore, every thought of the believer must be brought into the obedience of Christ. So, we are commanded as it is written, “... be not conformed to this world, but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable and perfect will of God.” Now that we have been called out of the kingdom of darkness and set by God into the Kingdom of Grace, we are no longer to let ourselves be shaped or molded in thought, word or deed by the standards of the world; but by the power of the Holy Ghost through the ministry of the Word and Sacraments, we are to be transformed, our minds renewed, and so enabling us to have true understanding and be able to discern, to “Prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect will of God.”

To try by our own efforts to follow Christ through this conflict will be foolish enthusiasm. We can have all sincerity and what we think are excellent motives; but any reliance on self, rather than absolute trust in Christ, is a longing for a return to the world. It is a wavering, just as the children of Israel wavered. They would enthusiastically proclaim, “We will serve the Lord,” and then fall prey to the longing for the world. Our own efforts and ideas can have a place and serve for the edification of the Body of Christ only when they have been sanctified by the Spirit of God through the Word of God. If this is not the case, they will not build up at all, but only tear down.

Respect for the Authority of Christ

We have been called to follow Christ. It is His will to which we are to subject ourselves. It is His purpose and goal to which we are to give our attention. To take the leadership of the kingdom into our own hands is to bring it to ruin. To avoid this, Jesus prayed in His high priestly prayer that all his followers might be kept in unison with Him, so that the Church might present a united front in its war against the devil. What is more, Jesus is a leader worthy of being followed in every aspect of life. This is true not just because He has the ultimate authority, but because His authority is supported by an infinite knowledge of all things. Listen to Saint John: "All things were made by him; and without him was not any thing made that was made. In him was life; and the life was the light of men. And the light shineth in darkness; and the darkness comprehended it not...And this is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil." Christ is the very author of all things. This covers things visible and invisible languages, laws of nature, intelligence -there is nothing exempt that he did not create, and there is nothing excluded from His dominion.

Therefore, it is from this perspective, and from this perspective alone, that we can come to a knowledge of the truth about any subject. Furthermore, from this perspective it should also be clear that there is no such thing as a "Secular" subject. For the believer, truth is not relative. We have a sure and certain truth.. As for the world, "They are ever learning and never coming to the knowledge of the truth."

Christ Uses the World

It is true that men of the world have, by the providence of God, come upon some elements of truth in science and other fields; e.g., Isaac Newton. But bear in mind that Newton neither invented nor truly discovered something new. God created gravity. Newton called it gravity. For the good of the Church God has allowed men from time to time to discover or to uncover some knowledge of the world.

"It is common knowledge among Christian scholars that God used Greek philosophy to render an important service to Christianity. In their diligent unending quest for truth, Greek philosophers sought out the one permanent element, the highest being, the law of change, the mathematics of the universe. Socrates and Plato introduced inductive reasoning and logical definition of words and ideas. They also turned philosophy into a study of ethics...Unquestionably they laid the foundation for modern learning.

No knowledgeable person would question the fact that 'Greek philosophy had an important propaedeutic (preliminary) office to perform for Christianity.' (Funk and Wagnalls, *New Standard Dictionary of the English Language*, 1916). The Sophists, for example, gave precision to language without which the interpretation of Scripture would be well nigh-impossible. Yet these same Sophists insisted that 'man is the measure of all things' (Protagoras, quoted by Plato in *Theaetetus*), a dictum which expresses the basic ideal of all humanism. It was in part just such 'wisdom' which St. Paul had in mind when he warned the Colossians, 'Beware lest any man spoil you through philosophy and vain deceit, after the tradition of men, after the rudiments of the world, and not after Christ' Col. 2:8." (*Humanism, Its Origin, Nature and Menacing Impact*, Prof. Joel C. Gerlach).

Here is precisely the point of it all. The knowledge that the world comes by is incorporated into their philosophy or wisdom, and of this the Bible warns us, "For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men ...because that, when they knew God, they glorified him not as God, neither were thankful; but became vain in their imaginations, and their foolish heart was darkened. Professing themselves to be wise, they became fools ... who changed the truth of God into a lie and worshipped and served the creature rather than the Creator" Rom. 1:18-25. These are the "imagination and high thoughts" that are to be cast down, that every thought might be brought into captivity to the obedience of Christ.

If the wrath of God is revealed against the unbelievers who hold the truth in unrighteousness, then we who hold the truth in righteousness must hold fast to this truth in thanksgiving and in fear lest we be deceived by our own flesh attacking from within; or by Satan and his agents attacking from without, catching us in the snare of exalting our own ideas over the truth of God, as it is revealed to us in the Holy Scripture. Therefore, this prayer, which most of us have known from childhood, must ever be on our lips and in our hearts,... "and

by Thy Holy Spirit increase in us true knowledge of Thee and of Thy Will and true obedience to Thy Word, to the end that by Thy grace we may come to everlasting life; through Jesus Christ, our Lord. Amen.”

Obedience

We know from the Holy Scriptures that all men know there is a God (Rom.1: 18-21); And we also know from the Scriptures that all men have a natural knowledge of the law: “Which shew the work of the law written in their hearts, their conscience also bearing witness, and their thoughts the mean while accusing or else excusing one another.” Rom. 2:18. That this is not a saving knowledge of the true God, we all (believers) know. We know that we can gain true knowledge of the true God as the Holy Spirit works in us through the hearing of the Word. “Faith cometh by hearing and hearing by the Word of God.” By grace through faith the Holy Spirit works in us true obedience to the Word. We refer to this as the fruits of faith, or our life of sanctification. How then can we come to the “true knowledge of Thee and of Thy will?” How can we come to the “true obedience to Thy Word?” These questions are answered for us in the Bible, and the substance of the answers is also conveyed to us through the Scriptures.

Saint Paul says to the Romans, “I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service. And be not conformed to this world; but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect will of God. For I say, through the grace given unto me, to every man that is among you, not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think; but to think soberly, according as God hath dealt to every man the measure of faith.”

Purchase for a Purpose

We who have been washed in the blood of the Lamb, who have been purchased by Him at such a high price, are to present our bodies as a living sacrifice. This is what we confess with all true believers in the explanation of the Second Article, “That I should be His own, and live under Him in His kingdom and serve Him in everlasting righteousness, innocence and blessedness, even as He is risen from death, lives and reigns to all eternity. This is most certainly true.” “That I should be His own.” Christ came that I should be His own. Christ lived on earth that I should be His own. Christ died and rose again that I should be His own. Christ has gone to heaven to prepare a place for me that I should be His own; His own to serve Him with my entire life.

This kind of total service to Christ suggests a complete surrender of will to Him, His will, His desire, His purpose, His goal are all ours in the sanctified life. This is the transformation that takes place. The opposite would be to be molded again by the world from which we have been set apart. But the Christian life is not to be shaped by the world. The Christian is not to adapt himself to the customs and practices of the world. He is to be transformed. It should be noted also that this transformation is outwardly evident in conduct and life, but actually derives from the “renewing of your mind.” A Christian who is inwardly renewed, whose mind and heart are continually directed toward God, and who daily renews his mind, continually searches what the will of God is, what God just now in this present case wants of him and what is pleasing to Him under prevailing circumstances and relations. Very practically, this means to bring “into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ.”

Moved by Love

The motivation which brings this about is the love of God as it is expressed in the Gospel. “The love of Christ constrains us.” There is no room here for self esteem apart from what God has made us through faith. “Whether therefore ye eat, or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God.” 1 Cor. 10: 31. Lenski says, “Each truly glorifies God when each acts according to the full measure of his knowledge and his love, and when he seeks constantly to increase that knowledge and that love. We do all things for ‘God’s glory’ when the excellence of God’s attributes is made to shine forth by our actions so that men may see it.”

On the other hand, any act of ours which is not done in accord with God’s will and any act not done in obedience to His Word is displeasing to God, Luther says in the *Bondage of the Will*, “Now, he who glories in God is he who knows for sure that God looks at him with favour, and deigns to regard him kindly, so that what he does is pleasing in God’s sight, and what does not please God is borne with and pardoned ... And if this glory

is wanting, so that a man's conscience dare not say with sure confidence: 'this pleases God,' it is certain that he does not please God! For as he believes, so is he; he does not believe that he undoubtedly pleases God, but it is necessary that he should; for it is precisely the sin of unbelief to doubt of the favour of God, inasmuch as God would have His favour believed in with the fullest certainty of faith...without it belongs confusion of face, rather than glory, in God's presence."

