

ΤΩ ΧΡΟΝΟΥ ΚΑΙΡΩ

“In the Nick of Time”

Occasional Essays
and Other Stuff
for Christian
Students

Presented by the
President of
Central Baptist
Theological
Seminary of
Minneapolis

American Christianity needs leaders. American Christianity needs *Christian* leaders. Christian leaders explain the Scriptures, bringing them to bear upon life's urgent questions. Christian leaders exemplify the life of faith, finding their ultimate satisfaction in God alone. They unite intellectual discipline with ordinate affection, turning their entire being toward the love of God. These essays are dedicated to the task of inviting today's Christian students to become tomorrow's Christian leaders.

—Kevin T. Bauder

“...Be instant in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort with all longsuffering and doctrine.”

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January 4, 2008

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Fundamentalists and Scholarship

Part One: Not Me

Kevin T. Bauder

What I would like to do is to write about the role of scholarship within fundamentalism. I see this as an important topic that deserves a fair and open discussion. The short essays that I produce will be far from comprehensive, but I hope at least to raise the important questions and to provide the most important categories for the conversation.

Since this conversation is about scholarship, it must begin with an admission on my part: I am not a scholar. A scholar must meet certain qualifications that I do not possess. Nevertheless, I have spent a good bit of my life in institutions of higher learning, both inside and outside of fundamentalism. I have had the opportunity to observe and even to labor alongside at least some genuine scholars. Through their mediation I have been exposed to much of the scholarly world. While I cannot rightly claim to be a scholar, I think that I have a fair idea of what scholarship involves.

As I write about fundamentalists and scholarship, I have a particular kind of reader in mind. This reader is not the hostile critic who assumes that fundamentalism and scholarship are necessarily antithetical. Nor is my reader the stereotypical (but not unreal) fundamentalist who

rejects scholarship and academic life out of hand. Rather, I intend to write for fundamentalists who are interested in understanding what a scholar is and in discussing what benefits scholarship might bring to fundamentalism.

In this series of essays, I wish to answer a series of questions. What is a scholar? Does fundamentalism need scholars? Does fundamentalism have any scholars? What would we have to do in order to produce scholars? Along the way, another pair of questions will have to be addressed: what are the dangers of scholarship, and how are these dangers to be avoided?

In this discussion, I do not intend to dwell upon the distinction between theological scholarship and scholarship in other disciplines. Since fundamentalism is a theologically-motivated movement, we would expect to find biblical and theological scholars if we were going to find scholars at all. My interest, however, is not simply in theological scholarship. Rather, I hope to articulate the canons of scholarship that apply to all academic disciplines. Of course I am personally interested in the biblical disciplines, and my own perspective is that of a practitioner in one of those disciplines. But I also wish to discuss whether fundamentalists should want to produce scholars in the other humanities and in the sciences.

Before proceeding with this discussion, however, I want to preempt certain misunderstandings. Most people—and not merely fundamentalists—hold rather flawed notions of what scholarship is. Therefore, I think it would be worth mentioning a few things that do *not* make a scholar.

First, scholars are not the same as doctors. Many doctoral programs are not designed to produce scholars, but practitioners. Physicians, dentists, attorneys, and veterinarians all graduate with doctor's degrees, but none of those degrees by itself prepares one for scholarship. People who earn these doctorates are usually highly trained, but they are sometimes poorly educated. The same is true of people who hold doctorates in education and ministry. They may eventually become scholars, but their doctorate is not in itself a preparation for scholarship.

Even the Ph.D. (or, in theology, the Th.D.) is not a guarantee of scholarship. Historically, the Ph.D. was the terminal, academic doctorate that prepared people for research and writing. In recent years, however, the Ph.D. has been debased by its extension to certain non-academic disciplines. In any case, the Ph.D. is to scholarship what a driver's license is to NASCAR. Finding a scholar who hasn't earned it would be pretty difficult, but simply possessing the degree is merely a step along the way toward scholarship. To put it bluntly, I've known many a dim bulb who claimed a Ph.D.

Second, scholars are not simply people who publish. Granted, scholars *do* publish, but not all publication is scholarly in nature. Scholars *as scholars* do not write for popular readers. The number of pages that someone publishes (or, worse yet, self-publishes) in magazines, popular books, and internet websites has nothing to do with scholarly standing. Anyone with enough money and determination can find a way to put ink on paper or to light pixels on a screen. Writing fifty books does not make a person a scholar. Everything depends upon what those books are.

Third, linguistic fluency does not make scholars. We Americans are easily impressed by mastery of languages. We assume that someone who speaks three or four languages must possess some special intellectual standing. And, of course, scholars do study languages. Being a scholar means being able to read what other scholars are writing, and that requires a reading

comprehension of at least German, French, and English. In theology, we rightly expect scholars to study Greek, Hebrew, and usually Aramaic. Other disciplines require yet other languages. Simply knowing the languages, however, is no guarantee of scholarship. The issue is not just how many languages a person knows but what that person reads in those languages.

