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THE CLASSICAL EDUCATION QUARTERLY - A NEW KIND OF EDUCATIONAL JOURNAL

With this issue, we begin to the third year of publication for THE CLASSICAL EDUCATION QUARTERLY. The CEQ is a journal dedicated to providing a variety of helpful resources for Lutheran educators and parents who are labouring in the noble enterprise of nurturing and educating God's younger children. This issue features some outstanding articles intended to inform, equip, and perhaps also, inspire. Angela Hill provides a wonderful contribution from the *Western Civilization - Ancient and Medieval Department*. Her article provides an overview of the usually discounted writings of the history that arose in medieval Western Christendom - what she refers to as the "red-headed stepchild of history." She describes the content, tenor, and scope of the historical writings of Gregory of Tours (A. D. 538-594), the venerable Bede (A.D. 673-735), Einhard (A.D. 742-840), and Dino Compagni (A.D. 1260-1324). Her treatment challenges the reader to upgrade their consideration of these and other medieval historical writings on the basis not simply of the historical facts they catalogue, but also on the basis of the interpretive schemes that mold these facts according a Christian world-view and the major events of God's redemptive history.

Dr. E. Ross Betts provides a most timely article from the *Sciences Department* of the CEQ challenging the reader to think about recovering a more modest view of scientific inquiry and its findings. In addition, he makes a case for the return to a more wholistic view of scientific knowledge which would recover inquiries into the purpose of things, not simply how we can use them technologically for our own ends. He asserts that scientific knowledge became truncated and anemic when it laid aside metaphysics and reduced itself to a study of material and efficient causation. He calls for an integration of science and the humanities as well as connecting facts and values so an educated person can see things aright and make both informed and virtuous decisions.

And lastly, Rev. William C. Heine of the *Educational Philosophy Department* - the undisputed "father" of the recent classical education renaissance among American Lutheran schools - provides a tribute and perspective on those Lutheran educators and schools in Wyoming that he served for many years as

their district education executive. He offers helpful insight between grasping the theory of the classical education model, and the challenge of putting it into praxis daily with children in the classroom. These are great articles. Enjoy! sah

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'UNTRUSTWORTHY MONKISH FLAPDOODLE'¹

BY ANGELA HILL

The Middle Ages are the red-headed step-child of history. Compared to her illustrious sister of Antiquity, her innovative brother in the Renaissance or her reasonable sister of the Enlightenment, she is backward, awkward, and superstitious. Red-headed step-child she may be, even of questionable parentage; however, she made herself a servant to her siblings as she bore the brunt of the barbarian invasions and preserved the family treasures as best she could. This article is an attempt to understand the misfit a little better by examining some of her history.

1. Peter Brown, "What's in a Name?" (A talk given at the opening of Oxford Centre for Late Antiquity on Friday 28 September 2007)
p. 9. www.ocla.ox.ac.uk/pdf/brown_what_in_name.pdf.

Much of our classical curriculum is based on the Great Books. Of the eight or so medieval works that usually make "the list," none of them are histories. The most commonly known types of medieval writings are theological treatises, for example, Thomas Aquinas, or romances, Chrétien de Troyes' Arthurian legends, for instance. But we have at least 25 histories and chronicles that date between A.D. 500–1500. These works were often heavily based on the writings of a previous author so they are not considered to be primary sources the way the *Magna Carta* or some other public document would be. For many years these medieval histories were considered to be "untrustworthy monkish flapdoodle." However, experts in the classics such as C.S. Lewis, R.W. Southern, and Peter Brown would impel us to reexamine the value of these works.

For many years these medieval histories were considered to be "untrustworthy monkish flapdoodle."

C. S. Lewis, in *The Discarded Image*, provides a perceptive description of medieval man that will help us to understand better the following selected histories:

At his most characteristic, medieval man was not a dreamer nor a wanderer. He was an organiser, a codifier, a builder of systems. . . . Distinction, definition, tabulation were his delight. . . . There is nothing which medieval people liked better, or did better, than sorting out and tidying up.²

They are bookish. They are indeed very credulous of books. They find it hard to believe that anything an old *auctour* has said is simply untrue. And they inherit a very heterogeneous collection of books; Judaic, Pagan, Platonic, Aristotelian, Stoical, Primitive Christian, Patristic. . . . Obviously their *auctours* will contradict one another. They will seem to do so even more often if you ignore the distinction of kinds and take your science impartially from the poets and philosophers;

² C.S. Lewis, *The Discarded Image*, 9th ed. (Cambridge: University Press, 1964; Reprint, Cambridge: University Press, 2004), p. 10.

and this is what the medievals very often did in fact though they would have been well able to point out, in theory, that poets feigned. If, under these conditions, one has also a great reluctance flatly to disbelieve anything in a book, then here there is obviously both an urgent need and a glorious opportunity for sorting out and tidying up. All the apparent contradictions must be harmonized. . . .³

Lewis lists Thomas Aquinas' *Summa Theologica*, Dante's *Divine Comedy*, and even the medieval Model of the Universe as the supreme examples of medieval productivity. So we are to expect in these histories an interest in number and balance, as well as frequent references or borrowing from ancient texts.

I. Gregory of Tours (A. D. 538–594) ~ *History of the Franks*

Gregory became Bishop of Tours in A.D. 573 and served there until his death. Tours was not some backwater town. Tours was the home of Saint Martin, who would eventually become the patron saint of France and of soldiers. Roman roads and the Loire River made Tours accessible to many visitors, political and religious.

Gregory would have been in a powerful position. Thomas Cahill wrote in *How the Irish Saved Civilization* that bishops owned land and often had to carry out justice.⁴ Furthermore, as Christianity is a religion of the written Word, bishops (and monks) could read and write. (Benedictine monks were to read three hours a day in the summer and two hours a day in the winter.) Cahill wrote that with the fall of Roman order it was often up to the bishop to "civilize' the ruler, introduce to him diplomatically some elementary principles of justice and good government."⁵ As we read Gregory's *History*, we see that he finds himself in just such a situation.