Total Commitment

Therefore, any and everything that we do must reflect God's holiness and His power. Nothing is exempt. No part of the life of the Church, nor any part of the life of the individual believer is exempt from this "doing all to the glory of God." "And if this glory is wanting, so that a man's conscience dare not say with sure confidence: 'This pleases God', it is certain that he does not please God!"

Conscience presupposes a certain standard. The standard is the law of God written in the heart of man. For the Christian, however, the standard is the Word of God revealed to us in the Holy Scriptures. Now, if our conscience is not troubled when we do not submit totally to the will of God, then we should be fearfully examining ourselves in the light of God's Word. And if we are unable to discern the will of God, then we are yet "conformed to the standards of this world." The only help for this is the prayerful and diligent study of the Bible, thereby enabling the Holy Spirit to transform us "by the renewing of our minds."

Noah, An Example

In this regard let us look at one of the outstanding examples in the Bible of a person who was transformed. "And God saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every imagination (the whole imagination with the purposes and desires of the heart) of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually ... but Noah found grace in the eyes of the Lord ... and Noah walked with God. (Genesis 6:5-9.)

God has caused to be recorded for us in the Holy Scriptures that He had, because of the sinfulness of man, set a time when He would send the flood to destroy all life from off the face of the earth. We are told that of that entire generation of men, Noah alone was righteous in the eyes of God. With the exception of only eight people of that generation, all belonged to the kingdom of darkness. Their hearts and will were moved by Satan, Noah was chosen by God as a "preacher of righteousness", (2 Pet.2:9) to warn the world of its coming doom. A time of 120 years had been set by God as the time of grace. During this time Noah was also to build an ark. God had renewed His Messianic covenant with Noah. The ark was to serve as the "means" of preserving life for the coming generations and it was to serve as the "means" of keeping the promise of the coming Saviour for all generations to come. The ark was the "means", life on earth and salvation for Noah and his household (believers in the promise), and for future generations it was the "ends." The ark carried everything needed for the eight who were saved and carried all necessities for the earthly needs and salvation for the generations to come.

God went into great detail as to how Noah was to build the ark and about what was to go into the ark. There was not a single, small, part which was not important to God. And it is stressed repeatedly in Genesis that Noah did as God commanded. Scripture does not tell us whether or not Noah was a shipbuilder; but we are told that Noah built the ark, how it was built, for what purpose it was built, and that by God's grace through faith Noah obeyed. Compare to this what Paul says of himself: "But by the grace of God I am what I am, and His grace to me was not without effect. No, I worked harder than all of them - yet not I, but the grace of God that was with me." (1 Cor. 15:10 NIV). Noah obeyed and he and his household were saved.

Noah did not procrastinate. He didn't say that this was a bad time to start building ships. The money hasn't been budgeted for it. The undertaking is too much for one man. Anyway, there are already perfectly seaworthy vessels being built by "experienced" shipbuilders. Noah obeyed. The Lord was Noah's sole instructor, and the Lord had all authority, (cp. Matt. 28:18b-20, "All power is given unto me ... teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you and lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world"). Noah faithfully obeyed, and the skills and materials needed to complete the task were provided by the Lord.

Our Christian Day Schools are not “ends”. They are one of the “means” freely given to us by our Lord, Jesus Christ, through which His purposes, or “ends”, are to be achieved by the working of His grace and power. Though Christ is not limited, His followers are. We are limited to those means and purposes which He gives us. Through His Word, as revealed to us in the Bible, He has carefully instructed us concerning His purposes and through this same Word He has given us all the means for accomplishing His purposes. What we need to pray for is obedience to His Word.

Scripture tells us that except for eight people, all of that generation was under Satan’s power, motivated by Satan, as subjects of the kingdom of darkness. Noah, a “preacher of righteousness”, was the only man who was just in the eyes of God. However, God has dominion over all and is the ultimate authority. God is the “majority”. Therefore, God and one believer are a majority. One righteous man against a whole world of unbelievers holds the majority. As a result, this one believer can say, “If God be for me (us), who can be against me (us)? He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him also freely give us all things?” (Rom. 8:31,32).

A Matter of Faith

To Noah, God delegated what would seemingly be for us an impossible task. For we know from Scripture that the kingdom of this world is at enmity against the Kingdom of God. Therefore, as Noah preached the message of God’s righteousness and practiced what he preached, he was, of necessity, besieged by the covert and overt hostility of the unbelievers. Yet he was kept steadfast, unmovable in his faithfulness to the Lord in carrying out his God-given duties as head of a household. From Noah’s perspective, this must have been tremendously difficult without other believers on earth to encourage and support him. All this - the preaching, rearing of a family (which meant providing for the temporal needs, as well as caring for the intellectual and spiritual training), and the building of the ark of such overwhelming proportions, had to be done by this man. Had he placed his reliance anywhere but entirely in God, he could never have brought all this to completion.

We see here the close relationship of obedience to faith. Obedience is part of the very essence of faith. That this is true is evident in the lives of all of the believers of whom the Scripture gives us detail. In addition to Noah, we might use the patriarchs: Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. We could point to Moses, particularly in the building of the tabernacle. To the detail, what had been commanded was carried out, and God saw to it that the materials and the skills to use them were also present.

Of course, the most striking example of faith and obedience is the Lord Christ in His relationship with His heavenly Father during His life here on earth. In the third chapter of the letter to the Hebrews, the holy writer first of all compares the faithfulness of Moses and of Jesus. “Therefore, holy brothers, who share in the heavenly calling, fix your thoughts on Jesus, the apostle and high priest whom we confess. He was faithful to the one who appointed him, just as Moses was faithful in all God’s house. Jesus has been found worthy of greater honor than Moses, just as the builder of a house has greater honor than the house itself. For every house is built by someone, but God is the builder of everything. Moses was faithful as a servant in all God’s house, testifying to what would be said in the future. But Christ is faithful as a son over God’s house, and we are his house, if we hold on to our courage and the hope of which we boast (cp. 1 Cor. 10:6, 7-12, 20b).

The exhortation and warning in regard to this thought cannot be stated more clearly than has been done by the Spirit of God in the continuing verses of this same chapter. “See to it, brothers, that none of you has a sinful, unbelieving heart that turns away from the living God. But encourage one another daily, as long as it is called Today, so that none of you may be hardened by sin’s deceitfulness. We have come to share in Christ if we hold firmly till the end the confidence we had at first. As has just been said: ‘today, if you hear his voice, do not harden your hearts as you did in the rebellion.’ Who were they who heard and rebelled? Were they not all those Moses led out of Egypt? And with whom was he angry for forty years? Was it not with those who sinned, whose bodies fell in the desert? And to whom did God swear that they would never enter his rest if not to those who disobeyed? So we see that they were not able to enter, because of their unbelief.”

Chapter Four continues this instruction for us on even more of a personal level. “Therefore, since the promise of entering his rest still stands, let us be careful that none of you be found to have fallen short of it, for we have had the gospel preached to us, just as they did; but the message they heard was of no value to them, because those who heard did not combine it with faith. Now we who have believed enter that rest, just as God has said, ‘So I declared on oath in my anger, “They shall never enter my rest.”’ It still remains that some will enter that rest, and those who formerly had the gospel preached to them did not go in because of their disobedience. Therefore, God again set a certain day, calling it Today, when a long time later he spoke through David, as was said before: ‘Today, if you hear his voice, do not harden your hearts.’ For if Joshua had given them rest, God would not have spoken later about another day. There remains, then, a Sabbath-rest for the people of God; for anyone who enters God’s rest also rests from his own work, just as God did from his. Let us therefore make every effort to enter that rest, so that no one will fall by following their example of disobedience.” (NIV).

We have seen here two examples from Scripture: one example of obedience and its result; the other the example of disobedience, and its result. The first, that of Noah, God has caused to be recorded for us as an example to follow. Noah’s service or work which the Lord gave him to do was the building of the ark, a vessel of preservation. Our service or work is in the building up of the Body of Christ, the Church. This is also a vessel of preservation.

