

# The Christian Educator's Application of the Scriptural Terms for Knowledge, Teaching, and Learning

By Theodore J. Hartwig

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Knowledge, teaching, learning. These terms have significance wherever people are concerned for education. Intelligently conceived, educating should not happen without thought for its goal and for the means to achieve the goal. The goal is knowledge, the means are teaching and learning. With these generalities we can readily agree. But let the terms be defined more specifically and differing schools of opinion will quickly come to the surface. Yes, education's goal is knowledge, but what *is* knowledge, why seek it, and what are its consequences? Moreover, how is it transmitted and how is it acquired? Answer: this happens through teaching and learning. But what kind of teaching? And when is teaching worthy of the name, and when not? And what is learning? How does it happen, what is the best way to achieve it? If questions of this kind are raised, a diversity of ideas, opinions, and convictions comes to view.

This diversity poses a challenge for anyone interested in education. It poses a special challenge for Christian educators; how shall *they* respond to the diversity? The easy way is that of complacency: refusing to be concerned for current debates over knowledge, teaching, and learning as if such debates, initiated in the world, have no great relevance for Christian education. The other way for the Christian teacher, and the right way, is to hear out what the world is saying about knowledge, teaching, and learning, not being satisfied with superficial examination of the issues but getting the information firsthand. Thus equipped, the Christian educator is in a position to put his high calling into practice: through study and discussion to sift the various ideas regarding knowledge, teaching, and learning, to select what may be useful and to discard what is vain, worthless, or downright dangerous, and by this winnowing process to keep himself and his educational tasks, theories, and practices fresh, meaningful, stimulating, and sound.

This is one part of our responsibility as Christian educators. Next to this and outranking it is another responsibility that sets us apart even more radically as Christian educators. It is this: that we return to the sources, that we examine the norms and standards which shape those attitudes and judgments we count as Christians. In the present case, returning to the sources calls for an examination of the terms for knowledge, teaching, and learning as these terms are employed in the Bible in order to discover how Scripture uses the terms and in order to understand what Scripture means when it speaks of knowledge, what Scripture means when it speaks of teaching, what Scripture means when it speaks of learning. Having done this, we may perhaps see more clearly whatever contrasts exist between the Scriptural and the secular use of these terms. We may also gain new insights or better insights regarding the implications which these terms have for our goals and methodologies as Christian educators.

While Scripture employs various terms with various shades of meaning for each of the words to be considered, we may limit our study to the few terms used most frequently. Our word *knowledge* derives from a Greek word with a roughly similar pronunciation. Having a Greek origin, this word from the beginning developed a connotation which the Greeks gave it and which has persisted in Western thought to our times. In the Greek view, "knowing" and "knowledge" have to do with the mind and the faculty of seeing. Knowing and seeing, whether with the eye or the mind, were equated with each other. Thus, among the Greeks the word for "seeing" could easily substitute for "knowing," and this way of thinking has persisted in our language also. "I see" is often the equivalent of "I know." In the Greek view, furthermore, true knowing or knowledge required personal experience. To be truly known, a thing must be experienced either by seeing, or by investigating, or by reflecting. In every case, the mind was active and contributed an essential part. To catch the distinctively Greek view, "knowledge" in contrast to "opinion" required that one *know* a thing as it really is, i.e. in its underlying substance which makes it what it is. In the classical Greek thought that came to maturity 400 years before

Christ, you will never really know what beauty is from looking at merely beautiful things. Visual perception of beautiful things will give you only will-o-the-wisp fantasies and dreams. But if you desire really to *know* beauty, you must enjoy the Beautiful for itself, and this requires that you turn your eyes inward and rely on your mind. The Greeks were consistent in applying similar rules for coming to a knowledge of God. In Greek thought, to know God is to know what God *is*. Existing beyond this world of our senses, God lies at the ground of this world's existence and is known and grasped in the mind's eye through contemplation of the world. According to the Greek view *knowledge is a capacity of the mind*.

When we look at the Scriptural use of this term inherited from the Greeks, we meet it in its form as “knowing” or “knowledge” both in the New Testament and in the Greek translation of the Old Testament. The Old Testament Hebrew term, by contrast, is different, and we have no similarly sounding word in our English vocabulary. The Old Testament term occurs in a variety of contexts and, as with the Greek term, it often means a knowledge gained by experience. In this sense we should understand how it was that the new king in Egypt did not *know* Joseph (Exodus 1:8). He probably knew Joseph from the written records (The Egyptians excelled at record keeping, particularly of past rulers), but it was not the knowledge of experience appreciated by this king's predecessors and previous generations in Egypt who had *known* and acknowledged Joseph and Joseph's God as saviors of Egypt.

