

Truth, Beauty, and Goodness In Thought, Word, and Deed: Unleashing the Power of Rhetoric  
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Now if (as we have assumed) there were no souls, and there were no need at all of schools and languages for the sake of the Scriptures and of God, this one consideration alone would be sufficient to justify the establishment everywhere of the very best schools for both boys and girls, namely, that in order to maintain its temporal estate outwardly the world must have good and capable men and women, men able to rule well over land and people, women able to manage the household and train children and servants aright. Now such men must come from our boys, and such women from our girls. Therefore, it is a matter of properly educating and training our boys and girls to that end. (Martin Luther, *AE*, vol. 45, pp. 367-8.)

Statements like these, easy to come by, indicate the importance Doctor Luther placed on education.

Reading further, the hypothetical (a universe where there were no souls) notwithstanding, it is clear Luther considers “the very best schools” to be those based on a classical liberal arts curriculum, to educate boys and girls for two ends: for growth in the faith (“for the sake of the Scriptures and God”) and to cultivate good leaders for both the maintenance of the “temporal estate” and for families. Those parts of the curriculum that equip especially for handling well God’s truth and for leadership, are dialectic and rhetoric; not mastering their content, in a theoretical way, but applying them so as to cultivate wise judgment. Dialectic and rhetoric, working in tandem, abide *under* the classical liberal arts, in a wonderful and peculiar fashion, shaping the character of the student as he or she pursues excellence *in* the arts of wisdom and eloquence, which entails infusing one’s arguments *with* truth, beauty and goodness. In the process of mastering arts of wisdom and eloquence, the student grows in mental dexterity, develops aesthetic sensibilities, and ultimately is equipped to be a good Christian person who exercises practical wisdom.

Richard Weaver writes, “In the restored man dialectic and rhetoric will go along hand in hand as the regime of the human faculties intended that they should do” (*Language is Sermonic*, 184). Classical Lutheran Education is indeed a restorative effort, and its aim, ultimately, is to equip students for the pursuit of excellence. But why rhetoric? Why dialectic? I cannot articulate the answer better than Robert Littlejohn and Charles Evans: Rhetoric, they note,

[P]rovides the greatest opportunity for educating morally aware students and for using the classroom to propagate character. We established in an earlier chapter that liberal arts schooling always seeks to educate the conscience and that liberal arts thinking blended with Christian theology promises the greatest opportunity for genuine character education. Of the three elements of the trivium, rhetoric is most helpful in the construction of a total curriculum with character formation and cultural leadership as its chief goals (*Wisdom and Eloquence*, 133).

Littlejohn and Evans got it right. How so? Unleashing the power of rhetoric begins with a clear understanding of how rhetoric, along with dialectic, both form mental habits (thereby equipping one to treat of truth, beauty, and goodness,) but also form character. So, the teacher must begin by understanding how truth, beauty, and goodness abide IN rhetoric, which entails, first, understanding the relationship of dialectic to rhetoric, then of poetics and rhetoric, and, ultimately, rhetoric and ethics. The classical educator must begin by grasping these varied relationships; they constitute the “grammar of rhetoric,” as it were. (Please do not be intimidated. Mastering knowledge of these relationships seems daunting, but bear in mind that classical thought on these particular arts is based largely on how human beings intuitively think, reason, analyze, persuade, and relate to others.) Truth, beauty, and goodness abide UNDER rhetoric in the sense that rhetorical arts depend on all three for their efficacy. And rhetoric also is productive of truth, beauty, and goodness, both in the speaker and in the auditor. But not every approach to teaching rhetoric bears fruit of this nature. So our examination must begin with matters pedagogical. This paper elucidates how Littlejohn and Evans “got it right” by means of, first, a discussion regarding how I teach rhetoric and dialectic, then, some brief considerations regarding the “pedagogical underpinnings” of that approach, and, finally, for the sake of those interested in Lutheranism and the classical liberal arts, observations about what Luther, Sturm, Bugenhagen, and Melancthon meant when they exclaimed, “The aim of education is a wise and eloquent piety.”