We are told in verse 10 above that “anyone who enters God’s rest also rests from his own work.” We who are in the Body of Christ have entered this rest, and this means that we are also to rest from our own work. Let us look at what God has to say about service and work. In 1 Cor. 12:4, we are told that “There are different kinds of spiritual gifts, but the same Spirit. There are different kinds of service, but the same Lord. There are different kinds of working, but the same God works all of them in all men.” This “same God” who is changeless is the “same God” who worked “all in all” in Noah. The key word here is faith. God works faith in us and the fruit of this faith is works for the building up of the Church (1 Cor. 14:12). The example we are to keep in mind here is Noah’s faith and the fruit of that faith, perfect obedience in bringing to completion the task which the Lord commissioned him to do.

Today we have not a shadow of things to come. We have the real vessel of preservation, the Church not built by human hands but by God. And we, being sanctified through God’s working of faith in us, are fellow-workers together with Christ in the building of this Church, the body of Christ, Nor are we alone, as Noah was. The Lord of the Church has placed us within the community of believers, and therefore we have fellow-workers in Christ, that we may mutually encourage one another in the work Christ has commissioned us to do.

Just as Noah was completely obedient to the voice of the Lord, we, too, must be totally submissive to His Word. Complete obedience is what Christ demands of us. We must take special care how we build, for there is no detail, no matter how unimportant it may seem to us, that is unimportant in God’s sight, He wants our every thought brought into captivity to make it obedient to Him.

The Example of Disobedience

Now let us consider the example of disobedience and its results. “And the people spake against God, and against Moses, Wherefore have ye brought us up out of Egypt to die in the wilderness? for there is no bread, neither is there any water; and our soul loatheth this light bread. And the Lord sent fiery serpents among the people, and they bit the people; and much people of Israel died.” (Num. 21:5-6). Paul refers to this murmuring against the Lord as “testing the Lord.” And he adds that we should not “test the Lord, as some of them did.” (1 Cor. 10:9, Heb. 3:9). God had constantly cared for His people and this is exemplified by His bringing them out of the bondage of Egypt. He had provided for their temporal as well as their spiritual needs. Yet Israel had a longing for a return to Egypt and the momentary pleasures of the old life. They refused to keep their hearts and minds fixed on the ultimate goal, and this turning back St. Paul calls “idolatry”.

The Lord had shown Israel His mercy and repeatedly warned them of His wrath should His mercy be scorned. He said, “Behold, I send an Angel before thee, to keep thee in the way, and to bring thee into the place

which I have prepared. Beware of him, and obey his voice, provoke him not.” (Ex. 23:20-21). Did Israel obey his voice? It is written that they did not. “How oft did they provoke him in the wilderness, and grieve him in the desert.’ Yea, they turned back and tempted God, and limited the Holy One of Israel.” (Ps. 78:40-41). Their hearts were so set (hardened) against God, they longed for the “fleshpots” of Egypt. They had a craving for the leavened bread of the old life, rather than the bread of life which is the very Word of God.

Life was in that which God had given. He had told Israel, “Harken ...unto the statutes and ... judgments, which I teach you, for to do them that ye may live” (Deut. 4:1). There is no life outside the Word of God. Should the Word be withdrawn from us, we would perish. “Man doth not live by bread only, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of the Lord doth man live.” (Deut.8:3). It is significant to note that these are the words Jesus quoted in answer to the first temptation of the devil in the wilderness. Man fell to this temptation in the wilderness, but man’s substitute overcame it by a perfect obedience and reliance upon the Word that had been given.

The implications of these words are very applicable to us. It means that any work our Synod undertakes, administration, day schools, or teacher training, will crumble into nothing unless such undertakings are firmly established in the Word of God. Therefore, we should strive to obey the Lord and live in His Word. For He has not called us into a life of disobedience, but into a life of obedience. What is more, “His divine power has given us everything we need for life and godliness through our knowledge of him who called us by his own glory and goodness. Through these he has given us his very great and precious promises, so that through them you may participate in the divine nature and escape the corruption in the world caused by evil desires” (2 Pet. 3: 4).

Saint Paul tells us in the tenth chapter of 1st Corinthians that these things which happened to Israel, i.e., that so many of them were destroyed as a result of disobedience, were written down as a warning for us and as examples to keep us from setting our hearts on evil things as they did. We are not to test the Lord, as they did, and we are to “flee from idolatry.” And we are warned even more, “So, if you think you are standing firm, be careful that you don’t fall.” If we are of the mind that it can’t happen to us, then our vision is even now being darkened by sin; for we need only look at our former sister Synod, which had such a firm foundation in the Word, and recall that at one time she was the very seat of Lutheran orthodoxy. Look at her today and mourn. Satan’s counter-attack has been successful, and the scattered corpses left in his wake may give off a stench that is a sweet-smelling offering in his nostrils, but it is an abomination to the Lord.

Amos prophesied, “Behold, the days come, saith the Lord God, that I will send a famine in the land, not a famine of bread, nor a thirst for water, but of hearing the words of the Lord: And they shall wander from sea to sea, and from the north even to the east, they shall run to and fro to seek the word of the Lord, and shall not find it.” This day has surely come upon the Church of this evil age. Nearly every continent has fallen to the god of the kingdom of darkness. Other than the small group in Sweden, all continental Europe has fallen. We have missions on other continents (and for these we give thanks), but as far as large strongholds of Christianity are concerned, they have all fallen. Here in America, it appears that WELS and our sister Synod, ELS are the only organized remnant of the Church which yet holds firmly to the Word. We are few in numbers, but our Lord Jesus has told us that this is how it would be. Furthermore, we have the assurance of the Word of God that the Church shall prevail. But we do not have the promise that our Synod will prevail. Should we lose to the world just one generation, our Synod will go the way of Missouri. We can see that each generation must win for itself the Word of God or lose the final race. The Lord has warned of this, “Now, brothers, I want to remind you of the Gospel I preached to you which you received and on which you have taken your stand. By this gospel you are saved, if you hold firmly to the word I preached to you. Otherwise, you have believed in vain” (1 Cor. 15:1-2).

God’s Answer

What is the answer for us if upon examination we find that the enemy has indeed slipped in while we were napping? The message given us concerning Israel points us back in the right direction. The people confessed their sin against God and against Moses, and the Lord provided a way for the people to be saved.

Those bitten by a serpent were to look upon the brass serpent in order to escape death. Now the serpent lifted up is a shadow of things to come. All men are, like the Israelites, serpent-bitten with the deadly poison of sin. God in turn has provided salvation for all in the person of His Son. In the crucifixion of Jesus Christ, we see sin conquered in the same way as the up-lifted serpent pictured the death of the Destroyer. The serpent God told Moses to make was not a real one. And Jesus Christ was not a partaker of sin, not a real sinner, but only made in “the likeness of sinful flesh ... God made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin that we might be made the righteousness of God in him.”

Singular Vision

As Israel had to look upon the uplifted serpent of brass to live, so we must in repentance and faith keep our eyes fixed upon the crucified Saviour. Our hearts and minds must know nothing but “Christ and Him crucified”. To take our eyes off of Christ uplifted on the cross is to look back to the world. We are to have this kind of tunnel vision, whereby we see everything in terms of the cross. Each person must be seen as someone Jesus loved unto death, and we are to love them the same way, simply because they have been bought at such an extreme price.

Jesus speaks of this kind of narrowness in John chapter seven: “Enter through the narrow gate. For wide is the gate and broad is the road that leads to destruction, and many enter through it. But small is the gate and narrow the road that leads to life, and only a few find it.” There are probably few of us who have not heard jokes about the “narrowness” of orthodox Lutherans. In Texas, “narrow Lutheran” jokes were second only to “Aggie” jokes. But today, these jokes are not very prevalent, because there aren’t many of us around any more. Of course, ridicule is one of the devil’s great weapons, a fiery dart that can make such a lasting impression upon the minds of the young and old alike, though the young are more impressionable. Today we find “liberal Lutherans” calling us “narrow” and making jokes about it, while the world has adopted another term. The world calls us obscurantists. *Funk and Wagnall’s New Practical Standard Dictionary* defines an “Obscurant” or “Obscurantist” as “one who obscures; specifically, one who opposes education, popular enlightenment, and freedom of thought.” Another name that the world has for our “narrowness” is “Atavist.” The *Grosset Webster Dictionary* defines “Atavism” as “Reversion to features and characteristics of primitive ancestors.” It is here that all joking stops and the seriousness of the situation must be realized. The people using these terms are educators. Specifically the object of their concern is any religion, any proponent of any ideology or philosophy that is narrow in its teaching. Such narrowness is considered to be a menace to the philosophy of a democratic society—it is! Those people who inflict such narrowness of doctrine upon society or upon any individual citizen or a collective society are considered to be a menace to the welfare of that society. We are those people. Jesus is that Person.