The Old Testament sense of “knowing” is further exhibited in the word spoken by the Lord through Jeremiah (16:21): “Behold, I will this once cause thee to know, and I will cause thee to know my hand and my might, and they shall know that my name is the Lord.” Each time the word is used here, it pertains to a knowing gained from experience.

More important to our purpose is the nature of that experience: how does it happen? Here a significant difference comes to light. Among the Greeks, knowledge depended chiefly on seeing with the eye and with the mind. Among the Hebrews, however, knowledge depended primarily on hearing. Another point: Among the Greeks, “to know” was to possess or understand a thing as it is, in its permanent, unchangeable substance or form (for example, if one can discover and grasp what is the basic substance of the world—be it water, or air, or number, or atom, or whatever—then one can know the world), but among the Hebrews knowledge was based on events, on that which occurred in time. Thus, a knowledge of God concerned itself less with the unchangeable Being God is and more with God's claims, God's activities, God's power, God's grace, God's demands. Knowledge was less the possession of information; it was more the recognition of God's acts, the carrying out of His will, the recognition and conviction that the Lord He is God. Of this knowledge the Lord speaks, for example, through Moses (Deuteronomy 4:39):

Know therefore this day and consider it in thine heart, that the Lord, he is God in heaven above and upon the earth beneath: there is none else. Thou shalt keep therefore his commandments that it may go well with thee and thy children after thee.

Similarly God says through the prophet Isaiah (43:10ff):

Ye are my witnesses and my servant whom I have chosen, that ye may know and believe me. Before me there was no God formed, neither shall there be after me. I, even I, am the Lord, and beside me there is no Savior. I have declared and have saved, and I have showed when there was no strange god among you. Yea, before the day was, I am he, and there is none that can deliver out of my hand. I will work, and who shall let it.

Here, in brief compass, is the natural and constantly repeated Old Testament setting for knowledge, especially the highest knowledge to which can attain: that of God. In Old Testament thought, knowledge comes especially from hearing, and it has especially to do with acts, with events, with things which happened in time. Knowledge has to do with history.

Since the New Testament is written in the language of the Greeks, we should expect, humanly speaking, that its use of the term knowledge will reflect the profane Greek view which regarded knowledge as a mental activity. But this is not so. In its verbal form, “to know,” the word occurs over 200 times in the New Testament. As a noun it occurs 27 times, and in 16 other cases the noun occurs in combination with a preposition to intensify its sense from “knowledge” to “thorough” or “full knowledge.” In this nominal use of the word, its normal and basic New Testament meaning is best seen. To select a few examples at random: “knowledge of salvation” (Luke 1:77); “key of knowledge” (Luke 11:52); “having a form of knowledge” (Romans 2:20); “filled with all knowledge”(Romans 15:14); “understanding all mysteries and all knowledge” (I Corinthians 13:2); “the light of the knowledge of the glory of God” (II Corinthians 4:6); “by pureness, by knowledge, by longsuffering”(II Corinthians 6:6); “excellency of the knowledge of Christ”(Philippians 3:8); “in Christ are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge” (Colossians 2:3), and so on. From these examples one comes away with the strong impression that the New Testament view of knowledge follows in the path, not of the profane Greek but of the Old Testament Hebrew. In New Testament thought the knowledge of God hears and heeds what God commands, and it acknowledges what God has done. Moreover, it is not fulfilled in the mere learning and understanding and having an intellectual grasp of things. Rather, knowledge proves itself in action. Thus Paul prays for the Colossians(1:9):

We desire that you may be filled with the knowledge of (God’s) will in all wisdom and spiritual understanding, that you might walk worthy of the Lord unto all pleasing, being fruitful in every good work and increasing in the knowledge of God.

And this New Testament use of the term grows in significance when viewed on the background of the times—times when the Christian church had to battle against false claims for knowledge as found in the mystery religions of the contemporary world and in the incipient movement that named itself *gnosis* or Gnostic. This religious movement peddled a knowledge that was speculative in character, a knowledge that separated itself from historical contexts and from historical actions, a knowledge of withdrawal from history in this world. The Christian message, by contrast, proclaimed a diametrically opposed knowledge: that of Christ Jesus the person who entered into human history, was born, grew up, walked and talked, died and rose from death. The knowledge of this Jesus was the mark of the Christian. And it was a knowledge that included far more than what was comprehended in the mind or passively accepted by the will. It was knowledge as the experience of the power of the Lord’s resurrection and the fellowship of His suffering within historical life.