Each book (chapter) of the *History* begins with a preface (although we seem to be missing the preface to the Fourth Book.) Gregory writes as if under protest (there is a classical precedent for this

³ Ibid., pp. 11- 12.

⁴ Thomas Cahill, *How the Irish Saved Civilization*, (London: Nan A. Talese/Doubleday; New York: Doubleday, 1995), p. 62.

⁵ Ibid.

modesty) and we will soon see that he is not completely inept in the art of rhetoric:

With liberal culture on the wane, or rather perishing in the Gallic cities, there were many deeds being done both good and evil: the heathen were raging fiercely; kings were growing more cruel; the church, attacked by heretics, was defended by Catholics; while the Christian faith was in general devoutly cherished, among some it was growing cold; the churches also were enriched by the faithful or plundered by traitors—and no grammarian skilled in the dialectic art could be found to describe these matters either in prose or in verse; and many lamenting and saying: "Woe to our day, since the pursuit of letters has perished from among us and no one can be found among the people who can set forth the deeds of the present on the written page." Hearing continually these complaints and others like them I (have undertaken) to commemorate the past, in order that it may come to be the knowledge of the future; and although my speech is rude, I have been unable to be silent as to the struggles between the wicked and the upright; and I have been especially encouraged because, to my surprise, it has often been said by men of our day, that few understand the learned words of the rhetorician but many the rude language of the common people.⁶

We get a sense from Gregory's first sentence of the chaos of his times. The liberal arts have always been connected to leisure, and the fighting of the Merovingian kings did not allow for the peacefulness needed for leisure. Kings were indeed "more cruel." Hardly a page goes by in the *History* where someone is not being boiled, strangled, stabbed, flogged or flayed. Nobody knew from one day to the next who would be in power. Instability was the norm. Gone were the days of the *Pax Romana*, the Roman senator, and the need for rhetoric.

For the medieval, Christianity is the framework upon which all else is nailed; Christ is the one thing in this world that remains

⁶. Gregory of Tours, *History of the Franks*, trans. Ernest Brehaut, (New York: Columbia University Press, 1969), p. 1.

constant, all else is fleeting.

Despite the continual bloodshed, Christianity, with its own battles against heresy, remained. For the medieval, Christianity is the framework upon which all else is nailed; Christ is the one thing in this world that remains constant, all else is fleeting. It is reasonable therefore for Gregory to begin his *History* with the Creation account in Genesis and finish with some talk of Judgement Day. His *History* includes important events of the Bible, the lives of the saints, occasionally the significant things done by various Roman Emperors. Gregory explains his rationale: "Following the order of time we shall mingle together in our tale the miraculous doings of the saints and the slaughters of the nations."⁷ That is, he is structuring his history according to the examples set for him by earlier historians, especially Eusebius, but also Severus, Jerome, and Osorius.⁸ Medieval historians authenticated their work by including all writings from previous authors.

At first glance Gregory's "mingling" of secular and sacred history appears to be written simply to show his reader the benefits of a Christian life and the dangers of a pagan one. We cannot deny that he would want his reader to be encouraged in the Christian faith by his *History*; however, Guy Halsall, history professor at the University of York, would have us believe that Gregory has a particular audience in mind.⁹ Gregory hopes to persuade the Merovingian kings to put an end to the strife. Halsall's conclusion is based on his meticulous study of Gregory's preface to Book Five.

Halsall suggests that the preface to Book Five, written in a more formal style, was probably written in the particularly violent year of 576 as an exhortation to the Merovingian aristocracy, including Merovech, son of King Chilperic. The *History* itself had ten books which places this preface directly in the middle of the work. (Remember C. S. Lewis's remarks about medieval organization?) Furthermore, the preface is written as a chiasmus! A chiasmus is a rhetorical device where "sections of text mirror each other around a crux, hence the name."¹⁰ Classical writers used the chiasmus but it seems more likely

⁷. Ibid., p. 21.

⁸. Ibid..

⁹. "Preface to Book V of Gregory of Tours' *History of the Franks*" <http://ehr.oxfordjournals.org/cgi/content/full/CXXII/496/297>.

¹⁰. Ibid.

that Gregory of it through his study of the Scriptures. Halsall points out that St. John begins his Gospel with a chiasmus, "In the beginning was was Word and the Word was with God and the Word was God; this was in the beginning with God." The very center of the phrase is the crux of that statement: "the Word was God."

Gregory's chiasmus is quite complex. Here Halsall has translated it from Latin and broken it into 17 sections:

1) It tires me to record the diverse civil wars which afflicted the people and kingdom of the Franks: what is worse we now see the beginning of that time of sorrows, which the Lord foretold.

2) 'Father rises up against son, son against father, brother against brother, kinsman against kinsman.' (Matthew 10:20)

3) The examples of earlier kings who, as soon as they were divided, were immediately killed by their enemies, should have deterred them.

4) As often as the city of cities and head of the whole world destroyed itself in civil wars, once these wars had ceased, it rose again, as if from the ground.

5) If only, O kings, you exercised yourself in those wars in which your relatives exerted themselves, so that peoples, terrified at your peace, should wonder at your might.

6) Remember what Clovis, the source of your victories did, who killed opposing kings, drove out enemy peoples, subjugated their lands, the rule of which he left to you, safe, sound, and in tact.

7) And when he did this he had neither gold nor silver such as there is now in your treasuries.

8) What are you doing? What do you seek? What do you not have in abundance?

9) In your houses luxuries are in superabundance; wine, wheat and oil abound in your storehouses; gold and silver are

heaped up in your treasuries.

10) You lack one thing, that, in not having peace, you are wanting in the grace of God.

11) Why does one man steal things that belong to another? Why does yet another covet things which aren't his?

12) Beware of that [saying] of the Apostle: If you bite and devour one another, take care lest you be consumed by each other.