Here is even the greater danger. Those educators are, speaking from the perspective of civic righteousness, sincere, dedicated men, who zealously, or we might say religiously, cling to their ideologies and philosophies and sincerely believe that they are helping to make a better world for mankind. In fact, if we were as devoted to preaching “Christ Incarnate, crucified and resurrected” as they are to preaching “one world, the brotherhood of man, and tolerance’, then perhaps we might even have reason to boast.

Our viewpoint of life must be seen from the perspective of the uplifted Saviour. And all must be seen in this light. Their viewpoint of life can be seen only from the perspective of the world, from the kingdom of darkness. Just as we know for sure that Jesus is the only Way to the kingdom of Glory, they firmly believe that education (to remold each individual character for the “better” according to collective society) is the way to the kingdom of glory here on earth. While they are sure and certain of this, they teach that you can’t be sure of anything. You must be tolerant. The other person could always be right. It does remind one of the dog chasing his tail, does it not?

No Common Ground

Jesus says, "I am the truth." The world religion sets forth its firm belief about truth: "What is truth?" "Truth is what you believe." "Truth is where you find it." "Believing makes it so." "Truth is from where you are standing now; the situation could be different tomorrow." We could find an "element" of fact (truth) in most all of these "non-assertions."

Jesus says, "I am the Life". "Without Him is nothing made." In Him all life has its being. Were He to withdraw from even a part of the universe, it would cease to exist. He is the Author of Life. The world belief is purely materialistic, asserting that all psychic processes are due to changes of material molecules, thereby denying the existence of the soul. Life is now. Life is what you make it. Life is adjustment. Life is integration into collective society. Therefore, once your soul has been removed and you have been washed clean by education through the behavioral sciences, you are conditioned. Now you can rest...sit back and wait for the opinion molders.

Serious Business

If any one person here today thinks this is not a serious matter, let it be suggested that he dig thoroughly into Scripture and he will find that the Holy Scripture teaches that all this is bound to come to pass in this evil age. Another suggestion would be to obtain a copy of Prof. Joel C. Gerlach's essay *Humanism, Its Origin, Nature, and Menacing Impact*. And if there is anyone among us who fails to see that the leaven of the world has encroached upon us and has affected, or rather, infected our thinking and our attitude of heart, then he must prayerfully examine himself in the light of that "one thing needful", the very Word of God; inspired for us, recorded for us, preserved for us, and revealed to us! For our vision may be already darkened; Jesus has said "The eye is the lamp of the body. If your eyes are good, your whole body will be full of light. But if your eyes are bad, your whole body will be full of darkness. If then the light within you is darkness, how great is that darkness."(Matt. 6:22-23)

If we would enter the narrow gate, we can't try to make our own way along the path. We have entered His rest and are told that we must rest from our own works. When we try to take the tasks the Church must fulfill or the concerns facing our schools into our own hands, when we attempt to "reason among ourselves" and we seek our own counsel in solving these problems, we are not resting from our works. We have returned to bondage. And we are not walking the way of Christ, but walking the way of the world.

Jesus tells us that few will enter the narrow gate. His followers are not many, so far as numbers go, and will always be few. This ought to suppress any exaggerated hopes of numerical success in relation to the Church or our Day Schools and put down any delusions of grandeur on our part. The rest of the world is the side of the many and will always be, but they are on the road to Hell.

Dare we believers ever to deviate from this straight narrow path of Christ on even the seemingly smallest particulars of any decision which affects the Church as a whole or any individual member of the Body of Christ? (Care must be taken to think in terms of the "one" as well as the "ninety nine"...neither can be neglected). Can following the road of the world be done to even a slight degree for reasons of expediency? No. No matter what the motive, how good our intentions, we must not allow ourselves to yield one iota to the philosophies of the world. For we are not to yield to "the standards" of this world. Though we live in the world, we do not wage war as the world does. The weapons we fight with are not the weapons of the world. On the contrary, we have divine power to tear down strongholds. We 'demolish arguments and every pretension that sets itself up against the knowledge of God, and we take captive every thought to make it obedient to Christ" (2 Cor. 10: 2b-5).

Lopsided Defense

There are, essentially, two agents of Satan's which attack our Church: Heterodoxy and Humanism. Should we, for example, post all our sentries on the north wall of the City? Should we post our watchmen at the north gate, on the north towers, send them out along the north road to watch for the enemy Heterodoxy? While

at the same time the enemy Humanism has silently slipped over the South wall and is even now invading the City from within and without?

It is true that we must prevent heterodoxy from entering our midst, but we dare not concentrate all our defense solely against that one enemy, While we are busy concentrating our defenses along the front line, ready for battle against the enemy Heterodoxy, even now Humanism is attacking our flanks.

Are the shepherds who have been called to tend the flocks standing at the gates of the sheepfold keeping out the heterodox wolves, while in the dusk of the evening the humanist wolves, in sheep's clothing, are even now devouring the flocks? This is no time to "strain at the gnat", heterodoxy, while "swallowing the camel" of humanism! Instead, we must petition our heavenly Father, Who knows our needs, that He would "lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil". He cares for us. He has told us, "Do not be afraid, little flock, for your Father has been pleased to give you the kingdom." Therefore, our reliance is completely in Him and our thoughts on this ultimate goal.

We must "be strong in the Lord and in His mighty power," and "Put on the full armor of God", so that we can take our stand "against the devil's schemes. For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms. Therefore put on the full armor of God, so that when the day of evil comes, you may be able to stand your ground, and after you have done everything, to stand. Stand firm then, with the belt of truth buckled around your waist, with the breastplate of righteousness in place, and with your feet fitted with the gospel of peace as a firm footing. In addition to all this, take up the shield of faith, with which you can extinguish all the flaming arrows of the evil one. Take the helmet of salvation and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God. And pray in the Spirit on all occasions with all kinds of prayers and requests. With this in mind, be alert and always keep on praying for all the saints."

We have been called from the kingdom of darkness to be "imitators of God as dearly loved children." This is the purpose of the Church. And it can't be said more plainly nor forcefully than what Saint Paul was inspired to write in his letters to the Church at Ephesus and Philippi, We are told that our very "attitude should be the same as that of Christ Jesus" (Phil. 2:5). We are to "be humble, consider ourselves to be nothing, and be obedient to death" (Phil. 2:7,8) and *we* are to "hold out the word of life." What can we say? He has made it so plain. This is how we are to be and do. And we must take this to heart as we contemplate what each one of us has been called to do. For our fellow believers we should humbly give thanks to God. And we should become servants to one another, and see every person as one we should love as Christ has loved us, realizing our accountability to God and our responsibility toward man, especially toward those children God has placed in our care.

By now it should be clear to us that every activity of the Church and every task given to each individual member of the Body of Christ is subject to the clear precept of our Lord, the Head that filleth all in all (Eph, 1:23). We are not left free to adopt our own nor any man's means for fulfillment of even the seemingly least task which pertains to the life of the Church. Exodus 31:2a, 3,6,11, 11 ... "See, I have called by name Bezaleel ... and I have filled him with the spirit of God, in wisdom, and in understanding, and in knowledge, and in all manner of workmanship. And I, behold, I have given with him Aholiab, the son of Ahisamach, of the tribe of Dan: and in the hearts of all that are wise hearted I have put wisdom, that they may make all that I have commanded thee:According to all that I have commanded thee shall they do."