The other two words of our study, “teaching” and “learning,” have, in their English forms, a Germanic rather than a Greek origin.

“And gladly wolde he lerne and gladly teche” declares Chaucer in commendation of the clerk or student of Oxenford. Interestingly enough, the old German word “learn”( *lernen* ) is derived from the German *lehren* meaning to teach. Thus *lehren* concentrates on the activity and *lernen* on the result of the activity. Regarding word stems and sounds, there is no similarity between the Germanic words and their Semitic or Greek equivalents in the Scriptures. Nor is there a similarity between the Old Testament Hebrew and the New Testament Greek terms, The close relationship between the word “teach” and the word “learn” that exists in the German has no parallel in the Greek. On the other hand, and contrary to what we might expect, an identical relationship occurs in the Hebrew; one term (למד) does double duty for both teaching and learning. A final general observation about the Scriptural use of teaching and learning: As with “knowledge” so with “teaching” and “learning,” the New Testament uses these terms in the Old Testament sense rather than in the sense of their profane Greek origin.

The New Testament Greek term for teaching has its sound and sense preserved in our English word *didactic*. The Greek verb “to teach” occurs about 95 times in the New Testament, two-thirds of the time in the Gospels and Book of Acts, and it occurs about 100 times in the Greek translation of the Old Testament. Again, it is instructive to compare the Scriptural use of the word with its profane use.

Among the Greeks, “teach” was used in the sense of imparting information, passing on knowledge, acquiring skills. Invariably, the word had intellectual overtones. To teach was to train the mind toward developing a person’s talents and potentialities. In the Old Testament, teaching applied to many things, but chiefly to the exposition of God’s *Torah* or Law as the sum of God’s revealed will respecting both Law and Gospel. Old Testament teaching directed itself to claiming the whole person and not merely certain parts of him such as, for example, the mind. We might say that teaching in the Old Testament concerned itself with education in the deepest sense.

The New Testament follows the same path. There is no better passage for discovering what Scripture means when it speaks of teaching than the description of our Lord’s activity in the synagogue at Nazareth (Luke 4:16ff.). This example serves as a kind of paradigm to throw light on the many short announcements in the Gospel which simply declare that Jesus went about teaching. What kind of teaching was this? What happened, how did it begin, how did it end, and what was its goal? As we recall from the Nazareth episode, our Lord’s teaching began with a reading from Old Testament Scripture. Then came an explanation of that Scripture, and this was followed by an exhortation. Briefly stated, “to teach” as we meet the activity in Scripture, means to tell or declare the will of God. It is a teaching aimed at shaping the human will. It is teaching in the absolute sense. If the Greeks in their teaching were concerned for “getting the right understanding of things”; if they were concerned for “teaching something,” Scripture or Scripture’s supreme Teacher gave absolute content to teaching. The Lord’s teaching, and that of His apostles, went beyond mere exposition of what God’s *Torah* means. It went beyond the traditional expositions put together by the experts over many previous generations. The Master Teacher and His disciples proclaimed the unique relationship between the *Torah* and this man Jesus—this man Jesus who occupies a unique relationship both with the Scriptures and with the divine source of the Scriptures, the Father in heaven. So it happened, as we frequently read in the Gospels (for example, Matthew 7:28; 13:53, *passim*), that the teaching of Jesus caused wonder and amazement. Many turned against Him and many rode the fence. But a few were indelibly impressed. The words of Jesus were printed into their memory to a degree that we in this machine age often forget to appreciate or fail to understand.