I.

How to Teach It “Old School”

Plato’s account of how the soul is moved toward Truth, Beauty, and Goodness seems like a good place to begin fleshing out a classical teaching methodology.

The wing is the corporeal element which is most akin to the divine, and which by nature tends to soar aloft and carry that which gravitates downwards into the upper region, which is the habitation of the gods. The divine is beauty, wisdom, goodness, and the like; and by these the wing of the soul is nourished, and grows apace; but when fed upon evil and foulness and the opposite of good, wastes and falls away (*Phaedrus*, pp. 51 & 2).

The allegory is both fanciful and pagan, but, as St. Augustine noted (and Luther later echoed,) a “Christian should realize that truth belongs to his Lord, wherever it is found, gathering and acknowledging it even in pagan literature, but rejecting superstitious vanities and deploring and avoiding those who ‘though they knew God did not glorify him as God ...’” (*On Christian Teaching* II.75). But the important consideration, just now, has to do with pedagogy. How can our teaching “nourish the soul” of our Christian pupils? How can we help them “sprout wings,” as it were, and take flight toward the heavenlies? I’m not sure how “one” ought to, but following is how I approach this business!

Teaching students to cultivate mental habits that help them excel in the practical arts must be approached in a manner different from mastery of subject matter. In short, such pedagogy features praxis and backgrounds theory, while mastery of content features contemplation and foregrounds theory. Theory informs practice, to be sure, but the seminar-style discussion of readings (the “Great Books” approach) will not help students hone their rhetorical or dialectical skills as much as getting in front of an audience and making arguments or engaging in debate about contemporary controversies. Consider the manner in which one masters piano. One does not immerse oneself in music theory, or read the lives of great musicians, only. One learns to read notes, and practices, every day, until the skill becomes “second nature.” Theory is

then tackled as one matures in one's art. Theory follows practice. Again, theory is vital, but it is not age-appropriate to "lead" with volumes of theory.

This is why, in my Public Speaking course, I attempt to lay a foundation in rhetoric that guides students in the art of composing speeches (as opposed to merely imparting techniques for "effective communication" on the one hand, or, the content-oriented study of rhetorical theory, on the other). What one considers "fundamental" is, of course, open to interpretation, I tell them, and then demonstrate why a rhetorical approach to the art of speech making, in the classical liberal arts vein, teaches the true fundamentals and elevates the enterprise without overburdening them with 2,500 years of theory.

I orient students to the liberal arts approach by pointing out that most people already know about eye contact, gestures, volume, rate, pitch, etc., and that I could cover those topics in about a half-hour. So, what are we going to discuss for the rest of the semester? (It is, in fact, more appropriate to dwell on mechanics with children. I make this move to generate enthusiasm on the part of my college students; to assure them that they will not be force-fed minutiae of mechanics mastered long ago!) I propose studying the art of rhetoric, from a traditional liberal arts perspective. I then pose a question: Why are you at a university? If you just want a good job that pays well, you could spend a lot less time and money going to a tech school and learning a trade. What do you get at a university that you don't get elsewhere? Eventually they take the bait: "A liberal arts education!" This realization, of course, begs the question: What is a liberal arts education? So we're off and running.

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**Teaching it "Old School" Tip #1:** Clue them in. Classical liberal arts education focuses not only on the "how and what," but also on the "why and wherefore."

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I then discuss with them the nature of liberal arts education, borrowing heavily from Dorothy Sayers (please visit my Rhetoric Ring for a brief description of the shape of this conversation).