Every student of the Bible has read the seven chapters in the Book of Exodus in which God gave Moses the instructions for the building of the tabernacle of the congregation, the ark of the testimony, the mercy seat, the altar, the furniture and the holy garments for Aaron and his sons. The Lord took care of every detail in the building of the tabernacle of the congregation, which was a foreshadow of what was to come. (Heb. 8:1-2; Heb. 9:10). The Lord went into such detail that there was not the smallest detail of the construction of the Old Testament Church which He did not cover. And He commanded that all should be done "according to all that I have commanded thee shall they do". The Lord not only told Moses how the tabernacle was to be built according to God's purposes; God also told Moses that He would take care of the means. God told Moses to tell

the people what to bring - they were to believe, trust and obey God. Then God told Moses that He, God Himself, would call the laborers, fill them with the spirit of God, in understanding, in knowledge, and in all manner of workmanship. God said He would call "wise hearted" (believing) men; and again God told Moses in detail what skills He would give to these men. What was left? What did Moses and the children of Israel lack that God did not provide? Nothing. They simply were to believe, trust and obey. In faith true obedience can come. This tabernacle was but a shadow of the true tabernacle which was to come, according to the promise..."the true tabernacle, which the Lord pitched, and not man" (Heb. 8: 2). Is there any reason for us to believe that God is less concerned about every detail, no matter how unimportant it may seem from our viewpoint of the Church today, His Body, of which He is the Head?

Our work is Christ's work. Therefore, it is absolutely dependent upon the will of Jesus. Yet this is true freedom, freedom found in His truth. In adherence to that truth we are free from all burdens which trouble the conscience. When we let His word renew our minds and do not attempt to make His word conform to our ideas of accomplishing the purposes of His Church, inclusive of our Christian Day Schools, then we can commend ourselves to every man's conscience in the sight of God (2 Cor. 3:2b). Then, too, we will be certain we create no stumbling blocks to cause others to fall. We have known the love and mercy of God; let us take care that we don't incur His wrath by exalting our own imaginations or calculations over the fixed, determined precepts of the Lord of the Church.

God, in His revealed Word, lays down fixed limitations for the performance of works He gives to His followers. Neither the choice of field nor the means for completion of tasks depend on our own impulses or inclinations, but rather depend upon what task He gives and the means He has already given to us. Holy Scripture makes it quite clear: it is not our own field in which we labor, but God's. This in no way contradicts the great commission given the Church. But we dare not make the least attempt to start a task, much less bring it to completion, without due authorization of Jesus. And we must work within and through the means He gives, To do otherwise causes our work to be devoid of promise. We would do well to keep in mind the declaration of God's herald, John the Baptist: "He must increase but I must decrease". All zeal and enthusiasm which exalts itself or gives to itself equal status with the commandments of Christ Jesus is worship and service to the ego, is idolatry and devoid of promise. This takes away from our labors the blessing of God and gives them over to the Devil. For it is not our own work that we do, but God's...one plants, one waters, but it is God who gives the increase.

The previously mentioned truth that there is nothing whatsoever which does not come under the dominion of the Lord cannot be pointed out to us too often. And this especially applies to the Church, His Bride. "For thy Maker is thine husband; the Lord of hosts is His Name; and thy Redeemer the Holy One of Israel; The God of the whole earth shall He be called" (Isa. 54:5). All activities which are the concern of the church most certainly includes every facet of the education of the children belonging to Him. This is the reason why we must be especially concerned about what materials are used to train our teachers and those used for students in our Christian day schools. We must certainly give these matters over to the sole authority of the Lord.

It is necessary that we continually remind one another that the only ultimate serious concern is eternal life and the preservation of Christians on earth. This is a matter of godly stewardship, making use of all He has given over to us and training up children for a life of God-pleasing stewardship. Eternal life is not an academic question. Whatever Christ has called us to do, whether we be pastors, teachers, school principals, or members of the board of education, we must give account to Him (Heb. 13:17). We are not to fix our eyes on the work we do but on the goal, holding firmly to the Word with which Jesus calls us to do it. It is Jesus we must obey, not the world. It is before Jesus we must stand and give account, not the world.

By Grace we have the true revealed Word of God. Therefore, we must not attempt to evade His will while at the same time knowing the will of God. We can neither ignore nor go beyond His will as revealed in His Word. By grace, through His mighty power and His mercy, we have thus far been preserved in the true faith. As we have been reminded, and cannot be reminded too often, we must not scorn His grace and become

guilty of a piety shaped by and centered on ourselves. For it is written, “Ye did run well; who did hinder you that ye should not obey the truth? This persuasion cometh not of Him that calleth you. A little leaven leaveneth the whole lump. (Gal. 5:7-9, KJV).

Jesus says, “If ye love me, keep my commandments.” If we must ask which commandment applies to any particular situation confronting the Church, then the Devil has already gained a foothold. We do face a serious situation in a world where all teaching materials available to us today are filled with the doctrines of man-made philosophies, which are in their essence the very antitheses of Christianity. These philosophies do not even have a smug tolerance of Christianity, but rather are hostile to our Lord, no matter how subtle a form this hostility may take. Perhaps an even greater danger is that many of these philosophies, on the surface, are so eye and mind appealing and can be disguised to take on the appearance of the teachings of Jesus.

We say we know God’s commandments. But how can we know which apply to us in this present situation? If we must ask this question, we are ignoring the clear command of God and replacing it with the purely human concern of our own moral difficulties. The danger in this lies not in the awareness of our problems, but in any attempt to play them off against the will of God.

Moral difficulties are the consequences of the Fall. The serpent, when he asked, “Hath God said?”, tempted the first man to play off against the clear command of God the moral question posed by the Devil. Until then, the divine command has been clear enough, and Adam obeyed it with perfect child-like obedience. When Satan posed the same question and tempted our Lord Jesus Christ, Jesus pierced the Devil with the sword of the Word, with a simple, “It is written.” Now we have this same divine Word, the same sword Jesus used when He was tempted by Satan. However, because we still have a remnant of the old-Adam in us, we still do not as yet possess this perfect communion we once had with God. We too often fail to see the Devil lurking behind every temptation in which we fail to give a child-like obedience to the divine command. The command, the Devil says, needs to be explained and interpreted. Man must use his own “God given” knowledge and conscience and knowledge of good and evil in deciding what is best for the Church at this “point in time”. The Devil can even convince God’s own people that we certainly have freedom of choice in so-called “secular matters”, while at the same time Satan knows (and we should remember) that the Lord has dominion over all these things.

The second we start to speculate on which part of God’s Word applies to any given situation within the Church, we have already fallen into disobedience. Doubt and reflection take the place of spontaneous obedience. Soon we go from “Thus sayeth the Lord” to “Hath the Lord said?”, to “He didn’t really say that”. The “grown-up” man, with his freedom of conscience, vaunts his superiority over the child of obedience. We acquire the freedom to meet moral difficulties head-on only at the cost of renouncing obedience to the clear precepts of God. In doing this, we retreat from the reality of God to the speculations of men, from faith to doubt. The devil has gained a foothold, We can keep on posing problems from now to the end of the world, and thus escape the necessity of obedience to Christ. This is not following Christ. If, in our concern for temporal matters, we continue to allow ourselves to be enslaved or paralyzed with the problems facing us in the field of Christian education today, we are hardening our hearts to the freeing activity of obedience to Christ.

Jesus has spoken indeed! He speaks to us now in His revealed Word, “For this is the love of God that we keep His commandments: and His commandments are not grievous. For whatsoever is born of God overcometh the world: and this is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith” (I John 5:3,4, KJV).

The Application

“And Samuel said, Hath the Lord as great delight in burnt offerings and sacrifice, as in obeying the voice of the Lord? Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice, and to hearken than the fat of rams.” (L Sam. 15:22).

It is clearly taught in the context of this passage that, regardless how apparently pious motives may be and regardless how technically correct goals may be, if the means employed are contrary to the revealed Truth, the whole matter is an abomination to the Lord. We may set forth our philosophy of Education in our school handbook, underlining Christian perspective from which every aspect of our educational program is carried out. We may spell out in detail that our purpose is to “teach for eternity”. These statements may be formulated with

the utmost care, giving all due attention to clarity. This is certainly commendable in itself. But if in the day to day instruction routine of the school His voice is not obeyed in practice, we are diametrically opposing the will of God. We must not forget that obeying the voice of the Lord means obedience in deed, as well as in word "...be ye doers of the Word".