Since teaching in Scripture carries the connotation of absoluteness, it is found in close combination with preaching. The New Testament, being far more dynamic in its mode of expression than our poverty-stricken language of today, employs 31 different terms to describe various shades of meaning for preaching. We are concerned with the term used most frequently, a Greek word whose stem and sound have been reproduced in the English *kerygma*. As a noun, this word designated a herald, i.e. someone whose divine gift of a booming voice qualified him, in an age that knew nothing of electronic amplification, to serve as an announcer, an ambassador, or a performer of state sacrifices. In this form of a noun, the word occurs rarely in the New Testament (Paul refers to himself twice as a herald, I Timothy 2:7; II Timothy 1:11), and Peter calls Noah by this name (II Peter 2:5). Apparently, the word did not fit well for a person who proclaimed God’s Word, for it is not the preacher who counts, but it is the preaching. Thus, in its verbal form, the word occurs 61 times in the New Testament: 40 times in the Gospels, 21 times in the Epistles. By this word Jesus described His work, Mark 1:38. Preaching was the mission that had been assigned to Him, Luke 4:18. He is like the Old Testament herald who proclaimed the year of jubilee. His Word carries God’s creative power with it: not only does it announce, but it also gives what it proclaims. The same activity is enjoined on the apostles: they should preach the Gospel to every creature, Mark 16:15. They should do this in season and out of season, II Timothy 4:2. The activity of preaching, like the suffering and death of Jesus, belongs to God’s plan of salvation, because the Christian truth needed not only to be given its historical foundation but also to be proclaimed. Thus we find the cross of Jesus and the preaching of the cross combined. As Paul tells the Corinthians (I Corinthians 1:18), “the preaching of the cross is to them that perish foolishness, but to us who are saved it is the power of God.” Similarly Paul writes to the Corinthians in another place (II Corinthians 5:19): “God was in Christ, reconciling the world to himself, not imputing their trespasses to them, and hath committed to us the word of reconciliation.” New Testament preachers are the heralds of God’s deeds. “The Jews require a sign, and the Greeks seek after wisdom, but we preach Christ crucified.” (I Corinthians 1:22,23) New Testament preaching like New Testament

teaching is far more than a pep talk, far more than a call to action, far more than a lecture on God's thought, God's rule, God's kingdom. New Testament preaching is the declaration of an event absolutely unique. It is different from the myth of a dying and rising God as celebrated in the Greek and oriental mysteries. It is unlike the timeless ideas of philosophy. It is an event historically manifested. It is the event of Jesus. It comprehends His teachings and His doings from the perspective of His resurrection—all the events of that life coming full, so to speak, in the resurrection whereof God the Father has made us partakers through repentance. New Testament preaching like New Testament teaching is a preaching in the absolute sense.

We come finally to the Scriptural terms for learning. As mentioned before, the Old Testament employs one word for both teaching and learning. In doing this, it reflects the Biblical view that the two activities are united by the fact that the content and goal of all teaching and learning have been established once and for all by what God proclaimed in the historical revelation of His Word. When man does not know the will of God revealed in God's Word, then the possibility of authentic learning no longer exists. With learning as with teaching, the attitude sought out is that of an obedience manifested in the *doing* of God's will and not merely in the better understanding of His Will. The Old Testament approach to teaching and learning persists in the New Testament. Jesus' concern is not to impart information nor to awaken in His hearers an attitude previously present but dormant, but rather Jesus aims to awaken an unconditional commitment to Himself.

In its verbal form, the New Testament word for learning occurs only 25 times, ¼ as often as the word for teaching, and this occurrence is chiefly in the Epistles. But the noun, usually translated "disciple" occurs 250 times, and these occurrences are exclusively in the Gospels and Book of Acts. Thus we might deduce that the historical books of the New Testament give more weight to teaching than to learning and, conversely, that they also give more weight to learners than to teachers.

The New Testament Greek verb is strongly controlled by its Hebrew equivalent in the Old Testament. "Go and *learn* what Scripture means" Jesus tells the Pharisees, to vindicate His promise which opposes itself to their rituals and formalities, Matthew 9:13; 12:7. In the New Testament view, learning happens when God's will is learned from Scripture and taken into one's own will, and the highest revelation of God's will consists in knowing that Jesus is the Christ. In another witness to the fact that learning in the New Testament sense is not mere acquiring of information, Paul tells the Galatians: "This I would learn of you, received ye the Spirit by the works of the law or by the hearing of faith (Galatians 3:2)?" Paul stresses the hearing, and in this he follows the cue of his Master who gave it the same emphasis: "He that hath ears to hear, let him hear." One reaches the goal of learning chiefly by the route of hearing—by hearing instead of seeing.