13) Study old writings carefully and you will see what civil wars produce.

14) Look up what Orosius wrote about the Carthaginians; when he told of the overthrow of their city and territory after 700 years, he added: what served them so long? Concord. What destroyed them after so much time? Discord.

15) Beware of discord, beware of civil wars, which are wiping you and your people out.

16) What else can be expected, other than that, when your army has fallen, left without solace and overthrown by opposing peoples, you should immediately be ruined?

17) If civil war pleases you, O king, exercise that which the apostle reminds us acts within men, so that spirit should strive against flesh (Gal. 5:17), and vices fall before virtues, and that you, who formerly served the root of all evil (Timothy 6:10) in chains, should freely serve your chief, that is Christ.¹¹

If we read each section individually, we may recognize some of the rhetorical techniques we are trying to teach our students: enconium, epilexis, pathos, invective, etc. Then, if we study the chiasmus structure, we may see particular points emphasized. Halsall thoroughly discusses the chiasmus in his article but for our purposes, we simply need to recognize that Gregory's preface

¹¹. Ibid.

required no little rhetorical skill.¹² At the center Gregory's chiasmus, he tells the kings that their greed for more power indicates their lack of faith in God. Their lack of contentment will be their downfall and the downfall of their people. Halsall puts forth that when all of the prefaces are read together, they teach that the desire for earthly things is the cause of all trouble. Gregory longs for the Merovingian kings to resemble Clovis, who was the "ideal" king and succeeded because he followed God's Word. Critics have complained about Gregory's atrociously poor ability to write in Latin. If one considers the political upheaval of his day and the lack of resources available, we must conclude that Gregory is an impressive historian.

II. The Venerable Bede (A.D. 673–735)

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The History of the English Church and People

Christians around the world sing "A Hymn of Glory Let Us Sing"¹³ on Ascension Day. This beloved hymn was written by a scholarly monk from Jarrow, Northumbria, who would eventually be known as the "Father of English History." This monk, the "Venerable" Bede, presented his *History of the English Church and People* to King Ceowulf in 731 A.D. It is the history of the metamorphosis of Britain from a land of tribes with opposing interests into a nation with one faith in Jesus Christ. A few short years after he wrote his *History*, Bede passed from this life . . . on Ascension Day.

The History of the English Church and People is one of Bede's last works. He was better known in his day for his numerous commentaries on the books of the Bible and for his textbooks on grammar. He benefitted from the excellent library at the monastery of Jarrow. His abbot had traveled as far as Rome to gather books for his library; it is said to have had 300–500 codices.¹⁴ Bede's works reflect that he was familiar with at least some of the Latin and Greek Church Fathers: Augustine, Jerome's and Rufinus' translations of Eusebius' *Chronicle*, Ambrose, Gregory I, as well as John Chrysostom and Evagrius' translation

of Athanasius. Other important sources were Josephus, Gildas, Orosius, Isidore of Seville, Cassiodorus, Gregory of Tours, and Virgil.¹⁵

Bede's work was written in Latin. "It is well to remind oneself, moreover, in order properly to appraise the magnitude of Bede's achievement, that Latin was a foreign language to the people of England. Bede's mastery over Latin idiom, like the German Einhard's a century later, is the more outstanding."¹⁶ He saw Latin as a uniting factor for the Britons. Bede tells us that the people of Albion spoke British, Pictish, Scottish, and English. They may have come from different tribes "but all are united in their study of God's truth by the fifth (language)—Latin—which has become a common medium through the study of the scriptures."¹⁷ Unity in Christ is the major theme of Bede's *History*.

Bede is not content with an all-inclusive Christianity; he wants to follow the teachings of the Church of Rome, which he believes to be pure doctrine. The arrival of Arianism in Britain is greatly distressing to Bede: "The Christian churches in Britain continued to enjoy this peace until the time of the Arian heresy. This poisonous error after corrupting the whole world, at length crossed the sea and infected even this remote island; and, once the doorway has been opened, every sort of pestilential heresy at once poured into this island, whose people are ready to listen to anything novel, and never hold firm to anything."¹⁸ Bede continues in his next chapter with Pelagius: "In his [Arcadius'] time, the Briton Pelagius spread far and wide his noxious and abominable teaching that man had no need of God's grace, and in this he was supported by Julian of Campania. Saint Augustine and other orthodox fathers quoted many Catholic authorities against them, but they refused to abandon their folly. . . ."¹⁹

Sometimes in medieval works, miraculous signs and relics were symbolic of God's approval. Often they were

¹²11. Ibid.

¹³. Lutheran Service Book, Commission on Worship of the Lutheran Church Missouri Synod, (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 2006), p. 493.

¹⁴. Bede, *History of the English Church and People*, trans. Leo Sherley-Price, (London: Penguin Books, 1955; New York: Penguin, 1968) p. 38.

¹⁵. M.L.W. Laistner, "Bede as a Classical and a Patristic Scholar," *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society* 16 (1933): 69–93.

¹⁶16. Ibid., p. 71.

¹⁷. Bede, p. 38.

¹⁸. Bede, p. 48.

¹⁹. Ibid.

"evidence" of the personal sanctity of the men who did them.

Bede also discusses the differences of Celtic Christianity with Roman Christianity: the calculation of Easter, the correct wearing of the tonsure, the monastic vs. diocesan rule of the church.