Dangerous Business

Then too, we are setting forth the lie before children. In fact, even the "mature in faith" should not be exposed to the lie, for this is tempting God. And the more subtle the lie, the greater the danger. This lie is the tacit approval we give to the ideologies of this world which cannot be excised from the curricula. We may think we have the "knowledge" to circumvent the lie which is intermingled with the very substance of every subject presented in any teaching materials for use in public schools. But we are being foolish if we think we can do this. And though we may fool ourselves, we can never fool God. When we expose ourselves to the lie, we are playing "Russian roulette", not only with ourselves, but with other souls. Let us hear His warning: "We know that we all possess knowledge. Knowledge puffs up, but love builds up. The man who thinks he knows something does not yet know as he ought to know... (as indeed there are many "gods")...Be careful that the exercise of your freedom does not become a stumbling block to the weak ... So this weak brother for whom Christ died, is destroyed by your knowledge. When you sin against your brothers in this way and wound their weak conscience, you sin against Christ" (1 Cor. 8:1, 5b, 9,11,12).

Definition of Education

A few points to be kept in mind must be lightly touched on here before going any further: Curricula published for public school use is based upon a "philosophy of education". Today, the term "educate" can have a connotation quite different from that which we know from traditional usage. Though to "educate" yet means to teach and train, the science of Educational Psychology now puts more emphasis on the "training" aspect than of the "teaching". And the training up of Christian children lies within the domain of the Kingdom of Grace and has not been delegated by God to any other than the parents and the Church. According to the *Lutheran Cyclopedia*, the definition of education is, "Man's ordered attempts to control and direct change in behavior." "Educational psychology is the science that deals with studies and explanations of the processes involved in education. It is not merely a branch of general psychology, but a science in its own right which has already accumulated or developed a vast store of factual knowledge, a system of fundamental principles, and a variety of scientific techniques. Its aim is to understand, predict and control human behavior.

Historically, the roots of educational psychology lie in associationism. This philosophy, which antedates Aristotle, was formed, reformed and transformed by a succession of thinkers even into the present century. Hebart, the first to emphasize the dynamics of learning and to apply mathematics to associationism in an attempt to explain learning, is often called the father of educational psychology. Experimentalists, however, of the late 19th and early 20th centuries laid the groundwork for a scientific approach to the study of learning. From their day on, research in the field has been abundant. The raw material with which the educational psychologist works is the human organism.

While in Christian education, concern for the soul is fundamental, understanding and educating the whole man, body and soul, is its goal. Since the soul is beyond the reach of scientific research techniques, it is ignored by educational psychologists. The Christian, however, considers human behavior the product of the soul's functional unity with the body. Under God, man is the product of two determining forces, heredity and environment. The psychologist concentrates most of his experimentation on the effect of environment on behavior. In the fact that no two persons have both identical heredity and identical environment is found the basis for individual differences. In the understanding of and adjusting to individual differences lies the key to effective education. "Christian educators see the hand of God operative through natural laws on finite matter, They cannot, therefore, subscribe to the thought that anyone is what he is solely because of heredity and environment. God's love, wisdom and power to perform wonders will not be denied" (Ibid.).

We must understand that a basic change in attitude in an organism is the purpose underlying all educational materials for use in public, or rather, State teacher training institutes and in all federally funded public or private school systems today. The goal is the conditioning of the organism for its adaptation into collective society and the function it is to have within this society,

Before we go any further, let us see how “knowledgeable” we are; and if there is the remotest possibility that a Christian day school teacher in the day to day routine within the classroom can in any way possible recognize, much less excise, all the various techniques and devices employed for achieving the ends of public education. We will first look at the terms used to indicate specific techniques used in public educational materials for the understanding, predicting and controlling of human behavior. (By no means can all the terms be listed.) And then we will look at just one method.

Terms

Behavior modification by structural development, maturation, motor, sensory, emotional, perceptual, verbal, social, conditioning, insight, rote, drill, imaginary practice, association of ideas, bond between stimulus and response, readiness, exercise, effect, belongingness, impressiveness, polarity, identifiability, availability, mental systems, connectionism, repetition, structuralism functionalism, as opposed to mentalistic functionalism, behaviorism as mechanistic, the reflex and its conditioning in behaviorism, bodily movement, complex behavior as a chain or pattern of many conditioned responses, laws of conditioning as the laws of learning, reinforcement insured permanence, extinction accounting for forgetting, whole organism reacting to isolated stimuli, whole situations (whole situations now means configuration), goal consciousness, goal striving, field theory, functionalism, dynamic psychology, purposivism. These are by no means all the terms, and it must be pointed out that though some of the terms used may seem familiar and innocuous, linguistics comes into the picture, and the usage may be different in practice. Also, note that the popular techniques, such as “sensitivity training”, have been left out of this list, though sensitivity training, sensitivity sessions, sensitivity groups (all these terms mean the same thing), are in widespread usage today and have invaded classrooms for six year olds in state schools.

Since our concern is not with the state school, concepts of this nature have been left out.

Now, from all these previously listed terms, let us consider one part of one technique, on which principle certain ends are to be achieved in education according to the aforementioned definition of education.

Configuration: Classic Experiments

“If two adjacent lights be turned on and off quickly and in brief succession, the observer is likely to see a movement as of one light jumping between the two adjacent positions ... the Phi phenomenon. And what one experiences is not one light at the other light and the apparent leap, but simply one complete phenomenon of a moving light.”

If an animal or child be trained, when presented with two boxes, A and B, always to choose the lighter-colored one, B, later when presented with B, along with a still lighter box, C, he is likely to choose C. He reacts, then, not to the absolute and individual characters of a stimulus (to a certain degree of brightness), but to its relative character (to its being brighter-than). (*The Americana Encyclopedia*)

The preceding experiments are but two of the simplest used in Gestalt’s configuration method; and there are really no terms which can describe in the scope of this essay the explosive development in innumerable fields of the science of educational psychology which have evolved since these experiments were first used. But we do see the results in the teaching materials used in our Christian day schools. It would take an eye more trained than yours or mine to recognize the fruits of these psychological techniques, and we can in no way measure the effect it is having upon our students ... but God knows.

If we but open our eyes, we should be able to see the impossible burden we are placing upon our teachers and this burden should trouble all our consciences, especially since, no matter what form is taken by the “Beast”, all education is based upon the world religion that man is the measure of all things.

“Thus saith the Lord; cursed be the man that trusteth in man, and maketh flesh his arm, and whose heart departeth from the Lord. For he shall be like the heath in the desert and shall not see when good cometh; but shall inhabit the parched places in the wilderness, in a salt land not inhabited. Blessed is the man that trusteth in the Lord, and whose hope the Lord is”. (Jer. 17:5-7)

Room for Argument?

It could be argued at this point that the teachers are to present each subject in the light of Holy Scripture; or, to quote directly from A Statement on the Philosophy and Purpose of the Christian Day Schools of the Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod, “.it (the Gospel) is also to be commended to the individual child through the ... example and testimony of Christian instructors”. When a Christian instructor presents a subject matter to a child in the light of the Gospel, and then places a workbook in the child’s hand which, through form and/or content, plays a role in shaping the child’s heart and mind to the ways of the world’s religion, the instructor is seemingly placing his own, the congregation’s and God’s seal of approval on the material! And these teaching materials go into the home of uninitiated parents, who also indirectly receive the lie. Since these corrupt teaching materials are the only ones available to the teachers, they are placed in the intolerable position of choosing between not using any teaching aids or sinning against God. It should be enough for us that the Lord has said, “Keep thee far from a false matter; and the innocent and righteous slay thou not: for I will not justify the wicked” (Ex. 23:7). And He says in verse 13, “make no mention of the name of other gods, neither let it be heard out of thy mouth.”

But it may be said that we have been selective in choosing and evaluating from what the best publishers have to offer. That could be even more disastrous, for the materials which have seemingly been washed clean have the gross, easily recognized lie removed and can be so eye-appealing (and, indeed, they are intentionally so) that we become careless. When we become careless and under-estimate the enemy, we allow him to creep silently into our school system. Worse still, this is sin, but if we confess that fact and persist in this sin, then there is no repentance, and where there is no repentance, there is no forgiveness.