In the form of a noun—"learner" or "disciple"—the word occurs in the Bible almost exclusively in the New Testament alone. The Master-disciple relationship so familiar from the Gospels has no Old Testament equivalent. The Old Testament teachers or prophets from Moses on were followed by successors or sons or servants rather than disciples. Since God's Word alone served as the source of all teaching, and since the revelation of this Word through the Old Testament prophets was continuous and dynamic, God alone stood as the Master and Teacher. In His name the prophets appealed to backsliding Israel—in God's name rather than the name of Moses.

But in the New Testament a radical change occurred. Here we meet a personal attachment to a master or teacher, and this shapes the entire life of the disciples, their outward life (for example, the disciples of John the Baptist fast, but the disciples of Jesus do not fast, Mark 2:18) and their inward life (for example, Jesus should teach His disciples to pray as John the Baptist had done for his disciples, Luke 11:1).

The Gospel provides us with many clues regarding the uniqueness of this supremely personal relationship between the Master Teacher and His disciples. It originated in a direct call from the Master, for example with Peter (Mark 1:17), with Matthew (Mark 2:14), or even with the rich young ruler (Mark 10:21). The initiative always belonged to Jesus. A different state of affairs obtained in the schools of the rabbis. There, the initiative lay with the pupils. They, or their parents, decided to which rabbi they would attach themselves. Another difference shows in the kind of persons called. With Jesus the call went out to people who hardly seemed qualified for associating with a master: people on the order of fisherfolk, tax collectors, zealots—a

motley crew far different from the picture to be found in the schools of the rabbis where discipleship was “select.”

In the school of Jesus, the relationship of the disciples to the Teacher was personal in the highest degree. Jesus decided who belonged, and Jesus gave form and content to the relationship. Jesus exerted the powerful and direct impression of His personality. In one of the choicest passages regarding the quality of New Testament discipleship, Peter responds to his Lord’s searching question, “Will you go away too?”, with the following affirmation (John 6:67ff.): “Lord, to whom shall we go? Thou hast the words of eternal life.” The deep personal relationship between Jesus and His disciples is made starkly clear in the events of the upper room on Holy Thursday and in the happenings between Friday and Easter. It was not enough for the disciples to possess the legacy of their Master’s teachings (as would have been the case with pupils of the rabbis). If Jesus Himself were gone, then all would be gone. In this setting we must read and appreciate our Lord’s personal appearances and assurances to His disciples after the resurrection.

We may draw further comparisons between the relationship of Jesus with His disciples and of the rabbis with their disciples.

- (1) In the rabbinical schools, disciples swarmed to a master for his knowledge and methodology, and they remained disciples as long as they accepted what the master offered. Jesus, by contrast, bound the disciples exclusively to Himself rather than to His knowledge or to an idea He represented.
- (2) In the rabbinical schools, disciples followed a great teacher less for his intellectual stature and more for his being a great expositor of the Old Testament *Torah*, but in the case of Jesus the disciples were expected to renounce all things for His sake alone, and to accept His authority unconditionally by believing and obeying.
- (3) In the schools of the rabbis, discipleship aimed at emulating and at surpassing the teacher. In the school of Jesus, discipleship meant to be stamped and fashioned by Jesus. The disciples of Jesus were listeners rather than debaters. The decisive thing in their education was not the intellectual appropriation of knowledge but the acceptance of Jesus’ Word, the bending of their will to their Lord’s will, the resignation of their will to a wisdom which came from above.

In the circle of Jesus, learning was a resignation, yet not of a kind which turned the disciples into slaves of their Teacher but, contrariwise, turned them into friends. “Ye are my friends, if ye do whatsoever I command you, John 15:14. When we follow the disciples from the Gospels into the Book of Acts and into the Epistles, we see them reflecting what they have learned, chiefly by bearing witness to the events in Jesus’ life. In the history of Jesus that culminated in His resurrection, God confirmed all that Jesus stood for and taught: the teaching of Jesus was important and its significance became clear because it was sealed by God’s own stamp when He raised His Son from the grave. Jesus was not the head of a school, but He was the Lord of His people. In His own classic statement about learning and discipleship (John 8:31ff.), He identifies the mark of the disciples as an abiding in His Word. By His Word Jesus created the first circle of disciples—by the Word and the faithful hearing of it—and in this manner Jesus continues to create and to build a fellowship that bridges the generations and binds the believers of all ages into one.

Having examined the Scriptural terms for knowledge, teaching, and learning, we come to the practical significance of our study. How may the information gained relate to our thought and work as a Christian school? How may it relate to our call as Christian educators? What bearing do these terms, as used in Scripture, have on our general and particular objectives? What bearing do they have on our methodologies?

