

THE CLASSICAL EDUCATION QUARTERLY - A NEW KIND OF EDUCATIONAL JOURNAL

Our third issue of the CEQ promises you the reader a fine lineup of timely and thought provoking articles. CCLE VII was a most inspirational and informative conference, hosted by the staff of Messiah Lutheran Church and Classical Academy, Keller Texas. The CEQ is pleased to present one of the fine essays from that conference delivered by Heather Judd on the logic and purpose of history from a classical, Lutheran perspective. This is a very comprehensive treatment that provides a strong case for the study of history over against the usual social studies curriculum in today's progressive education. E. Christian Kopff presents an overview of the Lutheran revival of a classical education that served as a foundation for education in the modern Western world. Dr. Kopff makes the case that the Reformation's Humanist reform of the medieval Liberal Arts curriculum created the basis for biblical Christianity, and ordered freedom and literary and scientific creativity for 500 years. Lastly, a parable is offered to cement an understanding about a truly Lutheran catechesis: It must acquaint the baptized that God's intent is to prepare for his Gospel only by a dying to sin that comes from a ministry of full-strength Law. Nothing less will do the job of making hearts ready to be truly impacted by the grace that saves. And lastly we have a real feel good story: Anna Russert Day. Enjoy! S. A. HEIN, EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

## FORGING THE CHRONOLOGICAL CHAIN: THE LOGIC AND PURPOSE OF HISTORY

BY HEATHER JUDD (THIS PAPER WAS  
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### Introduction

History has long been a mainstay of elementary and secondary classrooms, yet many graduates from just such classrooms view history in the abstract as something one might need to know for a trivia game but which has no relation to their own lives. What is history? How should we teach it? And why should we teach it? The answers to these questions are interrelated, and truly effective teaching of history can only take place when we, for ourselves, have answers to each of them. First, as in all good debates and logical analyses, it is crucial that the terms we use be definitively defined, and so the proper starting place must be, "What is history?" Secondly we will approach the issue of how we teach history. In particular, I wish to discuss how our teaching of history can be "clearly classical," and even more particularly how history serves as one of the most crucial transition points as students expand from the grammar to logic phases of their education. Finally, we will surmount the thorniest question, "Why should we teach history?" The answers to this question come in a vast palate of shades and it is my hope to latch onto the uniquely Lutheran answer to this question of educational philosophy, because the answer one gives to this question is far more telling than might first be suspected. In fact, I believe our reason for studying history—the record of the human race—may very well reveal almost all our deepest beliefs about the human race.

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### **Defining History**

First, what is history? It is helpful to understand that there are two main branches of thought for this definition. The simplest definition might be something like, "History is events that happened in the past." This is subtly but significantly different from the definition that casts history as "the *study* of events that happened in the past." The first is all-inclusive but also unverifiable. For academic purposes, it is mostly meaningless as well. In everyday usage, we may say of something "it's history now," but this could just as well apply to buttering one's toast as to Hannibal's crossing of the Alps. Just as there is a difference between life itself and biology, which is the study of life, so too there is a difference between the past itself and history, which, academically speaking, is the study of the past. The comparison between biology and history leads to another interesting comparison; whereas in biology one can study life directly, in history we have a discipline that requires indirect study of its subject. So long as man is unable to exceed the speed of light and travel back in time, he will never be able to directly study the past.

### **History and Truth**

This brings up another important point. The study of history is based on a factual record of events. Although ancient historians in the strain of Herodotus may not have minded adding fanciful tales to their historical writings, the study of history as we define the discipline today (and rightly so, in my opinion) is always bound to finding the most accurate, true record of events. I must point out that this strikes upon the beginning of the answer to our third question. If for no other reason than this, here is cause to give history a foremost place in the classical curriculum: It stands on the belief that there is truth and that it can be separated from falsehood.

Of course, not all historians would agree with me on this, and in fact many modern historians delight in emphasizing a relativistic approach to history. Rather than accepting as historical fact the statement "Christopher Columbus discovered the New World in 1492," they propose to call into question every aspect of this sentence. "Discovered?" According to whose standards? There were certainly native peoples living there before he arrived. "New World?" Again, new to whom? And does it qualify as a world? "Christopher

Columbus?" But this is an Anglicization of the Italian *Christofori Colombo*. "1492?" Whose calendar is being used and why should it be any better than someone else's? In this way, the postmodern mind denies not only any absolute truth, but also the acceptance of any one set of values and parameters for study. In its most extreme form, such existential ideologies call into question the occurrence of the events themselves. Oscar Handlin, a former Harvard history professor, comments on this phenomenon in his 1979 book *Truth in History*:

. . . not a few [scholars] followed the deceptive path from acknowledgment that no person was entirely free of prejudice or capable of attaining a totally objective view of the past to the conclusion that all efforts to do so were vain and that, in the end, the past was entirely a recreation emanating from the mind of the historian. (410)

Thus, by denying truth in history, we open ourselves to the possibility that we are all simply madmen and nothing lies between to distinguish history from myth. It should be quite apparent, then, that our classical teaching of history is incompatible with the prevailing progressive ideas. They are founded on the rejection of truth, sometimes unequivocally, sometimes in favor of pluralism, which accepts contradictory beliefs as capable of both or all being true at the same time. Our teaching of history—and all of our classical teaching—is founded on truth.

Because historical truth must be conveyed over the years to its students, an unchanging, reliable form of communication is also necessary for the study of history. Thus anything beyond the realm of the written word is not properly considered history. Nevertheless, many, if not most, world history textbooks today begin with evolutionary speculation. Archaeology and anthropology may certainly add to a historical understanding, but they provide us with little actual historical data. History is dependent on written records. Anything preceding the written records we possess is truly *prehistoric*. This, I might point out, is another good reason to include the study of history in a classical school. Classical education is based on the written word.

### **History Versus Historiography**

Written records, then, are the tools of a historian. Human beings, of course, make such

records, and being the fickle, self-bent creatures we are, this brings us to a new problem. Records of historical events can never be purely objective. This fact opens the door for modern literary criticism to eke its way into history, questioning every motive and psychological suggestion of the writers, often with outlandish results. However, it would be just as ridiculous to take all historical sources at face value, and students, especially as their capacity for abstract thought ripens, should consider the source of their information and its trustworthiness. Early in the year, I introduce my logic stage students to the term *historiography*—literally the writing of history. Thus, *history* is the study of events that occurred in the past, but *historiography* is the written record of such events. Once students grasp the basic distinction, I try to guide them into thinking of the limits which historiography places on our studies. Primarily, of course, that historiography is a subset of history and thus that we cannot study everything that happened in the past. Nor would we want to, I might point out. To do so would be like studying geography from a life-sized map; very detailed, but ultimately futile.

Herein also enters the concept of worldview. Every source we have was written by a human author—a fallible, biased human author. Because of this, the sources we read may be flawed and will certainly be biased, though some more than others. Ask students how two accounts of the Battle of Gettysburg, one written by a Union soldier and one by a Confederate, will differ. How would a Roman reckoning of the crucifixion of Christ differ from that recorded in the Gospels? Even in the most object accounts, an author of history always has a personal bias that colors his writing, helping determine the vocabulary he uses, the facts he includes (or excludes), and the interpretation he submits. Furthermore, we as readers have our own biases and, inherent as they are, biases are not necessarily bad. For those who object to the idea of a “good” bias, differentiate between prejudice and bias. The first is literally to “pre-judge,” or to make a decision without rationally examining facts nor having any desire so to do. The latter is the natural bent and inclination of thought that logically follows from one’s beliefs. Thus anyone who claims to be unbiased admits that he has nothing in which he really believes. We as classical teachers, then, should proudly admit we are biased and we aim to make our students biased, too! Which thought brings us to our second question: How should we teach history?