Here you may say, “Does not the Lord expose children to evil in the Bible, in order to warn them against such evil?” The question itself shows that the devil already has a foothold. Yes, God, in His Holy Word, does expose us to teaching’s about evil; He even tells, as we all know, about actual historical evil acts committed by various persons. But He shows evil to be what evil really is, namely, evil. And He reveals to us the results of this evil - all in the light of the Gospel. Evil is brought to light in God’s Word, and He labels it *poison*, do not touch! In His omniscience, He knows the result if we are exposed to this poison and He has shown us the result. On the other hand, humanism, the world’s religion, presents evil in a candy wrapper. It is enticing and sweet to the taste, but lies heavy and bitter in the soul. The wrapper containing the poison is pretty, in order that it will not be recognized for what it is.

Now, let us assume for a moment that we go ahead, as we have been doing, and expose students and even teachers to various doses of the poison of humanism. Do we know the tolerance level of the person exposed? The dose could be fatal. The Adam in us may be tempted to want to be “like God”, but we are not omniscient; and God, alone, knows the final or ultimate results of these actions of disobedience. We must not tempt the Lord our God. Here again, we must “bring into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ” (1 Cor.10:5).

Materials available

Are there any materials available at all for teaching and training in our Christian Day schools? The choice presented to us, for the most part, at the present is between heterodox publications with, in some instances, its more obvious error (at least we are more trained to search for this error), or humanistic publications which are very subtle in the lower grades, but in most instances progressing to blatant lies by the secondary education level -yet not losing all its subtlety. This may look like a contradiction, but it is not; for it is another trait of humanistic propaganda that a certain statement is made, yet the meaning is just the opposite.

At this point, just one example of the paradox will be taken from a textbook labeled 'history', published for use in secondary schools and recommended for distribution overseas: "Democracy gives men liberty; but it does not prescribe what men shall do with their liberty, provided they do not use it to destroy liberty. It organizes men in order that their unorganized spontaneities, their personal development, and their soaring aspirations may the more abound.

Modern democracy sprang from the Age of the Enlightenment, and will be opposed by its tradition, its genius, and its explicit-teachings, to any dogmatic or authoritarian restraints upon freedom of thought. It will be opposed to obscurantism, and suspicious of any religious emotions that becloud or debase the reason. It will tend to the rejection of miracles and special providence, or any doctrine out of keeping with the habits of mind inculcated by science. It will subject dogmas to critical scrutiny and encourage their perpetual revision in form if not in substance. It will advocate public education, and attempt to raise the general average of knowledge. It will *trust* (italics in text) enlightenment and not fear it, and will therefore lend no aid or comfort to any religious cult that rests upon ignorance. Democracy does not reject either faith or authority, but only their priority to knowledge. On democratic premises, faith may supplement knowledge but must not replace it; authority may serve as a carriage for infants, or a crutch for the lame, but may not supersede the intellectual self-determination of the man who can walk alone, or impede the acquisition of that power. Finally, democracy's code of tolerance forbids its interfering with any religions provided that religion is similarly disposed to abstain from interference with rival cults, whether religious or secular. It does not demand a reduction of religions to a least common denominator. But there is a condition attaching to this tolerance. A religion which profits by this liberality must itself be liberal in its social philosophy" (Perry, Ralph Barton; *Puritanism and Democracy*, Harper Torchbooks, The Academy Library; Harper & Row, Publishers, Now York and Evanston; 1964; Pages 625, 626). Even the most casual reader surely could not fail to find numerous contradictions in Perry's statements; and if anyone will just consult the card catalog in libraries of various institutions of higher education, they will find Perry to be a most prolific writer. In fact, if one will take the time to read the 'history' textbook just cited, he will find that Modern Democracy is a religion, a faith: on page 598, "Modern democracy is pledged to the creation of a just and humane international order." We will let these statements speak for themselves, for it is doubtful that there could be any misunderstanding of what they explicitly describe. But it should be pointed out that Humanism in this case is called "modern democracy".

"Humanism is a term used to designate a number of different doctrines ... As humanism moves transitionally from the age of the New Learning toward the old-world united in its antagonism to Christ as envisioned by John in *Revelation*, it manifests itself in a bewildering variety of forms. For many people it seems inappropriate to call these various forms humanistic since some of them are apparently contradictory. Contradictory opposites cannot be comprised of the same essential ingredient, their logic tells them. That is precisely what Satan wants people to think. He uses it to his own great advantage.

Thus persons who appear to occupy positions at opposite extremes are often both humanists at heart, for example a Robert Welch and a Herbert Marcuse, or a New-Pentecostalist and a Zen Buddhist. Satan has always successfully employed the strategy of setting up two opposite extremes, one obviously evil and the other supposedly good because it is its opposite, and then trapping those who react to the obvious evil by getting them to espouse the supposed good. Humanism suits his purposes to a T in this respect" (Gerlach, Prof. Joel C., Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary, Mequon, Wisconsin; *Humanism, its Origin, Nature, and Menacing Impact*; Convention Essay, Arizona-California District, Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod, June 18-20, 1974, Phoenix, Arizona, p. 13).

In the same convention essay Professor Gerlach speaks of humanists in relation to schools, "The basic tool humanists employ in schools to produce the person of tomorrow is an educational method called conceptual inquiry. On the college or graduate level conceptual inquiry is the system students employ legitimately in the pursuit of knowledge on their own. They utilize what they have learned as a basis for expanding their knowledge through independent research.

This same teaching method has been adapted for use in classrooms on the elementary level. The teacher who employs this method in a classroom does not function in the traditional way of a teacher. He is not there to teach in the sense of sharing knowledge. He is there rather to facilitate a learning process, whereby the student supposedly discovers the truth for himself. The technique is ideal for leaving the impression in the minds of impressionable children that truth is relative, and that idea is essential to the realization of humanistic goals. "Conceptual inquiry is thus a theory of learning logically consistent with the idea of relativism. The old teaching method is one which grew out of and is logically consistent with the Christian notion that truth can be expressed in propositional statements and is definable.

The nature and purpose of conceptual inquiry were clearly shown to be humanistic in the National Education Association Journal in an issue titled, 'Special Journal Feature on Teaching and Learning Through Inquiry.' The featured article's author is Byron G. Massialas, associate professor of education at the University of Michigan. In explanation of the system, Dr. Massialas wrote, 'Teaching through inquiry is the process of formulating and testing ideas and implies an open classroom climate that encourages a wide student participation and the expression of divergent points of view.' In discussing the teacher's role as a sustainer of inquiry, he says, 'The teacher's general attitude is that of a fellow-inquirer who has no final and absolute answers to give our ... all statements or claims to knowledge are to be examined and then accepted or rejected in the open forum of ideas.' What the method aims to accomplish is stated in this way: 'For the students, the most important result of learning through inquiry is a change in attitudes toward knowledge. As they engage in the dialogue of inquiry, they begin to view knowledge as tentative rather than absolute, and they consider all knowledge claims as being subject to continuous revision and confirmation.'" (Gerlach; citing Massialas, as quoted by Dolores Peak in *A Critique of 'Organizing the Classroom for Learning'*).

Conceptual inquiry, Prof. Gerlach says, functions "in a useful and legitimate way when the area of learning involves a subject in which human knowledge is the final arbiter such as mathematics. But in other subjects such as English, history, social studies, we see the system as a useful tool for accomplishing the pre-established goals of humanism. The device is in fact an ingenious one. It has an air of learned sophistication, but it also bears the marks of the subtlety of that crafty serpent who once beguiled Eve."

Can we expect to find educational materials suitable for teaching and training students available now or in the future? No.

Why can we not now nor in the future use educational materials published for public school use in our schools? Educational materials are written by educators. And educators cannot separate their philosophy of life from their philosophy of education. Any philosophy of education must be based on two first principles, namely, the nature of God and the nature of man. And all philosophies of life must be either theocentric or anthropocentric. Therefore, if an educator's philosophy of life is man-centered, so will his philosophy of education be. The only God-centered philosophy of life and thus of education is to be found with the Body of Believers on earth, the invisible Church, And as we have seen already from Holy Scripture, the number is small.