The serious historian may flinch at the miracles Bede includes in his *History*. Translator Leo Sherley-Price reminds us in his introduction that Bede himself does not claim to have seen the wondrous events, he is merely relaying information from what he considers to be reliable sources.²⁰ Sometimes in medieval works, miraculous signs and relics were symbolic of God's approval.²¹ Often they were "evidence" of the personal sanctity of the men who did them. Sherley-Price reminds us: "It is an indication of the temper of the age in which we live that some who profess and call themselves Christians have so little faith in the reality of God's power and mercy that they regard an unmistakable answer to prayer as something unlooked for and extraordinary, almost indecent. It was otherwise among the Christians of Bede's day."²²

What is more interesting than the accounts of healings, holy apparitions, and the like, is a letter written by Pope Gregory I to the missionary Augustine about the miracles he has done. He writes:

My very dear brother, I hear that Almighty God has worked great wonders through you for the nation which he has chosen. Therefore let your feeling be one of fearful joy at God's heavenly gifts—joy that the souls of the English are being drawn through outward miracles to inward grace; fear lest the frail mind becomes proud because of these wonderful events. . . . For God's chosen do not all work miracles, yet the names of all are written in heaven. For those who are disciples of the truth should rejoice only in that good thing which they share with all men, and which they shall enjoy forever.²³

Miracles are all well and good but such "good

²⁰ Ibid., p. 31.

²¹ R. W. Southern, "Aspects of the European Tradition of Historical Writing: 1. The Classical Tradition from Einhard to Geoffrey of Monmouth," *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society*, 5th ser., 20 (1970), p. 191.

²² Bede, p. 31.

²³ Bede, p. 88.

works" or examples of piety are not the focus of Christianity. Rather, Gregory I wants Christians to be looking forward to their eternal life in heaven.

Bede's *History* is written for the moral edification of his reader. Here is his introduction:

For if history records good things of good men, the thoughtful hearer is encouraged to imitate what is good: or if it records evil of wicked men, the devout, religious listener or reader is encouraged to avoid all that is sinful and perverse and to follow what he knows to be good and pleasing to God. Your Majesty is well aware of this; and since you feel so deeply responsible for the general good of those over whom divine Providence has set you, you wish that this history may be made better known both to yourself and to your people.²⁴

C. S. Lewis and R. W. Southern both point out that the purpose of medieval histories was not to provide a blow-by-blow account of events. Annals did that quite faithfully. Rather, histories were stories. Lewis points out that the word "history" and "story" meant the same thing as late as Queen Elizabeth's time.²⁵ "It follows that the distinction between history and fiction cannot, in its modern clarity, be applied to medieval books or to the spirit in which they were read."²⁶ These stories, whether true or not, were for enjoyment, entertainment. They were also to serve as examples, in Bede's case, usually of piety, to encourage the reader. Furthermore, they were to honor the memory of the great deeds done by great men.²⁷

Secondly, Bede designed a new method of dating historical events. He decided to date everything in relation to the Incarnation of Jesus Christ.

Bede does a couple of things that reassure his readers of the authenticity of his facts. First of all, he takes great pains to list all of his sources,

²⁴ Bede, *A History of the English Church and People*, p. 33.

²⁵ Lewis, *The Discarded Image*, p. 179.

²⁶ Ibid.

²⁷ Ibid., p. 177.

especially noting the expertise of Abbot Albinus, Archbishop Theodore, Abbot Hadrian, and Nothelm.²⁸ He begs forgiveness for any inaccuracies and reminds his reader that "as the laws of history require, I have laboured honestly to transmit whatever I could ascertain from common report for the instruction of posterity."²⁹ Secondly, Bede designed a new method of dating historical events. He decided to date everything in relation to the Incarnation of Jesus Christ.³⁰ Bede got this idea from the work of Dionysius Exiguus, whose method of calculating the church calendar was accepted at the Synod of Whitby in Britain in A.D. 664. Bede's B.C. and A.D. dating system finally caught on in Europe in the 11th century.

Historian of Late Antiquity, Peter Brown, calls Bede "an evergreen."³¹ One simply cannot be a serious student of English history without reading his *History of the English Church and People*.

III. Einhard (A.D. 742–840) ~ *Life of Charlemagne*

Einhard's *Vita Caroli*, probably written between A.D. 829 and A.D. 836, is a significant history for two reasons. First of all, it is the biography of Charlemagne, the first Holy Roman Emperor, crowned in A.D. 800. Second, Einhard's work is an example of the achievements Charlemagne's mini-renaissance.

Charlemagne, a Christian Frank, brought much of Germany and France under his own rule. His ability to provide relative peace and stability to the land allowed scholarship some of the leisure-time it needed to flourish. He drew scholars such as Alcuin to his court in Aachen. Einhard discusses Charlemagne's interest in learning:

He paid the greatest attention to the liberal arts; and he had great respect for the men who taught them, bestowing high honors upon them. When he was learning the rules of grammar he received tuition from Peter the Deacon of Pisa, who was by then an old man, but for all other subjects he was taught by Alcuin, surnamed Albinus, another Deacon, a man of the Saxon race who came from Britain and was the most learned man anywhere to be found. Under him the Emperor spent much time

and effort in studying rhetoric, dialectic and especially astrology. . . . He also tried to learn to write. With this object in view he used to keep writing-tablets and notebooks under the pillows on his bed, so that he could try his hand at forming letters during his leisure moments; but, although he tried very hard, he had begun too late in life and he made little progress.³²

It is easy to snicker at Charlemagne hoping for some sort of academic osmosis; however, Einhard tells us that Charlemagne could speak Latin and understand Greek.³³ Charlemagne also tried to apply his knowledge of grammar to his own language.³⁴ Charlemagne never became a proficient reader but he often had works read to him during meals. Augustine's *City of God* was one of Charlemagne's favorites.³⁵

From the time of Cassiodorus in the early 6th century, monasteries had been the repositories for Latin and Greek classics. Monks diligently copied and preserved whatever works they could. Copying the ancient works was difficult because of the style of handwriting, the running together of words, or the lack of understanding on the part of the monks. During the Carolingian Renaissance, some improvements were made. Monks began using lower and upper case letters and putting spaces between the words. As Latin was "restored as a literary language,"³⁶ corrections were made to some texts. "The debt of literature to the Carolingian copying-schools may be best brought home to us by a very simple consideration. If we set aside Catullus, Tibullus, Propertius and Silius Italicus, together with the tragedies of Seneca and parts of Statius and Claudian, we owe the preservation of practically the whole of Latin poetry to the schools at the time of Charlemagne. These same scholars preserved to us, except for Varro, Tacitus and Apuleius, practically the whole of the prose literature of Rome."³⁷

Charlemagne never became a proficient reader but he often

³². Einhard and Notker the Stammerer, *Two Lives of Charlemagne*, trans. Lewis Thorpe, (London: Penguin Books, 1969; New York: Penguin Books, 1988), p. 79.