### **The Centrality of History to a Classical Curriculum**

History was not one of the original seven liberal arts, but it has existed as a discipline, more or less, since the time of Herodotus, nearly five hundred years before Christ. Of course, historical records of various types had been kept by civilizations long before the “father of history” made his debut. Certainly as far as our current version of classical education is concerned, history is of central importance. There are many good reasons for this, but I have my sneaking suspicions that pragmatism may at least partially underlie this centrality. For one thing, history is the easiest discipline around which to orient a curriculum. If we are studying Ancient Greece we will read the *Iliad* or the *Odyssey*, write essays about the great philosophers, and discuss how Aristotle’s natural philosophy informed science for the centuries after him. There is nothing wrong with such interdisciplinary connections, and indeed I believe them to be fruitful. Until we reach the realm of theology, all of our studies represent ideas and events that have a certain orientation in time, and it is important for students to learn this. If, however, history occupies a central place only so that we have a hub into which we may stick our other disciplinary spokes, I think it has been misunderstood.

More pertinently, I think our convention theme should be called upon as we consider why history is part of our classical curriculum. Teaching history—Western Civilization, in particular—is most decidedly a purging of progressivism. In my own education courses at one of our synodical schools, there existed no “History Methods” course for elementary education students. Instead we had “Social Studies Methods” which encouraged teaching about communities and social skills in the younger grades and vaguely assumed that some history, primarily American, would find its way into the upper elementary years. Any actual history taught, however, should serve mainly as a springboard for lessons about racism, feminism, tolerance, or anything else that might mute and overshadow the far too heavily represented accomplishments of Caucasian males. In this way, the time period being covered made little difference; the United States of the 1960’s would do just as well as the Golden Age of ancient Athens. I overstate the case to make my point, but the overstatement is not so great as one might suspect. Even secondary education students who wished to specialize in history could do so only

as a minor and only in connection with a Social Studies major. History is in many ways being smothered as an academic discipline. As I saw it in my experience, history was belittled to being one arm of the more insidious octopus of Social Studies.

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Social Studies is progressive. History is classical. Many students in schools both public and private study almost nothing of world history until high school, or if they do, it comes in the form of fun-injected unit studies that leave events unrelated to one another. Progressivism shuns history because it honors great men, not just all men, and because it lifts up some civilizations and denigrates others. The past efficiently buries millions of individuals and even whole societies and proclaims by its very nature the fleetingness of fame. History is not the story of how all people are different but equal, and in the end, Progressivism abhors history because history is based on objective truth. Oh, certainly progressive minds try to deny this by declaring the historical facts biased, by pointing out that no recorder can be truly objective and that some historians are blatantly prejudiced. Still, the reality remains: Either Caesar defeated Pompey or he did not. History demands a belief in absolute truth.

### **Teaching History: The Grammar**

Let us then consider how we will teach the truths of history to our students, first at the grammar level and then transitioning to the logic stage. Recognizing the grammar components of history is not difficult. Dates and names, along with events and places, are the building blocks of history. Or, we might say that they are the individual links in the chronological chain of history. At the grammar stage, the emphasis of history is on giving students the most pertinent and complete set of "links" possible. They may begin in these years to connect individual pieces of information, but that is not the primary goal yet. Instead, the grammar teacher helps students stockpile the historical bits and pieces that will serve as material for the logic years.

Historical dates are the simplest of the links that grammar students will learn. They are short, contained, and highly objective, which makes them

clear and easily accessible for learning. Furthermore, they are useful because children and adults alike need historical "hooks" on which they can "hang their hats." The more dates a student knows with understanding, the more clearly, quickly, and deeply he focus on discrete sections of the historical timeline. No one set of dates needs to be adopted by every school and classroom, but each teacher needs to derive some list of historical events that will be the key dates for his students to internalize.

The first, and easiest, method of choosing events is to use someone else's curriculum. This is not always bad. Publishers such as Veritas Press have already done most of the work a teacher would have to take up in creating his own history timeline of events. On the other hand, the Reformed or other bias of publishers often shows through in their choice of dates. I still remember from my own eighth grade history experience that Israel became a nation-state again in 1948 and that in 1981 Greece was the tenth country to join the European Common Market—both events indicative of the Millennial Fundamentalist viewpoint of my history text's authors. The Lutheran Grammar of History timeline is one alternative with preferable dates.

The other option, regardless of whether your school uses a purchased history curriculum or not, is to create your own time-line or list of important dates. In a progressive school, the teacher would ask the students for their favorite dates or what they think is important. A classical teacher, however, will create this list himself. To some extent, personal knowledge may guide this process. For instance, I know that the *Anno Domini* dates 476, 1066, 1215, 1517, 1588, and 1776 (among many others) have all been useful historical markers for my own studies, and so I trust they will serve likewise for my students. I also have good company in choosing these dates because other historians, both living and deceased, have included these as milestones in their renderings of history. If in doubt, compare the lists of important dates from three or four textbooks or other historical books to find the dates most frequently chosen as being of import.

Still within the realm of the grammar stage, once students have memorized the dates of important events, they should learn a few key facts about them as well. These links are slightly more complex, for they are not always so easily defined as dates, yet they, too, can be formed into discrete

packets of information. As an example: If studying the defeat of the Spanish Armada, students should probably first learn "1588 – Defeat of the Spanish Armada." Next they might learn some basic information about the important people involved; in this case it might be "Queen Elizabeth – Protestant queen of England, loved by her people and known as 'Good Queen Bess'," "Sir Francis Drake – seaman and explorer, first Englishman to circumnavigate the world," etc. In addition, grammar students should know what this event means. This means they should understand that an armada is a fleet of ships, that the English were badly outmatched by the Spanish and defeated them only through a series of special circumstances, that this battle in many ways sealed England's dominance as a naval power, and that Spain was a Catholic country who wished to reclaim England, and that had they won, the course of Protestantism and indeed the very founding of our own country might have been dramatically influenced.

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The grammar student, then, needn't be kept ignorant of causes or ramifications of historical events. Certainly, these should be taught along with the names, dates, and places, but the key difference between a grammar and logic student in history is that the grammar student is told of the causes and effects rather than extrapolating them on his own. To continue with the analogy, grammar students are not expected to figure out how historical links fit together, but the teacher may explain, model, or actually do such linking for him. All this information will hopefully remain and marinate in the student's mind until he again faces these historical issues on a higher level. Then he can be ready to reason about history. It is the nature of deductive reasoning that new knowledge comes about only as a result of forming connections between knowledge that is already possessed. For this reason, it becomes increasingly difficult with each grade level missed for an older student to enter and successfully learn at a classical school; such a student will constantly be trying to compensate for his historical missing links. It is imperative that younger students learn facts, whether historical or of other

nature, so that when they tackle subjects again at the logic level they have something with which to build.