The thoughts I would like to share with you in these matters are far from exhaustive. At best, please view them as a beginning attempt. Some of them express convictions, others are tentative, and still others are tendentious.

From this study of the Scriptural terms for knowledge, teaching, and learning, my appreciation has been sharpened regarding a set of educational theses formulated in behalf of Dr. Martin Luther College about 14 years ago. Among the more provocative of the theses was this one:

The Church must formulate its standards (according to which the excellency of its educational program is to be measured), and these standards, by very reason of their Gospel orientation, will have to be in basic disagreement with those of the world.

On the basis of what Scripture calls knowledge and on the basis of what Scripture describes as teaching and learning—recall the absoluteness which Scripture attaches to each of these words: no authentic knowledge, no authentic teaching, no authentic learning apart from Christ and His Word—on this basis and background the great chasm between Christian education and all other education stands starkly revealed. It is a chasm that remains unbridgeable, uncompromisable.

The present study refreshed my appreciation for other theses from the educational statement of 14 years ago. That statement also spoke of the duty of the Christian educator to bring all things into subjection under the Gospel, and then it itemized the following implications:

- (1) That Christian educators live and naturally express in their daily life what they believe;
- (2) That they continually re-study and re-think their educational heritage and thus make it their own;
- (3) That they guard against deadening complacency with what has been learned and received from the past, recognizing that the Church must always stand abreast of the changing times and changing challenges in the world in order to fulfill its Gospel ministry with most effectiveness;
- (4) That they, wherever possible and practicable, seek out and gain a measure of competence in the knowledge which the world offers, to bring that knowledge into subjection under the Gospel;
- (5) That they steadfastly guard against seeking knowledge from the world for the sake of winning recognition from the world through attainment of educational standards laid down by the world.

On the background of our present study carried out in this paper, I would subscribe to the general tenor of the just-cited statements, though, if we will be bound by the strict sense of the word as used in Scripture, we might give what the world has to offer some other name than “knowledge.”

Examination of the Scriptural terms for knowledge, teaching, and learning has substantiated for me various absolutes that occur in the newly formulated statement of our college’s philosophy and objectives. For example:

In line 63ff.: We equate education with Christian education, which puts all learning and wisdom into the perspective of Christ and His Word.

As I look at this statement now, I become more convinced that it should stand as it is without any qualifying adverbs or prepositional phrases. I regard the statement as absolute, not only for our testimony to one another but also for our testimony to the world about us.

Other expressions and declarations from our newly formulated statement of objectives which to my mind have been strengthened by the present study include the following:



- In line 35ff.: We view the study of man and his culture, together with the pursuit of other knowledge, not merely beneficial but obligatory. We humans have been appointed lords and possessors of all things.
- In line 43ff.: Our pursuit of knowledge is aimed primarily at growing in the wisdom which God teaches in His Word.
- In line 66ff.: ...all who are called to teach in the schools of our Synod are expected to share our Christ-centered convictions knowledgeably and to demonstrate the same by the testimony of their lives.
- In line 83ff.: We hold that the proper understanding of man requires us to be conversant with the broad theater of human affairs (i.e. with man's history) particularly in those places where the proclamation of Christ has been historically most visible.
- In line 96ff.: ( Dr. Martin Luther College) desires to educate the whole person for faithful, capable, intelligent citizenship (in God's Kingdom and) in today's world.

What Scripture says about knowledge, teaching, and learning has, in one manner or another, confirmed each of the foregoing statements. But what implications do these Scriptural terms have in the more direct consideration of our curriculum, our methodologies, and our life?

To begin with our Religion - Social Studies Division, I recall a lively debate seven or eight years ago when we were formulating or re-formulating objectives for general subject areas and individual courses. The debate developed around the *primary* aim or goal of the formal religion courses at Dr. Martin Luther College. We were agreed on four or five component parts of the general goal, but we disagreed on which objective should stand in first place as of first importance. Should it be that our students be equipped with the truths of the Christian faith, or should it be that our students be strengthened in their faith? If a distinction between these two aims is possible, and I think it is, then the first-mentioned goal aims more at the intellect, the second-mentioned at the will, and our debate over the primacy of these goals resulted in a statement of objectives which kept the aims in the order given. On the basis of what I have gathered from studying the Scriptural use of knowledge, teaching, and learning, I would admit my error in supporting that sequence. Unless there is good reason to the contrary, it seems to me that the proper order is the other way around: that Christian education and, even more critically, the formal teaching of Scriptural truth aims always first at the will. To others, this may sound like stirring up a tempest in a teapot, but great issues of life, and of education, frequently find their origin in obscure, out-of-the-way "teapots," and many grave consequences can result from whether this goal or that goal stands at the front of my course and determines how I will teach it.