³³. Ibid.

³⁴. Ibid., p. 82.

³⁵. Ibid., p. 78.

³⁶. Ibid., p. 11.

³⁷. Ibid.

²⁸. Bede, pp. 33-35.

²⁹. Ibid., p. 35.

³⁰. Note that he did not date things from the *birth* of Christ but from the *Incarnation*, meaning at conception.

³¹. Brown, p. 10.

had works read to him during meals. Augustine's City of God was one of Charlemagne's favorites

Einhard's biography of Charlemagne is one of the products of the Carolingian Renaissance. We now turn to R. W. Southern's expertise for some insights on historians of this age. Southern explains that histories gave medievals an opportunity to apply their rhetorical skills. We recall that rhetoric is the highest level of the trivium but that it had no practical use in medieval life. The most common histories available at Einhard's time would have given medieval scholars license to see history as literature, and therefore, an art. And, interestingly enough, the *Poetics* of Aristotle were not recovered until the 13th century, and so the medievals did not know that he would not have approved of their approach to history.

Southern explains Aristotle's position: history is too messy to be an art. It "lacks form because the events of history have no dramatic unity."³⁸ Furthermore, history cannot have balance because events happen without a clear "beginning, middle, and end." This haphazard quality of history is also problematic in that it cannot present one "universal truth." Perhaps the medievals would not have been daunted by Aristotle as their Christian worldview certainly provided any necessary universal truth and unity.

According to Southern, there were five main authors that would have influenced Einhard: Sallust, Suetonius, Virgil, Lucan, and Boethius.³⁹ The main ideas taken from these histories were:

- 1) The subject matter of history deserved the exalted language and balance required by rhetoric.
- 2) Histories provide the "big picture" of what transpired. They are not the place for lists of facts. A little elaboration here and there made the story more interesting.
- 3) Many authors imitated Virgil's idea

³⁸. Southern, pp. 175–176. All quotations from this paragraph

³⁹. Southern, p. 177. I will lean heavily on Southern for this section as his expertise is incomparable.

of the "destiny of a nation."⁴⁰ If one could prove that his nation descended from Troy, that would help establish the right of that people to rule over others. How else does one transform murdering marauders into noble leaders?

One final point of interest that Southern discusses is the medieval approach to historical causation. Although they had Sallust (86–34 B.C.) as an example, medievals did not imitate his interest in finding a cause for events. For medievals, all was in God's hands. He punished wicked rulers and blessed faithful ones.⁴¹ C. S. Lewis agrees with Southern. Medieval man understood the world in terms of "Creation, Fall, Redemption, and Judgement."⁴² It is this understanding that gives medieval histories their unity and balance. Furthermore, having seen the fall of the great Roman Empire and living with the remnants of it, the medievals kept very much in mind that this world is fleeting. The allegory of Lady Fortune, well-developed in Boethius's *Consolation of Philosophy*, illustrated how a person could have every earthly good one day and lose it all the next. Better to keep your eyes on eternal things. Such was the medieval view of historical causality.

Medieval man understood the world in terms of "Creation, Fall, Redemption, and Judgement." It is this understanding that gives medieval histories their unity and balance.

Einhard is often criticized for borrowing so heavily from Suetonius' (A.D. 75–160) *Live's of the Caesars*. If a reader approaches his *The Life of Charlemagne* as Southern recommends, he will find a rich, elaborate, and enjoyable history.

IV. Dino Compagni (A.D 1260–1324) ~ *Chronicle of Florence*⁴³

⁴⁰. Southern, p.188.

⁴¹. Southern, p. 180.

⁴². C.S. Lewis, p. 174.

⁴³. There is not much information about Compagni available in English so please bear with my personal observations.

Finally, I have chosen to recommend this last lesser-known history primarily because it is so well written and engaging, often fulfilling Southern's artistic requirements of history. Compagni's descriptions of events are realistic, his use of rhetoric is appropriate and effective, and his work is balanced. His reader cannot help but feel grieved by the atrocities committed during the power struggles of Compagni's day.

Dino Compagni was a contemporary of Dante and Giotto in the very turbulent 13th and 14th century Florence. He was a devout Christian silk-merchant who held a variety of public offices through the years. Compagni's love for his city and his love for justice finally moved him to write about the violence he witnessed. Unlike the previously discussed historians, Compagni was not a monk or court scholar but he was obviously educated. Florence at this time was wealthy enough for a good number of its population of 100,000 to attend school. Compagni's fellow historian, Giovanni Villani wrote that about 10,000 boys and girls were learning to read and write in his day.⁴⁴ It is interesting to note that Compagni wrote this work in the vernacular, like Dante.

Compagni's *Chronicle* brilliantly tells of the clashes of the Guelfs and the Ghibellines, beginning with the murder of Buondelmonte de Buondelmonti in 1215 and finishing in 1312. If the reader is unfamiliar with the history of Florence, all of the names of the various factions may be overwhelming; just read the work and analyze it later. Eventually Chapters 21 and 22 in Book II make everything clear. Finally, toward the end of the history, in 1309, Compagni has great hope for peace because Henry, count of Luxembourg, was anointed Holy Roman Emperor. There had been no Holy Roman Emperor for nearly 60 years! Compagni's work ends in 1312 with Henry about to set upon Florence. Unfortunately, Henry withdrew and died a year later, leaving Compagni out of political favor and his work unknown for about 300 years.⁴⁵

Conclusion

C. S. Lewis's character Eustace from *The Voyage of the Dawn Treader* is a great caricature of our modern society's fascination with facts and science. While Lucy and Edmond knew the reality of dragons, Eustace "liked books if they were books of information and had pictures of grain elevators or of fat foreign

children doing exercises in model schools."⁴⁶ We are much too clever to believe in fairy tales or "untrustworthy monkish flapdoodle."