### **Teaching History: The Logic**

With an understanding of the grammar of history, it should quite easily—that is, logically—follow that students' next step will be to connect these facts. Sadly, in my observation, many students never progress to having a logical understanding of history. I saw among my peers in college and I continue to see even among some adults of my acquaintance a concept of history as musty, dusty facts serving no useful purpose (and thus questionable as material for study; pragmatism rises again!). Realize that for many people Abraham Lincoln seems nearly as removed from their own time as Abraham the Patriarch; Martin Luther and Martin Luther King, Junior, are certainly related; and the times of crusading knights were before Christ, weren't they? Errors such as these not only display the shameful lack of historical study in many educational institutions, but they also indicate the inability of their believers to identify the pertinent characteristics of eras and their events and peoples and thus their inability to logically connect such events. In short, a cursory teaching of history—that is, one that fails to progress beyond the grammar stage—may be worse than none at all, for it relegates its students to a life of half-remembered truths, which are in essence merely lies.

How, then, should the classical Lutheran teacher seek to convey the logic of history? The process is an apprenticeship of modeling and imitation by which students move from seeing the logical connections made by others, to drawing connections from given information, and finally to identifying and connecting facts on their own. If successfully imbued, this process is one which will guide students in every area of study and life, and will also make history breathe with a new life of its own.

The first links to be forged in the historical, logical chain are those of chronology. Here reenter the dates memorized (or not) in younger years. Just as these were the simplest facts learned in the grammar years, so too they are the most straightforward to connect in the logic phase. The goal now is that students at the logic stage be able to order events mentally. Again, having a short list

of guidepost dates is helpful. In the past few years, I have created "Key Dates" lists of around 15-20 events for the segments of Western Civilization we study. By the end of the year my students must be able to pass (with 100% accuracy) the Key Dates quiz both by giving the date of each event listed and subsequently by giving the event for each date listed. I am still seeking to refine this process as I continually find the inherent laziness of students' minds seeks to memorize things in order rather than grasping the essential placement of the dates and their relation to one another. Quizzes in random order or oral description of reasoning as to why a date is correct, might be alternatives to help students wrap their minds around the importance and essence of these dates.

As within the major historical eras, so too should students understand what the traditional eras of Western Civilization are and why they are so divided. They should be able to characterize Ancient History, the Middle Ages, and the Modern Era and test their characterizations against events within each one. For instance, let us help students understand that the Medieval period was generally—and I must stress these are generalizations—a time of preservation rather than advance in intellectual matters, based on a definite system of social and celestial hierarchy, and a time of great devotion and piety along with the oft-touted superstition. If they have this framework on which to piece together the events of history, they are less likely to place the democratic, philosophical, pantheon-worshipping Greeks in the Middle Ages! The three major historical classifications are not random and students should grasp the essential differences among them so that they again have a mental system for classifying newly learned historical facts. Sub-eras such as the Greek Archaic Age, the Age of Enlightenment, or the Industrial Revolution are also useful in this way. In general, I would encourage the introduction of all these sorts of convenient divisions.

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Some schools recoil from teaching the three major eras because they argue that, aside from the fact they correspond to Western culture, they are too rigid and artificial. On the one hand we must agree. History is too complex to be susceptible to sudden changes. So, no, most citizens of Europe did not see a

substantial change in daily life between the years 475 and 476. On the other hand, something of import did happen in 476, even though Rome's roots had been rotting for centuries before that date. As historians we look backward, and so we should assign special import to certain dates as turning points, recognizable only in retrospect. At any rate, for students to really understand the logic of history they must first be able to break it apart and then be able to put it back together. The process is somewhat akin to observing a large, three-paneled painting. The observer first studies each panel, concentrating on its unique content. After doing this he is then ready to look in the background and see how the three parts blend into one whole scene. The process of bridging the chronological eras is far more difficult than that of separating them, and is a skill which probably cannot be fully grasped by most middle school students. The logical process continues indefinitely, though, and an introduction to this concept will prepare them to tackle it more fully on a high school or college level.

Once the chronological flow is established in students' minds, the more interesting and important logical work of history can begin. This is the linking of events in a causal flow. The chronological chain is straight and without deviation, but the intricate intertwinings of causes and effects create the loops, twists, and filaments that make history such a breathtaking thing to behold. Indeed, teachers must be aware that the causes of historical events are neither simple nor clearly defined. This is not science, wherein controlled experiments isolate one variable. History's laboratory allows for no repeated testing of hypotheses, for the variables in each moment of time are really too staggering to fully comprehend. Nevertheless, the absence of simple answers allows students to explore many causes, to weigh them against each other, and simply to roam in the wonderful wood of deductive reasoning, always guided by the well-read and experienced teacher.

And so here the student takes those tentative steps beyond the rote security of the grammar stage. What factors contributed to Rome's fall? Why was the printing press the most important invention of the modern era? Beginning with questions such as these, students learn to rely on the facts they know to draw conclusions. The answers they submit may be a few sentences or a few pages, mostly copied from text material or with larger

patches from their own intellects, all depending on the ability of the students. Questions can almost always be expanded to demand deeper thought beyond the facts of the lesson. What factors do you think contributed most to Rome's fall and why? Do you agree that the printing press was the most important invention of the modern era? If so, why? If not, what was the most important invention and why is its impact greater than that of the printing press?

In my own history teaching, I have chosen to incorporate such deductive thinking questions into weekly history sheets. Whereas our third through fifth grade students copy facts about their history lessons, my sixth through eighth grade students have two to four questions to answer about the weekly reading, usually including one or more extra credit selections that require more independent reasoning. At the beginning of the year I work with the whole class to discuss the question, to model finding information that pertains to it and to formulate an answer. I write copious notes on the board, from which students may forge their answers. Many of them are very similar, although the more accomplished students often prefer to answer completely on their own. Throughout the year I gradually have the students provide more of the facts, make more of the connections, and eventually write their answers on their own.

Another form of question that hones logical skills is comparison and contrast. The process is simple, but the findings can be profound, and by this practice students begin to discover historical patterns that can help them more deftly form the links between other ideas. Furthermore, this method often has the additional benefit of reviewing what students have already learned. When studying Nebuchadnezzar's Neo-Babylonian Empire, students should compare it to Hammurabi's Old Babylonian Empire. Or contrast Marc Antony with Octavian and speculate whether Actium might have ended differently if they had had different strengths or weaknesses. Or weigh the French and American Revolutions to discover why these contemporary events took such disparate paths. The essential questions to ask are: What makes these two things similar? What distinguishes them? In doing this, students are also sharpening their skill at defining terms and again are grasping essential characteristics that will help them create a broad and well-defined concept of history.

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The use of primary sources provides yet further opportunity for logical, critical thinking. Students at the logic stage should understand the difference between primary and secondary sources and begin to use primary sources in their historical studies. In my own experience, I have found that sixth, seventh, and eighth graders handle primary sources best in small, edited, annotated doses that allow them to grasp the main point with ease. Otherwise, their use tends to turn into a prolonged and painful comprehension exercise that ends with little new historical insight. The possibilities for comparison and contrast with primary and secondary sources are rich if time and abilities permit.

Finally, students need to expand beyond the borders of the history book and begin to link changes in history with changes in other disciplines, and vice versa. Philosophy, literature, science, arts, and religion have all developed in history and contributed to history. The philosophy of the Enlightenment did affect the ideals of the American founding fathers. How would our nation have been different if it had been born a hundred years later in the era of Romanticism? The Renaissance was truly a rebirth of old ideas, specifically those of the Greeks and Romans, and this resurrected interest led to the translation and reprinting of many of these works, which in turn led to new poems and treatises in imitation of the ancients, all of which moved the swirling currents of history. The Scientific Revolution need not be relegated to study during science; it is integral to the development of the Enlightenment era and the modern world. Listen to music from different sub-eras and try to identify the characteristics of that period. Do the same with artworks—paintings, sculptures, or even gardens. Observe how the rise of Christianity altered the Roman Empire and contributed to its transition into the Middle Ages or how the spread of Islam wrought changes in the Western world. Through such complex connections, students will begin the lifelong task of forging a complete and intricate chain of ideas about the world, its people, and their thoughts.