I then define rhetoric for them, explain how rhetoric was, in its golden age, considered the "most humane of the humanities" and then break it down into its constituent parts and explain to them how this theory will provide a framework for the entire course and will inform their practices. (See Teaching "Old School" Tip #1) There is also a good bit of instruction in fundamentals of logic (syllogisms, dialectic and

common material fallacies, to be precise) on the assumption that, if they are intellectually engaged, when they speak they'll have something of substance to say. In other words, thought is foundational, or fundamental, to speech. Thus, we begin instruction on rhetoric by placing it within the context of liberal arts learning.

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**Teaching it “Old School” Tip #2:** One of the most beautiful things about liberal arts learning is that it teaches ideas in relation one to another. Much of modern education, by virtue of its emphasis on math and science, is presented in a fragmented or “compartmentalized” fashion. We memorize terms from chapter one, regurgitate them on a quiz, push “core dump,” forget that information, proceed to chapter two, memorize unrelated terms, regurgitate, push “core dump,” and so on. Science raises more questions than it answers. Disciplines beget sub-disciplines, and, as Richard Weaver once quipped, the universe of knowledge expands by diffusion to the point of nullity. Never forget to stress how beautifully the classical approach features unity of knowledge!

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The classically educated young person should begin with a series of “stair-stepped” exercises that help him or her master foundational, then more advanced, rhetorical dynamics. They learn by doing, and the doing is informed by theory, but only enough theory to enlighten, as opposed to over-burden. The line of “over-burdening” versus sufficiently rigorous, will, of course, vary among children. Make learning fun! Luther repeatedly characterizes learning as “child’s play” (and suggests that teachers over-burden their students, in part, to build their own reputation).

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**Teaching it “Old School” Tip #3:** Theory, nuts-and-bolts, practice; theory, nuts-and-bolts, practice. Highly-integrated; methodical; fun. Note: Arts are also known as “disciplines.”

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My Argumentation & Debate course is an in-depth treatment of the relationship of dialectic and rhetoric. Argumentation & Debate aims to equip the student to engage in practical argumentation by examining and discussing patterns of reasoning, fields of argument, standards of evidence, and equips the student to apply classical rhetorical concepts to contemporary controversies. The course begins with a good bit of instruction in fundamentals of logic, because thought is fundamental to argument. This “Bootcamp of the Mind” constitutes a refresher course for my Public Speaking students, but it is all condensed into the first four weeks of class (whereas the concepts are distributed, in Public Speaking, on an as-needed basis, at strategic points in the semester.) It is important to observe this sequence for optimal learning. (Please do not let your debater talk you into skipping Public Speaking! :o)

"Bootcamp of the Mind" concludes with a philosophical speech (which draws upon the Great Books of the Western World) and a graduation ceremony (complete with certificates! Custom, signed certificates are available to those who purchase this booklet, free of charge.) The course is then divided, along lines suggested in Aristotle's *Rhetorica*, into three units, all designed to feature one aspect of arguing cases (a rhetorical approach to argumentation is a case-centered, practical approach): arguing a case in court of law, defending one's judgment in a moral dilemma, and arguing one's case in a policy controversy (see the Rhetoric Ring for a fuller explanation).

The forensic unit concludes with an argumentation analysis of a Supreme Court opinion. The unit on moral argumentation concludes with an opinion, written as a medical ethics consultant, in which the student must render and defend a judgment in a moral dilemma in clinical medicine. The course concludes with a debate involving a controversial policy proposition. Students must research both sides of the question. They flip for sides, then, second round, argue the opposite side of the question. Building a powerful case is not a matter of logic alone, but of stylistic excellence, also.

The Tallmon approach to Advanced Public Speaking is also classical. Students enjoy it very much. The core of the course is an exercise in "imitatio," a pedagogical scheme developed in the Roman era and practiced widely in medieval times. The idea is to expose students to great oratory, have them study it, then imitate it. As they develop a feel for stylistic excellence, they are encouraged to compose original works. This "stair-stepped" approach is very effective. Encourage advanced students to read classical oratory in the original tongues! This course is a nice, "right-brain" equivalent to Argumentation & Debate. In other words, it builds on the foundation in rhetoric built in Public Speaking, only it emphasizes style and the cultivation of imagination and memory over logic.