When an educator writes materials for publishing, it is presupposed by us that the textbook has been written with the express purpose of imparting knowledge. Another presupposition is that this knowledge to be imparted consists of concrete facts, things known to be true. We further presuppose that the writer has an intimate knowledge of the subject presented in the textbook. Other presuppositions are that the facts, once learned by the student, can be used as they stand or interwoven with other knowledge and even expanded upon in order to reach conclusions. This is the way it may have been, but this is not the way it is today. If there are textbooks of this nature being produced today, it is a well-kept secret.

Modern writers and publishers will publish what is used in the widest market. The publishing business is just that - a business. Thus the market place is a very influential factor. That this is true is supported by our own church. We are told that we can't publish textbooks because it is too expensive to do so for the limited sales that can be anticipated. As far as the public market is concerned you will have to ask yourself who it is who controls the market. Where does the money come from for the grants to do research and publish the results or publish new materials incorporating the results? Is it from small enterprise or is it from the large foundations? As far as

our church is concerned, we will have to ask ourselves whether operating a publishing house in the black is more of a priority in the stewardship of what God has given us than having acceptable teaching materials for our schools and being willing to pay the price.

I suppose that there might be some who would say we have gotten this far using material published for the broad market and we don't seem to be all the worse off for it. And finally can we not trust that God will keep us safe from these dangers and preserve us? There are a number of things that need to be said to such a question. First of all, such thoughts usually flow from a mind that has not at all comprehended the magnitude of the beast that is set on devouring him. We see a claw or a paw and we conclude that this is really nothing over which to become alarmed. We can handle a claw or a paw; but the paw is attached to a leg and the leg to the rest of the beast, and the beast is sincerely intent on devouring us.

The second thing is that we should respond to the claw or the paw in the light of the Word of God. Who has ever read in the Bible that God approves of His sheep and lambs keeping company with the wolves? On the contrary, His every warning is to be separate from them. What is more, He tells us why we are to steer clear and keep a well-fixed line of demarcation. The roaring lion, the devil, is behind the line, and you don't even have to guess what kind of trouble you are in if you let his foot in the door.

Saint Paul says to the Ephesians, "Be imitators of God, therefore, as dearly loved children. Let no one deceive you with empty words, for because of such things God's wrath comes on those who are disobedient. Therefore do not be partners with them. For you were once darkness, but now you are light in the Lord. Live as children of light (for the fruit of the light consists in all goodness, righteousness and truth) and find out what pleases the Lord. Have nothing to do with the fruitless deeds of darkness, but rather expose them, for it is shameful even to mention what is done in secret. But everything exposed by the light becomes visible, for it is light that makes everything visible. This is why it is said: 'Wake up, O sleeper, rise from the dead and Christ will shine on you.' Be very careful, then, how you live, not as unwise but as wise, making the most of every opportunity because the days are evil. Therefore do not be foolish, but understand what the Lord's will is" (5:1,6-17).

The Lord's will is that we bring into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ. The will of God is then that we accept the fact that we are engaged in a total war in which undisputed victory is the only acceptable conclusion and in which peaceful coexistence is impossible. Nor is there any demilitarized zone of which we can say that it is mutual territory. Anyone who thinks that he is in such a zone has crossed the battle line and is even now caught in the trap which Satan has laid.

Long ago F. Pieper wrote, "Where we must choose between science and Scripture, we say with Christ, our Lord: 'The scripture cannot be broken' (John 10:35) and with the holy Apostles: 'we bring into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ' (2 Cor.10:5). We do not wait for science to establish a foundation for us. We have it already; and prior to all scientific investigation and scrutiny it stands as firm as our God who has laid it. The findings of science can neither give us the faith nor rob us of it (*Dogmatics*, Vol. I, p163). This is true of all subject matter. It is important that we learn and pass on our knowledge to the succeeding generations. Grammar, literature, mathematics, history and science are all useful tools to the Christian in serving and bringing glory to His Lord. But these disciplines can only serve such a function if they are kept in subjection to the revealed truth of God's Word. Otherwise they become the revelation by which the god of this world rules.

Again it is made clear that there is no middle ground. If Christ is not the One who rules our thoughts, Satan is. If the material we use is not in harmony with Holy Scripture and used for edification, then it is part of the arsenal of the devil, and its use can be only of a destructive nature, If Christ does not reign in our classrooms through His Word, then Satan does. What is to be our role and responsibility in these areas? Isn't this made clear by our calling? Saint Paul wrote to the Ephesians, "And He gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers; for the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ" (4:11,12). Have we not learned that to be builders of God's house we must, through the obedience of faith, hold to the same goals and purpose as God, and strive faithfully to reach the same by the means God has provided? To do otherwise would be to fear down, and not to build up.

Another point to ponder in regard to our calling is that to which Ezekiel was inspired to address himself. In chapter 33, verse 7, we read, "So thou, O son of man, I have set thee a watchman unto the house of Israel; therefore thou shalt hear the word at my mouth, and warn them from me." We have been set as watchmen over the house of Israel, the people of God. It is our responsibility, therefore, to warn the people concerning the enemy, and if we fail to do this, Ezekiel says that when the enemy slays the inhabitant (one of God's people), "his blood will I require at the watchman's hand." We are watchmen set on the walls of Israel. It is necessary for us to recognize the enemy first of all, and then to sound the warning to the people.

It should be clear that one of the threats of Satan breathing heavily on the people of God today is the beast of humanism. But to what degree are our people being warned of this menace? This writer is certainly concerned in this regard, in view of much of what is recommended for use in our schools through the book reviews which are sent out from our synod office. Concern mounts when one hears time and again the confession from our teachers that they were teaching for a number of years before they became aware of the enemy's presence in their textbooks.

On the other hand, we would not have near the problem in this area of textbooks if we would write our own. There should be no doubt that the church has the men capable of doing this work in all fields of study. Nor should there be any doubt that we have the means available to see such an undertaking to its conclusion. Remember, God has promised us all things relative to His kingdom. He is the One who gives us pastors and teachers. He is the One who gives us members and students. He is the One who raises up willing hands and skilled hands to support and labor in His kingdom in many ways.

Where is the problem, then? Could it be the same problem the disciples had in Matthew 16? "And when his disciples were come to the other side, they had forgotten to take bread. Then Jesus said unto them, take heed and beware of the leaven of the Pharisees and of the Sadducees (cf. Col.2:8). And they reasoned among themselves, saying, it is because we have taken no bread." The disciples had recently seen the miracle of the feeding of a great multitude of people with the seven loaves and a few little fish. They heard Jesus rebuke the Pharisees and the Sadducees. Yet they saw not and they heard not. They reasoned among themselves. They were serving as their own counselors. They were guessing at what Jesus was talking about at that very moment. He was warning them against those who seek only the kingdom of this world. The text goes on, "Which when Jesus perceived, he said unto them, Oh ye of little faith, why reason ye among yourselves, because ye have brought no bread? Do ye not understand, neither remember the five loaves of the five thousand, and how many baskets ye took up? ... How is it that ye do not understand that I spake it not to you concerning bread, that ye should beware of the leaven of the Pharisees and of the Sadducees? (vs. 5-11)" You see, there had been those who had wanted to make Jesus their king, but king only in the sense of an earthly kingdom. Those people had no concept of Jesus' true office and purpose. They had no discernment. What is more, the disciples at first confused the two kingdoms also. But how were they reoriented in the proper direction? It was through the instruction of Jesus. Verse 12 says, "Then understood they how that he bade them not beware of the leaven of bread, but of the doctrine of the Pharisees and of the Sadducees."

To whatever degree we are still confusing the two kingdoms, the kingdom of Grace and the kingdom of this world, we will only come to understanding through the instruction of God's Word. This brings us back to one year ago when we heard the paper by Pastor Krueger relative to being students of God's Word. This is imperative.

Let us give diligent consideration to the Word of our God, and then let us prayerfully and diligently apply what we learn to ourselves and, through our calling, to others. And by God's grace, and by His grace alone, it might yet be said of us and the generation we have been privileged to instruct, "They that wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings as eagles; they shall run and not be weary; and they shall walk, and not faint." (Isa. 40:31). Even so let it be, Lord Jesus.