I should pause for a moment here to note that it is imperative for the teacher to be well

informed on the subject of the lesson. If you use a textbook, simply having read through it is not enough. Gather a collection of history texts and primary sources and make it a practice to compare them before the week's teaching. I often like to consult both a highly liberal and a highly conservative source, and am sometimes surprised at the Christian contributions that are emphasized even in the super-secular texts. Always be on the lookout for questionable facts and check them in other sources. The process of reading and comparison gives a broader view of the subject, highlights the most important facts, and weeds out the less useful bits. As classical teachers, content must reign over method, and it can only do so if we actually have a thorough knowledge of what we are teaching.

### **A Larger Purpose**

The types of connections I have described thus far are only slightly more than mental gymnastics; a broader application of formal logic that confines itself to the realm of the past. Now, certainly, within this realm is material enough to keep generations of thoughtful learners occupied with discovering connections, but is our goal really the pure development of the mental faculties? Is it simply the discovering of patterns that have been and truths that were? I think there is a larger purpose for history beyond tracing its internal links. The first connections students learn to make *should* be the obvious ones; in this case the connections between history and itself, then history and other disciplines. The next step, however, is to connect history to life. That is, the present and future—our lives. By so doing, history takes on an ultimate meaning. Here reenter those ingrained biases we all possess, for *what* this ultimate meaning is, however, is determined by our beliefs about history and about ourselves.

### **The Overarching View of History**

Though we as human beings cannot avoid bias, we can have some say in which direction our bias will pull us. In fact, what is our very purpose for teaching if not to mold our students' biases? And it is our own biases as teachers that will inform those of our students—a weighty thought indeed. With this great burden upon us, should we not carefully consider why we teach history? Objective as history is in its nature, it is also inherently open to interpretation. This is why I intimated earlier that the question of "Why study history?" is of fundamental importance.

First of all, history is a story. It is the story of mankind. I object, I might add, to the irksome platitude that history is "HIS story" which should, in my opinion, be relegated to the realm of tacky Christian key chains and bumper stickers. Justification is "HIS story;" history is primarily man's story. We as students of history, then, are both readers and participants in that story, and in both capacities we should be curious about the nature of this story and the end toward which it presses. Is the story of mankind a comedy or tragedy? Are we its heroes or its pawns? Many have tried to answer these questions and describe history's nature.

Perhaps the most basic difference of opinion on this point is that between the Eastern and Western views of history. The traditional view of history in most Eastern philosophies is cyclical. In other words, what has happened before will happen again in a similar, if not identical, form. Reincarnation fits with this view of the universe that concentrates more on the perpetuity of time rather than its end. In contrast, Western Civilization has traditionally taken a linear view of history. That is, that the events of the present are leading toward some goal or end.

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Linear views of history encompass a variety of vastly different philosophies and ends, however. Few today hold to a flat-line ideal in which things started, continue the same as ever, and then end no differently, although this was the basic view of the ancient Mesopotamian peoples. More common today would be the ascending line in which man continually improves himself and his society, ever gaining newer and higher levels of knowledge and ability. This, in short, is the evolutionary world-view. In opposition to this is the view of history as a downward trend. This philosophy bewails the "good old days" of yore when things weren't so dismal as they are now and it prophesies gloom and doom, generally in the form of unraveling morals. A variety of people may take this stance for differing reasons, but looming large among them are Fundamentalist or evangelical groups, especially those who wish to impose a literal,

linear interpretation of Revelation onto their historical plans. Granted, such believers see a divine intervention to end this historical disintegration, but for my part, I would reject this view almost as vehemently as the evolutionary model of history.

The linear possibilities need not be straight lines, however. Any combination of ups and downs, jagged or smooth, at intervals frequent or rare may be imagined. Does mankind perhaps have an upward ascent with periodic slips, or could history's story be one of descent with occasional triumphs? What is the view of history that reflects the world-view that we as Lutheran Christians hold? I think we might come close if we were to imagine a line of infinite height, falling then an almost infinite plummet before resolving itself in an uneven, undulating but, by and large, stagnant continuation. The story of history enfolds the perfection of Eden and its Fall. Since then, the story continues on with low points and heroic efforts, but largely remains the story of man's sinful pride and lust for power. In, around, and imbued into this linear picture, however, must be the presence of God's grace. Without this, history certainly would be a downward plunge of grade too steep to stay on our feet, but instead we have the mercy of our Lord, planted in history by His Son's death and resurrection, and so flowing from eternity to the future and the past, upholding and sustaining His whole creation.

### **The Purpose of Studying History**

Our view of history's overarching direction gives us an end to anticipate and press towards, but it does not describe this end. Theology is the proper realm of study for ends. Thus, even having an overarching view of history, we have not satisfactorily dealt with the question, "Why study history?" Let us consider the possible answers to this question, beginning with the simplest: a narrative purpose. If history is indeed a story, some would suggest, then its purpose should be exclusively to *describe* the events of the past. Seen in this way, history becomes either the grand tale of great men, nations, and deeds, heroic sagas distinct from myth only by a layer or two more of truth, or the universal story of human life, tying us together with humanity throughout the ages through the mundane and natural shared experiences of birth, life, and death. While this purpose for history rings partly true, it allows for little distinction between historical and literary tales. If history's purpose is solely narrative, its basis on truth seems no longer essential. There must be more to its purpose.

If we go beyond narration, the next step must be to *explain* why events happened. This, of course, involves suppositions and educated guesses as well as pure facts, and so some have suggested this practice goes beyond good scholarship. Most historians do seek out causes, however, and I have already intimated that this is a crucial aspect of history that we as classical educators wish to teach. Furthermore, in practicality, holding to a purely narrative purpose is impossible, for we as human beings are compelled by our nature to search for some greater meaning in the stories we read, hear, and recite. One guide for higher-level historical research comments on the tension in this way:

The problem of causation, the most vexatious facing the historian, is beyond complete 'solution'—that is, to the permanent satisfaction of all manners of men. It bristles with philosophical and practical difficulties. Are human events 'determined,' or can individuals choose paths to follow? . . . Should we therefore abandon efforts to find causes? Some historians do, preferring to deal in non-causal explanations. But to abandon the search for causes would be other than human (that is, it is not likely to happen), and it would leave us with formless and meaningless historical literature. (Shafer 52)

Still, simple description and explanation do not lift the discipline of history much past the realm of grammar studies, and so the explanatory purpose is also not quite satisfactory.

From seeking the causes of events, it is usually not a far leap from a retrospective search for causes to a prophetic application of the same, and so unless one is particularly disciplined, or particularly dull, history will most naturally take on a didactic purpose. By didactic, we mean that history *teaches* some kind of lessons. "What does this mean?" for us and for the future. A didactic view of history may be either cautionary or instructive. On the one hand, the events of the past may warn us, "This is what you should not do!" On the other, they may guide us into the wisest paths if we follow the examples of others.