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**Teaching it “Old School” Tip #4:** The student that is liberally educated will cultivate mental dexterity: the ability, given the nature of the various questions posed in the act of living life, to gauge appropriately the nature of the question at hand, and then, to utilize that mental operation most likely to produce an appropriate response. Mathematical reasoning, speculative reasoning, deductive reasoning, rhetorical reasoning, scientific reasoning, and so on. This is, in part, what it means to have a “well ordered mind.” Ordering the mind is precisely the aim of the trivium!

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The course begins with a refresher on rhetoric in the classical liberal arts, followed by focused study in elements of style. There are speaking assignments designed to break the ice, but real application of classical concepts begins with a memorized speech. Students select a speech of interest from days of yore. They select a portion of it that can be performed in 6 minutes. Next comes an "essentializing exercise," in which students identify the essential message of the speech. They then do an *imitatio* speech in which they apply that theme to a contemporary situation. In that speech they are to emulate the style of the person whose speech they chose to memorize. Finally, they are invited to do a "student's choice" speech, that demonstrates mastery of course content. They learn a great deal about how to move an audience (pathos) and, specifically, how to deploy figures of speech masterfully. (For a more elaborate discussion of this course, and its methodology, refer to the Courses page of the Rhetoric Ring.)

What can 14-year olds possibly learn from a series of courses based on rhetoric? Remember, in the Middle Ages, the trivium would have been completed by age 16. Taken together these courses constitute an integrated approach to the study and practice of rhetoric, which cultivates practical wisdom and eloquence. In the process of developing a conceptual understanding of the art of rhetoric (mastering its tools) and then practicing rhetoric as an art, the student will learn to reason with precision, spot faulty logic, exercise insight and forethought in deliberations and use language masterfully; to instruct, persuade, and delight audiences. In short, to think both logically, and analogically.

The key to this approach is that, in each case, both in terms of the logical and stylistic elements of instruction, in each case the theory is taught to prepare the student to excel in an upcoming assignment. So each unit of the course entails laying a theoretical foundation, some nuts and bolts, then an opportunity to practice. This cycle of learning, approached in a systematic, highly integrated fashion, over three courses, imparts the practical arts of both practical wisdom and eloquence. In other words, they study syllogistic logic, dialectic and common material fallacies AND elements of style, figures of speech, and the like, in the process of crafting powerful arguments. They do a good deal of research, they are exposed to great speeches, (see [evgonline.com/cart/great\\_speeches.html](http://evgonline.com/cart/great_speeches.html)), they focus intently on style and pathos, and, are ultimately invited to do a speech in which their voice emerges. I believe the value of the approach is self-

evident, but, just in case, let us consider briefly some ethical, moral, and theological implications of the approach.

## II

### Pedagogical Underpinnings

#### A. TRUTH : On the Relation of Dialectic to Rhetoric.

Many people, once divested of the notion that rhetoric equals bombast, but still novices when it comes to the study of rhetoric, must be further divested of the notion that dialectic is about discovering truth, while rhetoric is about making attractive the truth discovered dialectically. This view relegates rhetoric to mere ornament, but the interplay of rhetoric and dialectic, united “as the regime of the human faculties intended,” involves much more complexity and nuance than that.

Aristotle notes, in the beginning of his treatise on rhetoric, that dialectic and rhetoric are “antistrophes” (counterparts) of one another. An antistrophic relationship is best illustrated as two plants, growing up, side-by-side, that, while they appear distinct from above, share a common root below the surface. Rhetoric, as an art of argumentation, is relatively distinct from dialectic (as a test for the truth of propositions that are debatable). But, as one probes deeper, focusing on that aspect of rhetoric that precedes argumentation, namely, rhetorical reasoning, which may be understood as the faculty of discovering the crux of the matter in difficult cases, the “common root” metaphor is amplified. In other words, dialectical inference operates in rhetorical reasoning in a manner that accentuates just how deeply intertwined are the two.