Fourth, scholars and professors are distinct (though overlapping) categories. Most professors are not scholars and some scholars are not professors. Being able to teach effectively does require a certain measure of learning, but a scholar is more than simply a learned person. A professor who concentrates on teaching may not have time to pursue much scholarship, while a professor who concentrates on scholarship will often be less effective in the classroom. Individuals who are both good teachers and good scholars are rather rare—and their value corresponds to their scarcity.

Scholars do usually earn doctorates, study languages, publish books and articles, and teach in institutions of higher learning. None of these things by themselves will make an individual into a scholar, however. In fact, all of them together won't. Scholarship is something more than these. In the next essay I will try to articulate what that "something more" includes.✘

This essay is by [Kevin T. Bauder](#), president of Central Baptist Theological Seminary. Not every one of the professors, students, or alumni of Central Seminary necessarily agrees with every opinion that it expresses.

From Christian Ethics
Thomas Traherne (1636-1674)

For man to act as if his soul did see
The very brightness of eternity;
For man to act as if his love did burn
Above the spheres, even while it's in its urn;
For man to act even in the wilderness
As if he did those sovereign joys possess
Which do at once confirm, stir up, inflame
And perfect angels—having not the same!
It doth increase the value of his deeds;
In this a man a Seraphim exceeds.

To act on obligations yet unknown,
To act upon rewards as yet unshown,
To keep commands whose beauty's yet unseen,
To cherish and retain a zeal between
Sleeping and waking, shows a constant care;

And that a deeper love, a love so rare
That no eye-service may with it compare.

The angels, who are faithful while they view
His glory, know not what themselves would do,
Were they in our estate! A dimmer light
Perhaps would make them err as well as we;
And in the coldness of a darker night
Forgetful and lukewarm themselves might be.
Our very rust shall cover us with gold,
Our dust shall sparkle while their eyes behold
The glory springing from a feeble state,
Where mere belief doth, if not conquer fate,
Surmount, and pass what it doth antedate.✠

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January 11, 2008

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Fundamentalists and Scholarship

Part Two: What Is a Scholar?

Kevin T. Bauder

The idea of scholarship has narrowed over the centuries. During the later Middle Ages and the Renaissance, an ideal scholar would attempt to comprehend the entire body of human knowledge. As the corpus of knowledge expanded, however, the sciences and the humanities were gradually disengaged from one or the other, resulting in two sets of scholars. During the Nineteenth and early Twentieth Centuries, European universities (beginning with Berlin) were transformed into research institutions and scholarship was increasingly viewed as advancement with a narrow specialization. This model was transplanted to North America, first at Johns Hopkins University and then in the schools connected with the American Association of Universities.

These shifts have resulted in two tensions surrounding the term “scholar.” First, some favor an older vision of scholarship that emphasizes broad learning, while others favor a definition focused more narrowly on advancing the frontiers of knowledge through specialized research and publishing. Second, the two halves of the academy tend to be suspicious of each

other's scholarship. Humanists sometimes dismiss scientists as mere technicians, while scientists sometimes write off the humanities as less than rigorous.

These differences are mere niggles, however, in view of a broad consensus about what scholarship involves and who is qualified as a scholar. What are the elements in this consensus?

First, scholars understand the role of their discipline within the overall intellectual enterprise. This requires them to possess both intellectual skill (mastery of the liberal arts) and exposure to the entire field of learning. More specifically, they must grasp the main contours of the "Great Conversation" within Western intellectual development. They know the main questions that have been asked and the most important answers that have been suggested. In other words, a scholar must, to at least some degree, be a person of culture and broad learning.

Second, scholars must master comprehensively the literature within their own disciplines, including both the current and classical literature (the "classical" literature may not be very old, depending upon the discipline). They know their partners in conversation, whether living or dead. They are familiar with what has been thought and said. They immerse themselves in their discipline. It becomes the medium in which they live and move and have their being. They are constantly aware of their indebtedness to the discipline. They realize how their own work builds upon it, and they recognize when their research and conclusions depart from its established wisdom.

Third, scholars not only know the conversation and listen to the conversation, but they also advance the conversation. More than any other thing, the ability to advance the discipline—to contribute to knowledge—is what marks an individual as a scholar. In order to contribute to the conversation and advance the discipline, a scholar must necessarily engage in specialized research. Scientists conduct their research in laboratories while humanists conduct theirs in libraries, but no one qualifies as a scholar who is not somehow furthering the discipline through research.

Fourth, and implied in the foregoing, scholars enter into the conversation. They share the results of their research through professional interaction. They attend the meetings of their discipline, where they read and hear papers. They contribute to the journals. They put the results of their research into print. In a word, they *publish*, not for the general populace, but for the community of scholars. Credible, academic publication is the *sine qua non* of scholarship.

Fifth, scholars are accountable to the discipline. In other words, they are subject to peer review. Peer review is not peer agreement. Rather, it is recognition that the canons of the discipline have been observed. Scholars do not publish their serious works through vanity presses or in popular venues. They do not self-publish. Rather, they take advantage of the venues that are offered within and recognized by the discipline. Even if they disagree with the established wisdom of the discipline, their goal is to persuade other scholars. Whatever popular writing a scholar may print is simply irrelevant to her or his standing as a scholar.