Before subscribing to any of these reasons for teaching history, it seems only fitting that

classical educators look to the past for historical views on the purpose of history. In my research, I have found some of the most forthright sources on this subject to be the prefaces or introductions to histories themselves. As a representative sampling, let us look at some selections from prefaces of history books, one each from the Ancients, Medievals, and Moderns. Since Herodotus reserves the distinction of "father of history," it is well to begin with his words:

This is the showing forth of the inquiry of Herodotus of Halicarnassos, to the end that neither the deeds of men may be forgotten by lapse of time, nor the works great and marvelous, which have been produced some by Hellenes and some by Barbarians, may lose their renown; and especially that the causes may be remembered for which these waged war with one another. (1)

Moving further west, and into the Middle Ages, the Venerable Bede prefaces his *Ecclesiastical History of the English People* thus:

To the most glorious King Ceolwulf, Bede, servant of Christ and priest. . . . I gladly acknowledge the unfeigned enthusiasm with which, not content merely to lend an attentive ear to hear the words of Holy Scripture, you devote yourself to learn the sayings and doings of the men of old, and more especially the famous men of our own race. Should history tell of good men and their good estate, the thoughtful listener is spurred on to imitate the good; should it record the evil ends of wicked men, no less effectually the devout and earnest listener or reader is kindled to eschew what is harmful and perverse, and himself with greater care pursue those things which he has learned to be good and pleasing in the sight of God. This you perceive, clear-sighted as you are; and therefore, in your zeal for the spiritual well-being of us all, you wish to see my *History* more widely known, for the instruction of yourself and those over whom divine authority has appointed you to rule. (3)

One of the early historians of the Modern Age, Sir Walter Raleigh, expounds at length in his preface to *The History of the World* on the nature and use of history:

By [history] (I say) it is, that we live in the very time when [the world] was created: we behold how it was governed: how it was covered with waters, and again re-peopled: how kings and kingdoms have flourished and fallen, and for what virtue and piety God made prosperous; and for what vice and deformity he made wretched, both the one and the other. . . . In a word, we may gather out of history a policy no less wise than eternal; by the comparison and application of other men's fore-passed miseries with our own like errors and ill deservings. (69-70)

These are only a few of the clearer examples, but it is even so quite obvious that historically the purpose of history has been viewed as a didactic one. The problem with a didactic view, however, is that it slips quite easily from guidance or motivation into moralizing. Furthermore, events in history, when sifted through the sieves of our biases, can generally be construed to support whatever we already had decided to be true. This is the error that accompanies modern pronouncements of doom such as declarations that the terrorist attacks of September 11 were God's punishment for America turning away from him. Another memory of mine from my junior high world history studies with a highly Fundamentalist textbook is the interpretation of the authors that all of Christianity during the Middle Ages was "distorted." Their disregard for the Roman church led them to draw such lessons as:

"Most paintings during the Middle Ages were flat. They lacked a sense of depth or perspective . . . People and things did not appear real and natural the way God created them. **If men do not see God right, they will not see themselves right. The distorted Christianity of the Middle Ages inevitably distorted art.** [bolding original]" (Combee, 475)

Clearly this historical lesson itself bears some marks of distortion.

*In history we see man's actions and God's responses, both of grace—upholds, rules, prospers, honors—and of justice—obstructs, punishes.*

If the dangers of moralizing and unfounded claims are so great, to what didactic purpose shall we then subscribe? Herodotus was pagan, Bede Catholic, and Raleigh Anglican. In trying to approach history from a truly Lutheran perspective, we must be careful about wholly latching onto their rhetoric as guidance for our teaching. If I may let theology seep into history, the problem with most didactic approaches is that they either embrace Gospel without Law or demand Law at the expense of the Gospel. We as sinful human beings do not need to hear only how great certain men were and how we may aspire to be like them; this "Barbie mentality" of "We girls [or humans] can do anything!" dates back to the inhabitants of Babel. Neither, however, should we be commanded to better ourselves through historical moralizing—a path of self-sanctification that leads to despair.

Enough, then, of trying to give a Lutheran definition of history by exclusion. Let us turn to someone whose biases we might trust: Luther himself. Though he did not write his own history, he did compose the preface to a history written by his contemporary Galeatius Capella. In it he expresses frankly (how else would Luther do it!) his views on history itself. He begins:

Histories are . . . a very precious thing. For what the philosophers, wise men, and all men of reason can teach or devise which can be useful for an honorable life, that the histories present powerfully with examples and happenings making them visually so real, as though one were there and saw everything happen that the word had previously conveyed to the ears by mere teaching. (275)

Thus far, Luther acknowledges the power of history's narrative appeal, but he goes on:

There one finds both how those who were pious and wise acted, refrained from acting, and lived, how they fared and how they were rewarded, as well as how those who were wicked and foolish lived and how they were repaid for it. Upon thorough reflection one finds that almost all laws, art, good counsel, warning, threatening, terrifying, comforting, strengthening, instruction, prudence, wisdom, discretion, and all virtues well up out of the

narratives and histories as from a living fountain. (275)

Now he has turned to its didactic nature, and seems to head toward the moral betterment that is the common end of such a view, but this he immediately follows with a twist in his conclusion:

It all adds up to this: histories are nothing else than a demonstration, recollection, and sign of divine action and judgment, how [God] upholds, rules, obstructs, prospers, punishes, and honors the world, and especially men, each according to his just desert, evil or good. (275-6)

Here is, succinctly stated, our purpose for history. It is not merely the morality-boosting examples of man, but nor is it solely the fatalistic divine intervention of God. In history we see man's actions and God's responses, both of grace—upholds, rules, prospers, honors—and of justice—obstructs, punishes. Thus, also, history is not a method of moralistic sanctification. Instead, much like the reading of the historical books of the Old Testament, history sets us in awe of our own decrepit sinfulness and God's unending mercy toward us.

In short, as with all good subject areas, history pulls us outside ourselves. Its proper study chips away at the sinful nature's self-centeredness, for it puts our lives in perspective. In it we see lowly men who have risen to power and great men who have fallen. We see the decay of the sinful world, yet tempered by God's enduring grace toward mankind. With such a landscape on which to paint our own lives, we see how foolish it is to think too highly of ourselves, and yet we are also buoyed by the reassurance that God can and will use our lives, however humble—or exalted—they may appear, to his good and gracious purposes. This is the distinctly Christian, distinctively Lutheran, view of history.

Luther himself notes in this same preface that history cannot have the same perspective for the unbeliever.

And although there are many who do not acknowledge God or esteem him, they must nevertheless come up against the examples and histories and be afraid lest they fare like those individuals whom the histories portray.

They are more deeply moved by this than if one were simply to restrain and control them with mere words of the law or instruction. (276)

So while history for the Christian records God's justice *and* grace, His Law *and* Gospel, for the unbeliever blinded by sin, it serves only as Law in its first use, a moral curb. The non-Christian who aspires to greatness may try to use history as a sort of pseudo-third use of the Law, but it cannot take him beyond time to eternity, and in the end, as the writer of Ecclesiastes laments, "this, too, is meaningless."

Luther's comments prove, too that the problem of truth in history is not only a postmodern one. He says:

. . . the greater number [of historians] write in such a way that they readily pass over or put the best construction on the vices and deficiencies of their own times in the interest of their lords or friends and in turn glorify all too highly some trifling or vain virtue. On the other hand, they embellish or besmirch histories to the advantage of their fatherland and disadvantage of the foreigners, according to whether they love or hate someone. In that way histories become extremely unreliable and God's work is shamefully obscured . . . Thus the noble, fine, and loftiest use of histories is ruined and they become nothing but bearers of gossip.