In Peter Brown's speech at the opening of the Oxford Centre for Late Antiquity, he reminded his audience of a time when historians only looked at public records and annals of the medievals because they wanted the cold hard facts. Histories and chronicles "were the work of monkish chroniclers, whose tendency to exaggeration, whose moral bias and whose pervasive Catholic ideology made them as distasteful as they were unreliable." The refusal to read the works created "a Philistinism which had to be heard to be believed. And hear it I did. I heard a leading College Fellow in medieval history announce, with relief, that: 'Now that we have got rid of Dante, I can get down to Henry III and the Barons.'" Brown recalls that it was R. W. Southern who took the lead in teaching scholars that "literary texts awash with cultural meaning might serve as guides to the past quite as much as did the archives of the Public Record Office. . . ."⁴⁷

History's red-headed step-child will never turn into Cinderella. Lady Fortune will not provide her with a Prince Charming. Rather she will wear the hair shirt and remember that there once was a better time and she will hope for the future.

(ANGELA HILL OF CASPER, WYOMING, IS A VETERAN HOME SCHOOL EDUCATOR WHO HAS FOLLOWED THE CLASSICAL, LUTHERAN MODEL WITH GREAT FACILITY. SHE ALSO SERVES AS AN EDITOR OF THE CEQ.)

⁴⁴. Compagni, p. 5.

⁴⁵. Compagni, p. xxvii.

⁴⁶. C. S. Lewis, *Voyage of the Dawn Treader*, (New York: Harper Collins, 1994), p. 2.

⁴⁷. Peter Brown, "What's in a Name?" (A talk given at the opening of Oxford Centre for Late Antiquity on Friday 28 September 2007) p. 8. All of the quotes from this paragraph come from Brown's address.

... ABOUT CCLE

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

ITS VISION IS TO ADVANCE AND PROMOTE CLASSICAL EDUCATION WITHIN THE CONTEXT OF CONFESSIONAL LUTHERANISM AMONG LUTHERAN TEACHERS, ADMINISTRATORS, PASTORS, AND HOME EDUCATORS BY PROVIDING STANDARDS, CONFERENCES, PROFESSIONAL GROWTH OPPORTUNITIES, RESOURCE MATERIALS, AND CONSULTING SERVICES.

TOWARDS A MORE HUMBLE SCIENCE

BY DR. C. ROSS BETTS

We will restore science to its rightful place, and wield technology's wonders to raise health care's quality and lower its cost. We will harness the sun and the winds and the soil to fuel our cars and run our factories. And we will transform our schools and colleges and universities to meet the demands of a new age. Barack Obama

The proper role of science in public life is of considerable concern to both progressives and traditionalists. Many progressives, perhaps like our new president, are reluctant to concede that there are roles for philosophy, morality, ethics, or religion in shaping a public policy where science plays a role. The implications of this are important for our public life and for how we order education.

Progressive politicians grew up with progressive education. Their understanding of public life, one where science is free to dictate its own terms, springs from a mistaken understanding of the place of science in a proper education. The progressive school system elevates the language of science to the exclusive language of public life while all else, the humanities, philosophy, ethics, morals, are consigned more or less to the subjective realm. Classical education must reject this ordering of public life and of educational priority. We must teach a more humble science, one mindful of science's limits and its potential for dehumanization.

The progressive school system elevates the language of science to the exclusive language of public life while all else, the humanities, philosophy, ethics, morals, are consigned more or less to the subjective realm.

In public life, the regard for science embraced by progressives can lead to dehumanizing public policy. Yuval Levin makes this point especially well in reviewing a book by Diana Degette, a progressive congresswoman from Colorado. Degette is an ardent feminist and devoted especially to the promotion of embryonic cell research. She claims that the rationale behind any public policy that touches science, regardless of the issue, be it abstinence education or stem cell research, needs to be "science-based." Levin notes, "DeGette, however, can see no way to permit other kinds of views—philosophical, ethical, moral, traditional, or religious—to influence any policy issue in which science plays a role." Any objection to science in matters of this sort is "religious" and, therefore, personal and irrelevant to public life.

Likewise, Jerome Groopman, a Harvard physician-scientist chided Leon Kass and The President's Council on Bioethics for studying Hawthorne's short story *The Birthmark* in their first meeting regarding biomedical ethics. "Using literature to warn against the scientific search for perfection is a hallmark of Kass's approach to bioethics (Hawthorne, Homer, and Huxley are among his touchstones)." Homer has no relevance here? Groopman intones in closing that we should hope for "medical guidelines that are based on fact, not on literature or aesthetics—one that distinguishes real science from science fiction." There is no role for the humanities in ordering public life, as regards science, in Groopman's mind.

The progressive view of science, whether it is diminishing the ontological status of an embryo or the personal agency

of a student, leads to dehumanization.

This view of science impoverishes not only our public discourse, as Degette and Groopman illustrate, but it affects even our ideas of what it is to be a human person. A recent article in *Nature*, written by educators, proposed criteria by which educators might regulate and promote their students' use of cognitive-enhancing drugs. Buried within the article is an assumption that there is no such thing as human agency, action which proceeds from the human as a human. People are what they are and do what they do according to their genetics and environmental conditions, not by what might spring from their souls as acting persons. For these educators, there is no such thing as motivation which springs from the human soul itself, so for them promoting self initiative and hard work are morally equivalent means to improving a child's performance as Adderall and Ritalin might be. The progressive view of science, whether it is diminishing the ontological status of an embryo or the personal agency of a student, leads to dehumanization.