Think, for instance, about the manner in which an elder makes an argument to raise his pastor’s salary by \$2,000 for 2011. The confluence of considerations that must be brought to bear, the counter-arguments that must be anticipated, the distinctions established PRIOR to making a single argument, all bespeak the subtle interplay between dialectical inference (drawing fine distinctions, defining terms, and establishing parameters) and rhetorical reasoning (determining, out of the potentially limitless parade of considerations, which hold most weight; which are most relevant, given the question at hand). Learning to operate comfortably in this arena cultivates, in the natural course of things, over time, insight, discernment,

prudence, foresight, mental discipline AND mental dexterity! In short, it equips one to handle truth. (The reader will please note, I have said nothing of rhetoric, understood generally, that is, of making arguments. Again, in this role, dialectic and rhetoric work together because dialectic is the means whereby one secures the truth of debatable propositions. For further study, please see the "Rhetoric and Dialectic" pages of the Rhetoric Ring.)

#### B. Beauty: The Canon of Style

We are not logic machines. One of the beautiful things about rhetoric is that it appeals to humans in their whole being. When asked to envision their dream home, not many people would picture a shanty! When it comes to crafting fine speeches and papers that are designed to move one to dream big dreams, or think big thoughts, aesthetics are also key. This is so for a couple of reasons. First, to move human beings, one must evoke vivid images. Second, beauty inspires. Learning to use language artfully, to appeal not only to the mind, but also to the imagination and the heart, is then a very humanizing activity (for both speaker and audience). Albert Einstein's quip, that "Imagination is more important than knowledge," bespeaks the importance of style in rhetoric. You can muster all the logic at your disposal, but if you fail to move your audience, you will never persuade them. The end of persuasion is action, and in order to move people to action, you've got to move the soul. This view elevates the enterprise of speech composition. This is done by recapping the lecture on human excellence, and asserting that excellence is, in keeping with Einstein's sentiment, more a matter of creativity than of logic alone. The cultivation of imagination and reason is best accomplished concurrently.

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**Teaching it "Old School" Tip #5:** Do you see what I did there? When one's teaching aims at cultivation of mental habits, one must "circle" concepts, review what was learned last "go 'round," demonstrate the relationship of that to the present object of study, then discuss application. Viewing the same knowledge from a variety of vantage points reinforces learning, in a variety of ways: deepening one's theoretical grasp and affording further opportunities to "internalize" the mental habits informed by the theory being studied.

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I then discuss with students Sir Francis Bacon's definition of rhetoric, from *De augmentis*: "The application of reason to imagination for the better moving of the will." Bacon defines rhetoric in a manner congruent with the intellectual climate of his day. "Faculty psychology" was a project that captivated many

thinkers in the Renaissance, and faculty psychology is clearly implicit in the above definition. The soul was understood in terms of its constituent parts, or faculties: memory, imagination, reason, will, appetite, and so forth. I think Bacon's definition makes a good introduction to the canon of style, because it gets one thinking about the relation of style to pathos. Attending to aesthetics in one's argumentation is important, if for no other reason, than that it exercises imagination (both the speaker's and the audience's.) It reminds us that rhetoric attempts to appeal to humans in the fullness of their being.