. . . [However] we must remain satisfied with our historians as they are, and now and then reflect for ourselves and judge whether the writer is getting off the right track because of partiality or prejudice, whether he praises and blames too much or too little, according to how he is disposed toward people or things, even as we must tolerate it that under a lax government teamsters along the way adulterate the wine with water, so that one cannot obtain a drink of pure vintage, and we must be satisfied with receiving the better part or something out of it. (277-8)

The idea of bias coloring histories is nothing new! Luther, too, recognized the impossibility of impartiality, but he, too, believed that there is in fact truth underlying all our incomplete and imbalanced historical recordings and that its pursuit is a worthwhile

endeavor. For the classical Lutheran teacher or student, the chain of history is not primarily one to bind us to our own time, nor primarily to link us with our past, though it does serve both these purposes. Instead, the chain of history is the craftsmanship of our God who has placed every link according to his goodness and justice, and from which, as the central ornament and meaning of all history, He hangs His cross in resplendent token of His grace.

As the final word, I would let Luther speak once more to summarize the proper outlook on history:

. . . since histories describe nothing else than God's work, that is, grace and wrath, it is only right that one should believe them, as though they were in the Bible. They should therefore indeed be written [and we might add, taught] with the very greatest diligence, honesty, and truthfulness.

. . . in [history] one can indeed also see God's work, how marvelously he rules the children of men and how very wicked the devil is and all his, so that we learn to fear God and seek his counsel and aid in matters both large and small. To him be praise and thanks in all eternity, through our Lord Jesus Christ. Amen. (277-8)

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#### ... ABOUT CCLE

THE PURPOSE OF THE **CONSORTIUM FOR CLASSICAL & LUTHERAN EDUCATION** IS TO PROMOTE, ESTABLISH, AND EQUIP INDIVIDUALS AND SCHOOLS COMMITTED TO CONFSSIONAL LUTHERAN DOCTRINE AND A CLASSICAL APPROACH TO EDUCATION.

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## LATIN AND THE LUTHERAN REFORM OF THE MEDIEVAL CURRICULUM

BY DR. E. CHRISTIAN KOPFF

**W**hen the worst of the Dark Ages were past, Charlemagne (742-814) strove to restore order and empire in Europe. He turned to England for scholars and teachers such as Alcuin (735-814) to re-establish classical education. The old schools had disappeared, so monasteries and cathedrals were encouraged to found schools, modeled on the one at Charlemagne's court. The neo-Platonic ideal of the Seven Liberal Arts, known from Augustine and Martianus Capella, was the

basis of the curriculum. The cultural triumphs of the Latin Middle Ages were based on a curriculum that was the product of late ancient speculation taught at monasteries and cathedrals, institutions that did not exist in pagan culture, and carried on in Latin, a "dead" language without native speakers. In practice, pride of place went to grammar, the study of Latin language and literature leading to the reading of the Two Canons, the biblical and secular (pagan) Great Books. Logic and rhetoric, the rest of the trivium, in second place, were often taught more rigorously than the quadrivium (arithmetic, music, geometry and astronomy). Whatever its limitations, this curriculum was a true core with a reading list of Great Books and a balance between the study of language and that of mathematics and science. As culture and commerce recovered, universities arose to teach professional subjects, such as law, medicine, and theology, which were soon joined by the arts in the wider sense, including philosophy.

*While Luther was writing and preaching in favor of a liberal art education that emphasized language and literature, Melancthon was in charge of the institutional side of the curricular reform.*

The institutional basis of this curriculum was shaken by the Reformation. By 1524, Martin Luther (1483-1546) and his brilliant young Humanist friend and colleague, Philip Melancthon (1497-1560), were worried. The Reformation proclamation of Christian Freedom had turned into an excuse for license and a wholesale rejection of tradition. Cloisters were shut and their schools were closed. Erasmus wrote scornfully, "Ubi cunq; regnat Lutheranismus, ibi litterarum est interitus." ("Wherever Lutheranism reigns, there is the death of culture.")

Martin Luther had always been a strong supporter of a liberal arts education. In his important open letter "To the Christian Nobility of the German Nation" (1520) Luther urged reforming the universities and emphasized the importance of teaching Latin, Greek and Hebrew. He proclaimed his commitment to liberal education by writing to Humanist, Eoban Hess, "Without knowledge of literature, pure theology cannot endure. In the recent past, when letters were weak and fell, so did theology....There has never been a great revelation

of God's Word unless He has first prepared the way by the rise and prosperity of languages and letters." In 1524 Luther called upon local governments to found public schools in *An die Bürgermeister und Ratsherrn alle Städte in deutschen Landen, dass sie christliche Schulen aufrichten und halten sollen*, ("A Letter to the Councilmen of all the Cities in Germany, urging them to found and maintain Christian Schools.") He had heard the objections to the classical curriculum that contemporary classical educators still hear, "If we must have schools, why teach Latin, Greek, Hebrew and the other liberal arts? Is it not enough to teach the Scriptures in our mother tongue?" He answered firmly, "If the languages were of no practical benefit, they are still wonderful gifts from God," but "The languages are the scabbard in which the sword of the Spirit is sheathed." He took his case to lay people in his famous "Sermon to Parents, On Sending their Children to School" in 1530.

While Luther was writing and preaching in favor of a liberal art education that emphasized language and literature, Melanchthon was in charge of the institutional side of the curricular reform. He began visiting German cities to observe and advise them on education. In 1528 he published his *Visitation Articles* on standards for schools, his considered judgment as scholar and teacher.

The first part was a statement of faith. The three parts of a Christian life are repentance in response to the Law, followed by faith in the Gospel, from which flows a life of good works. For those good works, however, education is needed. So the second part of the *Visitation Articles* was a school plan. Human fulfillment in this life is based on language, to be learned by studying the traditional trivium: Latin grammar, logic and rhetoric. For Melanchthon the best education concentrates on a few basic subjects.

Elementary education was in the truest sense grammar school and the grammar was Latin grammar. First children learned their letters, the Creed and the Lord's Prayer. Then they studied Donatus' Latin grammar and the traditional wise sayings of Cato. Basic Latin vocabulary and grammar were emphasized. When they had mastered them, students went on to read Aesop's *Fables* and the Latin *Colloquies* of Erasmus and studied music. A solid grounding in grammar was essential for the success of this curriculum. "If such labor is irksome to the teacher, as we often see, then we should dismiss him and hire one who will not shirk his duty, which is keeping his pupils

attentive to grammar. No greater injury can befall learning and the arts than for young people to grow up ignorant of grammar," Melanchthon wrote. The reward for mastering grammar was reading the Bible and the pagan classics: Cicero, Virgil and Ovid. Greek was taught chiefly to read the New Testament, but some schools taught Isocrates, Homer and Greek tragedy, such as Euripides' *Hecuba*. The Two Canons, the Great Books curriculum of Late Antiquity, were still fundamental, but now supplemented by the Greek New Testament and a few Greek secular authors.

Melanchthon's curricular model spread across northern Europe, through the influence of men such as Johannes Sturm (1507-1589) in Strasburg and Johannes Bugenhagen (1485-1558) in Germany and Scandinavia. By the second half of the 16<sup>th</sup> century it flourished in England, where the evidence is presented in one of the greatest works of American scholarship, T. W. Baldwin's *William Shakespeare's "Small Latine & Lesse Greek"* (Urbana, 1944).