Classical educators come from a richer milieu than progressives. This type of dichotomy of the sciences and the humanities will not stand for us. Classical education understands that there are timeless and objective elements of ethics and virtue, that the beautiful in art and literature is not simply a matter of convention, that the integrity of philosophy and metaphysics still holds, and that there is the possibility of a reasoned faith. These are all features of classical education that are at odds with the scientific materialism which informs much of our public life. To assert this program, we must teach a more humble science, one consistent with classical ends for education.

The sources for a more humble science come from a consideration of the philosophical roots of science, as well as the limits science has itself discovered, especially those from the twentieth century.

Philip Overby notes, "The original defense of natural science, by men like Descartes and Spinoza, was not so much a refutation as a quiet beheading of preceding philosophies. That is, modern science refutes metaphysical questions not by addressing them but by ignoring them." The philosophical progenitors

of science began specifically by laying aside metaphysics. This was in part a revolt against Aristotle and his comprehensive influence over the medieval period, but it was also a commitment that by putting away these considerations, knowledge more useful to the relief of man's estate might be developed. They limited their consideration of the world to matter (material causes) and tangible things acting on matter (efficient causes).

. . . modern science refutes metaphysical questions not by addressing them but by ignoring them.

While it is true that considering the world only from the standpoint of material and efficient causes has been successful technologically, there have been losses along the way. In the modern world, we cannot talk about purposes in nature. Considerations of purpose are now completely outside of the bounds of science. Much of the resistance to Intelligent Design theory comes from the idea that purpose itself is an idea antithetical to science. The idea of the existence of human nature at all is a casualty of this mind-set as well.

Much of the resistance to Intelligent Design theory comes from the idea that purpose itself is an idea antithetical to science.

We are also hampered in our exploration of origins. John Lennox notes that given the assumptions of modern science regarding the nature of causation, something like evolution was bound to be accepted as an explanation of our origins. In a perspective where material and efficient causation is all that exists, there was no other possible conclusion. The exclusion of purpose from biology invites evolution as an explanation and makes it the only possible solution to the question of our origin.

Colin Gunton points out that one of the effects of modern philosophy, which has grown up with and in response to modern science, has been to alienate modern people from the creation that they inhabit. Idealistic philosophy, such as that of Kant, radically separates the subjective from the objective.

The moral and natural are separated as well. An extended quote is illustrative:

"Kant's view of the mind's assertive activity generates what can only be called a technocratic attitude to the world around us, encouraging attitudes of dominance and disparaging receptivity. Despite the astonishing success of modern science in understanding the world...there is at another level a serious crisis in human life. The personal and physical universes we inhabit have been so divorced that the morality we should adopt to our world is a matter of scandal and confusion. Understanding is so divorced from questions of our being and that of the world that we see a mindless rape of nature in the interests of short-term human gain. This divorce of the natural and the moral universe is perhaps the worst legacy of the Enlightenment, and the most urgent challenge facing modern humankind."

Consideration of the shortcomings of the philosophy that informs modern science is one way to encourage a more humble science. The results that modern philosophy and science have given us are not unalloyed goods. The alienation that Gunton describes is real. Humility in the application of science is a necessity for our humanity's sake. There are also developments in modern physics and mathematics themselves that engender more humility in science.

In the early part of the nineteenth century, the great physicist Laplace proposed a paradigm for physics. According to him, if there was a sufficient intelligence that could conceive of and simultaneously measure the velocities and positions of all particles in the universe, then that intelligence could understand not only the present state of things but all of history and the future. Laplace conceived a way that the entire universe might be understood. This might be a grand project for physics to explain the universe in terms of mechanical causes. Not just physics, but chemistry and biology would be explainable in mathematical and physical terms.

Idealistic philosophy, such as that of Kant, radically separates the subjective from the objective. The moral and natural are separated as well.

Twentieth century physics has refuted this hope. The Heisenberg uncertainty principle states that the simultaneous knowledge of the exact position and velocity of any particle is not possible. This principle comes out of experimental science but has vast implications for the mechanistic of scientific explanation of the universe. This principle is not simply an *epistemological truth*, a reflection of how much we may know, but it is an *ontological truth*, a statement of how things are in the universe. A type of freedom or contingency is built into the cosmos that escapes mechanistic certainty. While much of the certainty we observe comes back to us through statistics, the iron lock of mechanistic physics is broken. A more humble notion of know-ability, and thus technical control, is encouraged.

Another source of scientific humility comes from mathematics. In the early part of the twentieth century Russell and Whitehead published the *Principia Mathematica*. This work attempts to reduce all mathematics and mathematical truths into a well-defined set of axioms and inference rules in symbolic logic. For our purposes it represents a type of reductionism akin to the type that Laplace might have envisioned. Mathematics, according to Lennox, "might be reduced to a set of written marks that could be manipulated according to prescribed rules without any attention being paid to the applications that would give 'significance' to those marks." This was the so called *Entscheidungsproblem*. Solving this problem positively would have great implications for scientific reductionism generally.

In 1931, the Austrian mathematician Kurt Gödel published a paper entitled "On the Formally Undecidable Propositions of Principia Mathematica and Related Systems." This paper and a subsequent one established Gödel's First and Second Incompleteness Theorems. Gödel actually proved that a positive solution to the *Entscheidungsproblem* was impossible. He "demonstrated that the arithmetic with which we are all familiar is incomplete: that is, in any system that has a finite set of axioms and rules of inference and which is large enough to contain ordinary arithmetic, there are always true statements of the system that cannot be proved on the basis of that set of axioms and those rules of inference." In a sense, in any mathematical system, some elements need to be assumed, taken by faith. As Lennox points out, "...mathematics is the only religion that can prove

that it is a religion!" This is a great blow to scientific reductionism coming out of science itself.

There are sources for humility in science gained from a consideration of the philosophical roots and shortcomings of modern science to deal with matters of purpose. Further, modern philosophy which attempts to account for modern science has alienating qualities that fail to promote wholeness in life, and this should cause us to question the comprehensiveness of scientific claims. Also, modern science has uncovered shortcomings that limit the mechanistic aspirations of science and the reductionist tendencies of science.