The Scriptural terms for knowledge, teaching, and learning have implications for our curriculum in other ways also. They suggest that apart from God's revelation in Christ and His Word, and apart from the record of events which under God have transpired among men (which record we call history), all other, name it information, name it wisdom, name it learning, is tentative and transitory and therefore can not be truly known. And in respect to all this information or learning, God has called us to search it out—this belongs to His creation order—and to search it out properly and profitably is to discover, examine, and know it as faintly reflecting the depths of the riches, both of the wisdom and knowledge of God whose ways are unsearchable and past finding out. I think the time has come to give more emphasis to this absolute goal of teaching, namely, that Christian education aims at obedience to Christ. I will not resort to what has become a huge cliché in our circles, to wit, that we should guard against dragging in religion by the hair, so to speak. In our present generation, the greater danger, it seems to me, is to take God and His rule and His wisdom so much for granted in our teaching that we seldom really testify to it. It becomes a truth which, to use another cliché, goes without saying.

If teaching, absolutely conceived, is directed to the will, this may carry implications regarding our methodologies, whatever the subject matter, whether religion, history, English, science, psychology, or physical education. What Scripture says about knowledge, teaching, and learning does not constrain us to run away from

information, methods, and techniques which the world has to offer. As Christian educators we have a duty to study all of these contributions from the world, to sift and to select. What has been heard about the Scriptural meaning of knowledge, teaching, and learning may alert us to raise the following questions:

- To what degree should our teaching become a discovery process?
- To what degree should our teaching become immersed in statistics?
- To what degree should our teaching employ machines or mechanical devices?
- To what degree can our teaching, Christian teaching, proceed with declaring, proclaiming, and professing?

How would you respond to the methodology I witnessed at one of our secondary schools last year? The teacher regularly committed what he had to say to a tape ahead of time and played this tape to the class while he stood at the side of the room watching the students take notes. In Christian education, which is the only bona fide education, is there any substitute, whether in a biology class or a literature class or whatever class,—is there any substitute for the direct encounter of proclaiming and professing?

Since education in the absolute Scriptural sense addresses itself to the will and asks for obedience and resignation, we may find in this circumstance another reason for the passivity among our students—a noticeable lack of that wholesome spirit of inquiry, or a lack of what was once described to us as a “controlled rebellion” in the classroom. If this is so, and I’m sure it is, the matter deserves further study in the hope that something can be found and something done to encourage more of the latter attitude without losing the good in the former. In my own experience, rebellions of the kind described—and I like to think they have remained controlled and respectful—such rebellions have usually been stimulating, and both teacher and students, I hope, have come away from the experience with a clearer understanding of whatever was at issue. No one among us would dispute the importance of cultivating a spirit of inquiry among our students, a spirit that manifests itself especially in classroom debate and library digging. But does it also happen, I ask myself, that I wittingly or unwittingly squelch this spirit out of slavery to my methodology, or from a fear that I am not in control of my subject matter or do not wish to admit or reveal my ignorance,—or from such outward circumstances as the look on my face or the tone of my voice? Nothing in the Scriptural terms for knowledge, teaching, and learning conflicts with the wholesome spirit of inquiry on the part of learners or pupils or disciples. Indeed, Scripture shows the opposite. Therefore I would suggest that a good topic for presentation to some future faculty meeting might be this one: How our Lord Jesus stimulated a wholesome spirit of inquiry among His disciples and among the people at large.

One more point I’d like to make about the practical application of the terms we have studied. This study has sharpened my understanding that Christian education cuts across every subject in the curriculum; that it cuts across the Christian teacher’s entire life both within the classroom and without; that Christian educators must be at their educating constantly, in what they teach, what they say, and how they live. To assist ourselves in our high calling, we Christian educators have the solemn duty to encourage one another, to admonish one another, to set one another the pattern of a Christian life. In the classroom, on the playing field, in the locker room, in our socializing with one another and with our students, we should at all times set the example of Christian men and Christian women who know what is tasteful and what is appropriate in both speech and behavior, that our ministry be not blamed.