*The Reformation's Humanist reform of the medieval Liberal Arts curriculum created the basis for biblical Christianity, ordered freedom and literary and scientific creativity for 500 years.*

This "grammar school" education provided the foundation for theology, law, medicine and science in Protestant countries. The Jesuits imitated it in their excellent schools in Catholic lands. Schools with this curriculum graduated Shakespeare and Bacon, Racine and Voltaire, Bach and Handel, Milton and Newton, Thomas Jefferson and John Adams. In the 19<sup>th</sup> century the English Public School and the German Classical Gymnasium used the same educational ideals and reading list, with somewhat more attention given to Greek. John Keats and Charles Darwin, Karl Marx and Friedrich Nietzsche, Albert Einstein and Werner Heisenberg attended schools with a classical core curriculum. The Reformation's Humanist reform of the medieval Liberal Arts curriculum created the basis for biblical Christianity, ordered freedom and literary and scientific creativity for 500 years. Can a curriculum modeled on it produce similar fruits in the 21<sup>st</sup> century? That is the challenge that inspires contemporary American Classical educators.

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## A PARABLE ON LAW AND GOSPEL

BY DR. STEVEN A. HEIN

*He stood on the porch of his ten year old home. He was soaked through from the downpour of rain. He had been walking for hours. . . thinking, thinking about how things could have gone so very wrong for him in his marriage. He was bewildered, disillusioned, and angered by what he had just learned about himself. It was his tenth wedding anniversary, but not what he had planned. He must tell his wife*

*about his new discovery. But, what should he tell her?....Let's go back to the beginning.*

*There was once a young Christian man who married the woman of his dreams and was determined to be the husband that God's will obliges him to be. He joined Promise Keepers and committed himself publicly to loving his wife as his most supreme duty in life below his faith and love of God. On his first wedding anniversary, which he remembered, his actions were guided by his commitment and his awareness that his wife loved long-stemmed roses. So...on his way home from work that day he picked up a dozen beautiful long-stemmed, dew-dripping, red roses for his wife. Upon greeting his wife at the door with a warm, "Happy anniversary," he presented her with the lovely bouquet of roses. Now imagine the reaction of his wife when in the midst of her gracious thank-you's, he responds in accord with his committed duty to love her (remember, he promised)...."Think nothing of it honey, I'm just doing my duty!" Instantly, an expression of angered disbelief came over her face, the roses came flying in his face, and she ran to their bedroom in tears.*

What does this wife understand--and we through her eyes--that her insensitive husband does not? It certainly is the husband's duty to love his wife. Husbands should love their wives. It is an important part of God's Law and he solemnly promised to do so. Moreover, it is also true that his commitment in this regard at Promise Keepers is certainly in keeping with this obligation. Yet, the wife understands in the depths of her heart, that this duty of love can never be fulfilled by mere commitments and promises to do so. Indeed she understands, and we through her eyes, that love is a duty that can never be fulfilled out of a commitment to do one's duty. And the more committed her husband becomes in his actions to doing his duty, the farther away he will get from actually loving his wife. She just intuitively understands that all

motivations by her husband to doing his duty indicate an absence of love.

*. . . love is a duty that can never be fulfilled out of a commitment to do one's duty.*

So we, and this bewildered husband, are left with a mysterious paradox. Love is the duty he has toward his wife, but it is a duty that will never be fulfilled...by commitments to doing his duty. On the other hand, we all understand that if he blows off the occasion of his wedding anniversary by doing nothing, he surely falls short of his obligation to love his wife as he ought. Therefore, taking in all that we have recognized through the eyes of his wife, this husband realizes that as concerns his obligation to love his wife...he is damned if he does his duty and he is damned if he doesn't. And the more committed he becomes to doing his duty in all he does toward his wife, the worse off it gets for him.

*Now, ten years have passed since this couple married. Today is the occasion of the man's tenth wedding anniversary. The husband comes home to his wife at the end of the day and makes the following confession and promise: "Dear, I want you to know that for the past ten years I have been striving to love you. And I want you to know that in this coming year, I promise to redouble my efforts."*

Has this husband not confessed to his wife that he does not love her? Indeed, has he not disclosed that he has not loved her for all the years of their married life together? If you were his wife, how would you respond? Perhaps...*please stop!* Again, what is it about love that the wife understands right to the depths of her heart, that this husband of hers does not? She understands that love is not ours from the efforts of striving. Indeed, if you are *striving* to love...you don't. But, surely we must strive to love. What would be the wife's reaction if the husband comes home and confesses: *Dear, I want you to know that for all the ten years of our married life together, I haven't loved you...but I want you to know that in this coming year, I'm not even going to try?*

Now imagine that this husband has been reading this piece about him up to this point. Today is

his tenth wedding anniversary, but he has not gone home to his wife yet. He reflects on what he has learned about himself from the foregoing.

*. . .I must love my wife. It is my duty. I am committed and I promised. But, lets see now...I am damned if I do my duty, and I am also damned if I blow it off. I am damned if I strive to love my wife. My striving to love her just reveals that I don't. But I am also damned if I don't even try. Well then, I'm out of options. I'm dead!*

In the game of chess, when there are no options left by which you can keep your king out of harm's way, it is called, *Checkmate!* As regards his obligation to love his wife, is it not true that this husband has recognized that he is in the moral equivalent of checkmate? This, of course, does not mean that he does not have choices. He has several choices. He can do his duty, or he can blow it off. He can strive to love his wife or he can choose to make no effort at all. But just as in chess where a checkmate position presents possible moves, none of the choices remove the checkmate-game's-over-condition of the player. Make any move, choose any option, the game is still over. . .you're dead. *And so am I*, realizes the husband in a magic moment of self-discovery. He is a changed man. He can never go home to his wife as he has for the past ten years. But what will he do? What will he now say to his wife on this, his tenth wedding anniversary? Here is one possibility. Now we pick up our story from the beginning....

*The husband goes inside his house to his wife and tells her the following: "Dear, I have something to tell you. It has been quite a day for me. I have learned some things about myself during our married life together that I never knew. Let me get to the point. I have come to the realization that for the past ten years I haven't loved you. God knows how committed I have been to doing so, and how I have strived to love you, but the fact is I don't and I can't. That's just the way it is. So . . . to hell with it and to hell with you, I'm*

*out of here!" And he walks out on his silent wife never to return.*

***Love is obligated by the Law, but all commitments to duty and legal considerations void and destroy love. Where there is Law, there is no love.***

It was the great Danish thinker, Soren Kierkegaard, who observed that love and law have a *hide and seek* relationship with one another. If you see one, the other is hidden and cannot be found. *Loving God with all one's heart, mind, and soul, and one's neighbor as the self* is indeed, God's Law of life. Do it and you will live. If you see the demand - *you must* - love is absent and nowhere to be seen. If love is a present flowing reality, then the Law has disappeared from view. Yes, love *is* the Law of life, but they can never be present together for they repel one another like oil and water. The Law of love presents us with a moral and spiritual *catch-22*. Love is obligated by the Law, but all commitments to duty and legal considerations void and destroy love. Where there is Law, there is no love. It always reveals that we aren't, we don't, and we can't. We both understand and sympathize with the reactions of the wife in our parable. And therefore we also understand something about the mind of God.