Style is about crafting strong mental imagery and also building to crescendo. Figures of speech help build both beautiful imagery and strong rhythm. The canon of style is about introducing to one's argumentation both poetry and aesthetics. It's about communicating truth with beauty and grace which adds impulse to the Truth. Rhetoric, in the final analysis, moves the soul toward the Good. So, we teach our students to "preside over their art with secure mastery" (see Joseph Dunne's *Back to the Rough Ground*). We teach them, not dry, sterile communication of ideas, but to combine good reasons with passion and vivid imagery to pique the imagination, which stirs the emotions, which moves the will. Vivacity is a key concept in classical rhetoric. The lively idea is what is "striking" to the audience. The opposite of a lively idea is a dead one. So, vivid imagery is key to giving one's argument rhetorical potency. If one's argument is potent enough, and the audience will supply a little imagination, one can be transported through the use of metaphor. It must not escape notice, however, that the act of appealing to the audience's imagination is, in itself, complimentary to their humanity; it cultivates in them moral imagination and aesthetic sensibilities. This is why beauty matters; the above explicates why beauty is in, under, and with rhetoric. But this power must be wielded with grace, decorum, propriety, proportion and measure, so, even when it comes to the fanciful dimensions of rhetoric, good judgment is cultivated.

C. Goodness: Rhetorical studies impinge on both the personal and public good.

Mastering rhetoric can teach one to BE Good (to establish trust) and AIM at THE GOOD, to make "true" one's persuasion. The former entails the goodness cultivated within the rhetor (virtue); the latter, the Goodness to which our rhetoric points (but also, in a deeper sense, FROM which our rhetoric points!). Trust

is a precondition of persuasion. Why would one allow oneself to be persuaded by one whose word cannot be trusted? Credibility counts. Similarly, creating a “nagging feeling” in the minds of one’s audience that one’s aim is not true, that the proposed course of action may lead to ruination, tends to militate against one’s rhetorical success!

In Book 12 of his *Institutes of Oratory*, Quintilian argues that an orator must be a good man because he is educated to lead and a leader cannot create civic virtue, through good laws, and by praising virtue, if he has not cultivated virtue himself, or if his judgment is warped. To speak credibly on affairs of state, the speaker must be credible, and love both the state and its citizens. (In this stance, Quintilian informs Luther’s sentiment about the role of liberal arts education in equipping students for leadership in the “temporal estate.”)

One is reminded that Plato’s prescription for “redeeming” rhetoric, elucidated in his *Phaedrus*, entails a methodology grounded in the study of the soul. Aristotle took seriously Plato’s suggestion, so, in his treatise on rhetoric, he makes “ethos” (personal character) one of the three “modes of artistic proof.” Aristotle asserts, of ethos, that a trustworthy character is one of the requisites of persuading because “We believe good men more fully and more readily than others: this is true generally whatever the question is, and absolutely true where exact certainty is impossible and opinions are divided” (1356a 3). In fact, he writes, “character may almost be called the most effective means of persuasion [the rhetor] possesses” (1356a 5). Later, in Book II, Aristotle identifies *phronesis*, or practical wisdom or prudence, with ethos. This is a key extension because *phronesis* is exercised with respect to the other. Plato’s negative view of the Sophists was motivated by his conviction that their distortions would warp the soul of Athenians.

Cicero, in “De officiis,” similarly notes that “man is the only living being that has a sense of order, decorum and moderation in word and deed,” then offers an account for how this aesthetic is acquired:

No other creature is touched by the beauty, grace and symmetry of visible objects; and the human mind transferring these conceptions from the material to the moral world recognises that this beauty, harmony and order are still more to be maintained in the sphere of purpose and of action; reason shuns all that is unbecoming or unmanly, all that is wanton in thought or deed (Bk I, 4).

Cicero even posits that the man who has a well-constituted character will not countenance corrupt rulers because of, in part, the sense of decorum and moderation acquired through right education. We have now, of course, come full circle, via the pagans, back to Father Luther.