The program to teach a more humble science must itself begin humbly. When we teach physics, we must explain in a rudimentary way what philosophical assumptions are behind science.

Transferring these insights to the pedagogical realm will be difficult. The present ascendancy of the progressive movement in the United States politically attests to the durability of that notion in modern life. Technology and progress are difficult to disparage since our lives are organized so thoroughly around them both. The program to teach a more humble science must itself begin humbly. When we teach physics, we must explain in a rudimentary way what philosophical assumptions are behind science. We must point out also, at the appropriate time in a child's education, the shortcomings of science in explaining human life and in ordering our public life.

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(DR. BETTS PRACTICES MEDICINE IN GIBSONIA, PA AND SERVES ON THE QUARTERLY'S EDITORIAL BOARD)

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CLASSICAL EDUCATION: THEORY AND PRAXIS

BY REV. WILLIAM C. HEINE

How timely for me is the theme of this summer's CCLE conference, *Classical Education: Theory and Praxis*. For eight years, as the LCMS Wyoming District Education Chairman, I promoted the theory of Classical Education to congregations, school boards, and teachers. Though I might claim some success in that all of the Wyoming Lutheran schools beyond preschool adopted the classical approach, the real success belongs to those who put the theory into practice. Teachers, school boards, and parents who embraced the theory and worked hard to make it a reality for their children are the real

heroes. I know this now that my role has changed from promoter to practitioner. No longer in Wyoming, I now teach theology at Saint Paul Lutheran High School in Concordia, Missouri.

For years as a promoter, I explained the history, the nature and the promise of Classical Education. I held forth my belief that classical, Lutheran education would better prepare our students to know, understand, and defend the faith in a hostile world. I sought to contrast Classical Education with contemporary educational theories that are built on faulty educational and false theological presuppositions. Primarily, I wanted people to know that Classical Education has been a significant part of our own Lutheran heritage—a part worth restoring in our present-day schools.

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When it came to praxis, however, my offerings were far less specific. It took the dedicated teachers of the Wyoming District to bridge the gap between theory and praxis. With uncommon commitment, they developed classical curriculum guides, created classical reading lists, promoted excellence among their students, and convinced parents, parishioners, and even pastors to embrace and support Classical Education. It was my privilege for eight years to observe some of the best classical, Lutheran educators in action at Riverton, Sheridan, Cheyenne, and Casper, Wyoming. These and other teachers, headmasters, and homeschool parents are the real experts on classical praxis. Their classrooms are admirable and their results are amazing! But, as I have discovered, to follow in their footsteps is just plain hard work!

That brings me to my personal journey from theorist to practitioner. I will focus on one of the several classes I teach at Saint Paul Lutheran High School called *Applied Doctrine*. The title of this class—unlike *Bible History*, *Systematics* or *Church History*—does not immediately suggest its content. In past years this class covered teen troubles with sex, pornography, dating, relationships, competition, violence, cheating, profanity, abortion, suicide, media,

video games, self-image, eating disorders, and, of course, the environment. As interesting and relevant as these topics might be to teens, the course seemed like little more than a primer on sin, which no son of Adam really needs. Instead, I wanted the class to help them think like men and women not behave like teenagers.

Hoping to steer the course in a more classical direction, I aimed at getting the students to read, think, and write, rather than merely listen, feel, and opine. So, I began with several apologetic challenges. We asked and sought answers to questions like: “How can we know that God exists,” “How can we defend the resurrection of Christ,” and “Can we be certain of the Bible’s inerrancy?” Though I had to carefully survey websites in advance, the internet became our primary source for answering such questions. I directed students to read and respond in writing to articles, papers, and entire books online.

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It was the student responses that made me realize the need to introduce both logic and rhetoric into the class. This I chose to do while the class read an online book, which we used to study statement types and logical fallacies, euphemisms and propaganda, pluralism and political correctness, Bill Jack’s “killer questions” and how to weigh evidence. In addition, the students learned and practiced the “S.T.E.P.S” approach to rhetoric, a system for thinking, writing, and speaking persuasively promoted by Dr. Jeff Myers of Bryan College in Tennessee.

We next spent a quarter on worldview studies. Drawing heavily from David A. Noebel’s *Understanding the Times* and reading authentic documentation online, the students examined the propositions and presupposition of Secular Humanism, Cosmic Humanism, Marxism, and Biblical Christianity. Additionally, we discussed and debated such topics as creationism, atheism, theodicy,

homosexuality, abortion and euthanasia within the context of the worldviews that promote them. We will end the year reading some articles and books by C.S. Lewis and with the Christian allegory, *The Pilgrim's Progress*, which none of them has previously read.

Even if you have never studied philosophy or logic or debate, keeping in mind the student goals of knowledge, understanding, and persuasive defense will add classical dimensions to any course.

Now, I know that classical purists could find grave deficiencies in my approach to this class—I have much to learn about classical praxis. However, I share my story not as a model to be copied but as an encouragement for others to boldly apply the theory in their classrooms. Even if you are familiar only with the Trivium, planning a course and class sessions with “grammar, dialectic, and rhetoric” in mind is an approach vastly superior to the progressive “objectives, methods, and materials” framework. Even if you have never studied philosophy or logic or debate, keeping in mind the student goals of knowledge, understanding, and persuasive defense will add classical dimensions to any course. Even if you have never read the great store of western classical literature, requiring students to read even a single classic is a move in the right direction.

I am excited about the topic chosen for this summer’s Conference on Classical and Lutheran Education. I know it will help me bridge the gap between the theory and praxis of Classical Education. I am sure it will do the same for you.

(REV. HEINE SERVES AS DEAN OF CHAPEL AT ST. PAUL LUTHERAN HIGH SCHOOL, CONCORDIA, MO. HE ALSO SERVES ON THE CCLE BOARD OF DIRECTORS AND THE CEQ EDITORIAL BOARD)

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