But what if we respond like Israel, when they realized that they had transgressed God's Law and came under His wrath? *Give us another chance!* Let's explore the idea of more chances by returning to the analogy of the game of chess. Imagine that the demands of the Law of Love could be compared to the task of having to defeat the world's greatest chess player. (Actually the demands of the Law for sinners is a far more impossible task.) You draw white and make your opening move...king's-pawn two spaces forward. Now, imagine the chess champion looks over at you and announces, *checkmate!* You protest: *Look the game has just begun. I still have all my pieces on the board and you have not even made a move. What do you mean, "checkmate?"* The champion responds, *Don't you see it?...Well then, play the game. You'll see it in seven moves.* And sure enough, in seven moves you see it... *checkmate!* So you say, *Give me another chance!* So another game begins with the same announcement, *checkmate!* You play the game and see it in seven moves. Now, *if you play long enough*, he tells you, *you may get good enough to see*

*it in six moves.* And better still, perhaps you can get good enough to see it in five.

The real question for you, however, is the same as it was for Israel: how many times do you have to play the game to come to the realization that you can't win? It took our husband ten years in connection with his wife. Where there is Law there is no love. But some of us take longer to see this than others. And some never see it in a lifetime. Let's return to our parable. There is another possible scenario.

*The husband goes inside his house to his wife and tells her the following: "Dear, I have something to tell you. It has been quite a day for me. I have learned some things about myself during our married life together that I never knew. Let me get to the point. I have come to the realization that for the past ten years I haven't loved you. God knows how committed I have been to doing so, and how I have strived to love you, but the fact is I don't and I can't. That's just the way it is. Now I believe that you have every right to leave me and I wouldn't blame you if you did. You deserve far better than I have ever been able to give you. But, I just want you to know how deeply sorry I am."*

*In this version of the parable, the wife breaks her silence and has the following astounding revelation for her husband. "Your lack of love for me may be a recent revelation to you, but it is no surprise to me. I have known it all along. But, there is something else I want you to understand. I do love you, and I always have. And as it has been in the past, that love shall be sufficient for the both of us. I'm not going anywhere; you are just fine the way you are." The husband can scarcely believe what he has heard from his wife. Tears well up in his eyes and he just goes over to her and hugs her. Now, about that hug, he did not make any commitments to hug his wife, nor did he hug her out of any sense of duty. He did not strive to hug her. He just spontaneously did it. It was the first loving*

*thing he had ever done for his wife in their life together. Indeed, she had been waiting ten years for that hug.*

*This is the second half of Kierkegaard's paradox: where there is love, law is nowhere to be found.*

How do we explain the hug? While it is true that Law cannot beget love; love can beget love. And that is just what the wife accomplished in her husband in the second scenario. When there is a humbling repentance before a lover for a failure to love, love can beget love when first it begets a faith in that love. The husband only gets up and hugs his wife by first believing her incredible account of her own commitment and love. Her love and that trust blossomed into his returning love... something that all his commitments to duty and striving could never produce. This is the second half of Kierkegaard's paradox: where there is love, law is nowhere to be found.

Now we must understand what an extraordinary woman this is in our parable. She understands the Law of love, and she also understands well something important about her own heart's desire for a loving relationship with her husband. There would be only one way that she could get what she wanted, but about that one way there would be no guarantees. To gain a loving relationship with her husband, he would first have to discover that he did not love her, and for that matter, he never would by commitments to duty or striving. Until that time, she must keep her silence. There are things that a man must discover about his own heart on his own. She cannot *tell* him.

*Imagine his response if after five years of marriage, she breaks her silence and informs him that she knows that he does not love her. Moreover, she then declares, "that's OK. I love you and that is sufficient for the both of us." He would be incredibly offended and outraged by her comments, would he not? And he would say things to her like, "where do you get off telling me such offensive things? After all the things that I do for you day in and day out, etc., etc!"*

The woman knows that she must keep her silence—a silence without any guarantees. He may spend his whole life and not come to a true understanding about his own heart. If so, she loses. Moreover, even if he does discover it as in our parable, this is a magic moment. Scenario one is always a possibility. He may blow her off and walk. In which case, she also loses. She must hold her silence . . . even if it means, forever. There is no other way and she knows it.

*The ministry of the Law in the service of the Gospel is predicated on this spiritual truth: there is no other way.*

Thus, God deals with us in his Law and Gospel. The chief purpose of the Law is not to show us where we love when we do. Nor, is its purpose to enable us to love. All commitments to duty and striving destroy love. (There may be much striving in love, but never to love.) The Law's purpose is to reveal the checkmate, the dead-in-our-trespaces character of our sinful condition. It does this not by announcement, but by showing us our own heart when we engage the Law of life in daily living...when we play the game. Its purpose is to take us behind God's spiritual woodshed and give the kind of thrashing that humbles us before Him. Yet, as in our parable, there is no guarantee of this outcome. The self-realization of moral checkmate can just as well produce rebellion and greater lovelessness as repentance. About this truth much of the contemporary church has lost its nerve and imagines other options. The ministry of the Law in the service of the Gospel is predicated on this spiritual truth: there is no other way.

In scenario two, the woman reveals the heart of God in the Gospel...a heart that only reveals the true self to the man of her dreams when he has been humbled before her. Perhaps, she is a rather unbelievable figure of pure imagination. What woman in reality would be so lovingly committed to a husband who has no love for her? On this question there may be many different opinions. But about our God, there can be no doubt. He is just such a loving God who has designs on us loveless humans. He is a gambler, but He plays for keeps--win or loose--with all of us in Christ Jesus. And about Him, let us not get sentimental or fool ourselves. When it comes to what is necessary for a relationship with Him, through faith in his favor for the sake of

Christ...there is no other way. He is the champion who pushes the chessboard in front of us to play the game of life. The stakes are death and life. The rules are contained in the Law of Love which is the Law of Life. Make your move.

*Now, lest we think that recognition of the checkmate comes by viewing the matter simply as the wife perceived her husband in the parable, it must be said that this is only half of the matter. The real hopelessness of the checkmate must be seen in the woman's eyes as she would survey her own heart: "If it doesn't make it for you, honey...don't think it will ever play with God." End of story.*

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## ANNA RUSSERT DAY

This year nine of the Latin students at Good Shepherd Lutheran School and Preschool in Lincoln, NE, had an opportunity to take the *Introduction to Latin* exam offered by the ACL/NJCL National Latin Exam. The NLE has levels of testing ranging from *Introduction to Latin* through *Latin VI*. According to the NLE, there were over 134,000 participants world wide who took tests NLE offered. All fifty states were represented in taking the exam. Countries such as

Australia, Canada, Italy, Switzerland, and Zimbabwe, to name a few, were represented.

*Within the state, there was only one student who received a perfect score on the Introduction to Latin test. This was from a FOURTH grade student at Good Shepherd, Anna Russert.*

Of the 134,000, there were 16,553 students who took the *Introduction to Latin* exam. Of those, 5,177 received an "outstanding" rating. These were students who missed five or less on the test. Of the "outstanding," there were 463 perfect tests. In the state of Nebraska, nine schools took the NLE. There was only one school in Nebraska which took the *Introduction to Latin* exam. Within the state, there was only one student who received a perfect score on the *Introduction to Latin* test. This was from a FOURTH grade student at Good Shepherd, Anna Russert.

Three other students (all sixth graders) from the school were included in the "outstanding" category. One of these students missed one question, and two students missed two questions. Good Shepherd had one student, a seventh grader, who received an "achievement" ranking. She was one of 4,198 world wide in this category.

Governor Heineman, who takes seriously the education of the children in the state of Nebraska, was present to assist in recognizing those students at Good Shepherd Lutheran School who placed on the National Latin Exam. In his address, Governor Heineman also spoke to the student body of the importance of education. In recognition of the perfect score, Anna received a special proclamation from the governor. Governor Heineman, named May 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2007, Anna Russert Day in the state of Nebraska.