### III

#### Implications for the Lutheran Educator

Our students DO HAVE SOULS. AND that is the ultimate justification for teaching them “old school”! In this postmodern age, they need to be educated in this fashion, simply to hold onto the faith we confess. What sort of faith is that? Confessional. Confessional faith is based on absolute truth. “Unless one believe this, one shall surely perish.” This is unequivocal. Luther's *Small Catechism*, true to his classical training, employs rhetorical devices to facilitate learning and memorization. Take, for example, the section on the Creed. The ubiquitous, “What does this mean?” the rhetorical question begins each explanation, and the repetition of “This is most certainly true” acts as a hammer of God, driving the lesson deeper and deeper, fortifying the student’s soul. Consider the rhythm of the words: “He also gives me clothing and shoes, food and drink, house and home, wife and children, land, animals, and all I have. . . . For all this it is my duty to thank and praise, serve and obey Him.” Of course this use of couplets is deliberate. These rhetorical schemes aid memorization; the rhythm established thereby helps the various lessons penetrate; the dialectical treatment of each chief part, by sheer force of method, aids memorization.

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**Teaching It “Old School” Tip #6:** Attend to rhythm! Classically educated children should be the happiest children on earth. (See **Tip #3** re: “Child’s Play” ;o)

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Why is this important to know? Cultivating in our young charges appreciation of these forms aids in memorization, first, but also develops in them habits of mind that make them more receptive to truth, better equipped for learning, and inclined to think in a principled, methodical fashion.

Beyond the *Small Catechism*, Luther and Melancthon spearheaded a revival of classical liberal arts learning in Europe. In a sense, classical education is our gift to the civilized world. Would it not be tragic if our own children did not learn to think like Lutherans because we neglected that heritage? The seminal

works of Lutheranism are cast up in terms that speak to the classically educated mind. This approach provides the framework upon which hangs the furnishings of the mind which make it a beautiful, spacious, edifice. Neglecting these "appointments," this education, imperils our heritage, because our heritage is based on cultivating, not only certain truths, but truth based on certainties. Progressive education (the default alternative to classical education) is based on questioning certainties; critical method. If our children are not taught how to grasp, think about, and be comfortable with, certain, absolute truth, they will not "feel at home" in our heritage. Secular and post-modern education simply does not cultivate the habits of mind one needs to grasp and defend a sacramental, patristic, and confessional worldview. We've got to educate our kids in this fashion for two vital reasons: Their souls are at stake and the perpetuation of our confession is at stake. About the former concern, there is no question that action is imperative. Regarding the latter, we must decide how much we are willing to sacrifice to continue the work begun by our Reformation forebears. At any rate, the post-modern worldview is antithetical to a traditional, Christian confessional worldview. This is most certainly true.

Liberal arts education is, at its core, about educating for freedom. The benefit to society of educating our children for freedom is obvious; as is the detriment to society of neglecting right education. Given more time, I could hold forth about the relation of the approach here elucidated and vocation. But I think this audience understands well that herein lies our cultural imperative. (For a fuller discussion see Luther's "The Temporal Benefit or Injury arising from the Support or the Neglect of Schools" and Veith's *God at Work*). This audience is keenly aware, also, of charge, before Almighty God, bring up our children in the fear and admonition of the Lord.

Beyond helping them feel at home within our faith tradition, liberal arts education equips children to understand God's Word in two ways: enhanced ability to follow protracted lines of analysis (recall Paul's tendency to use really long sentences [parenthetical ones, at that!]) and to "decode" figurative language: parables, allegories, metaphors. Approaching learning in this way literally gives one "ears to hear" better the rhythms of scripture and eyes to see better truths expressed by means of images. Learning rhetoric and

dialectic, in the manner detailed above, equips one to “rightly divide the Word” with more clarity, confidence, and precision than one capable of grasping only isolated truths, one scripture verse at a time.

Finally, unlike the preponderance of thought regarding ethics in the Western tradition, because rhetoric aims to persuade the *other*; rhetorical ethics take into account *both* “I and thou.” It involves us in both the thought life and passions of other children of the Heavenly Father, nourishing their souls, helping them sprout wings, and sending them aloft. We are now positioned to understand fully why learning dialectic, alongside rhetoric, mastering the arts of wisdom and eloquence, balancing the appeal to both head and heart, constitutes vital equipment for both service in the temporal estate and, in a most profound sense, love of one’s neighbor.

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