Sixth, scholars converse in a particular manner. They do not typically set out to prove a point, but to find an answer. They are driven by a sense of wonder. They want to *know*; they want to *discover*. When they submit the results of their research, they articulate the questions that they are intending to answer, the alternatives that they have examined, and the evidence that they have accumulated. They explain how they have weighed the evidence and why they have weighed it as they have. They assess the probability of their conclusions, and they

articulate the conditions under which their conclusions might be shown to be mistaken. They listen respectfully to contradictory opinions and they respond dispassionately. This “scholarly temperament” does not come naturally to everyone, but it is cultivated by all scholars for their interactions within the discipline.

Finally, scholars are aware of disciplines that overlap theirs. If they are theologians, then they take cognizance of philosophy and intellectual history. If they are Old Testament scholars, then they know what is happening in archeology, Semitics, and ancient Near-and-Middle Eastern Studies. If they are New Testament scholars, then they keep at least marginally current in classics, patristics, and First Century history. Just as scholars hold each other accountable within each discipline, the disciplines also hold each other accountable.

The foregoing discussion reveals that scholarship is the activity of communities. It is not pursued by solitary individuals, and it cannot flourish in intellectual ghettos. The individual scholar pursues specialized research that builds upon and contributes to the work of an entire discipline. For scholars, no “parallel universe” exists outside of the disciplines. Those who isolate themselves from the disciplines forfeit the privilege of being recognized as scholars, no matter how learned they may be.

Holding a doctor’s degree is no guarantee that a person is a scholar, though a research doctorate is normally a milestone towards scholarship. The purposes of the doctorate are to prepare students to perform the tasks of a scholar and to bring them into the conversation of a discipline. The dissertation is the first substantial word that a fledgling scholar speaks in the conversation. It is only the beginning, however. Recognition as a scholar depends entirely upon what one does after one has completed the Ph.D. ✖

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To Heaven

Ben Jonson (1572-1637)

Good and great God, can I not think of thee
But it must straight my melancholy be?
Is it interpreted in me disease
That, laden with my sins, I seek for ease?
Oh be thou witness, that the reins dost know
And hearts of all, if I be sad for show,
And judge me after; if I dare pretend
To ought but grace or aim at other end.

As thou art all, so be thou all to me,
First, midst, and last, converted, one and three;
My faith, my hope, my love; and in this state
My judge, my witness, and my advocate.
Where have I been this while exil'd from thee?
And whither rap'd, now thou but stoop'st to me?
Dwell, dwell here still. O, being everywhere,
How can I doubt to find thee ever here?
I know my state, both full of shame and scorn,
Conceiv'd in sin, and unto labour borne,
Standing with fear, and must with horror fall,
And destin'd unto judgment, after all.
I feel my griefs too, and there scarce is ground
Upon my flesh t' inflict another wound.
Yet dare I not complain, or wish for death
With holy Paul, lest it be thought the breath
Of discontent; or that these prayers be
For weariness of life, not love of thee. ✠

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January 18, 2008

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Fundamentalists and Scholarship

Part Three: Hazards of Scholarship

Kevin T. Bauder

In the past two essays I have tried to articulate how scholars understand their own craft. My guess is that many fundamentalists will think that I have defined scholarship too rigorously. To this I can only reply that I shall be embarrassed if real scholars stumble across these essays, because they will most likely think that I have not understood their work rigorously *enough*. What I have articulated is, I think, a fair if minimal description of how scholarship is perceived within the real world of the academy.

I now wish to ask a question that will move us toward the core of this series: Does fundamentalism need scholars? In order to answer this question, we need to make two assessments. First, we need to perceive the hazards of scholarship so that we can calculate what fundamentalism stands to lose by having scholars. Then we need to understand the benefits of scholarship so that we can estimate what fundamentalism stands to gain. In this essay I will mention three hazards or dangers that come along with scholarship.

The first hazard is that scholarship consumes considerable resources. Would-be scholars must normally devote most of a decade to formal education—more, if they are studying for the

theological disciplines. The upper levels of their preparation require them to master languages, to refine rigorous research skills, and to control large corpora of literature. Doctoral education is a full-time job in itself, and it leaves very little time for recreation, relationships, or ministry.

Institutions that wish to produce scholars must invest significant resources. Scholarship requires more than classrooms. Scholarship is about research, and a school that prepares scholars must be a research-oriented institution. It will hire the best faculty, then give them leisure for their own research and writing. It will spend significant sums to build first-class laboratories and libraries. The expense of scholarship is considerable.

A second hazard of scholarship is the risk of subversion. In many disciplines, scholars will be exposed to thinking that is repugnant to their Christianity. This exposure will come to them in very credible forms, often backed by the authority of academic prestige. Christian scholars must face these ideas fairly, for scholars who reject ideas without understanding them have betrayed their calling. The problem is that a fair appraisal of ideas means opening one's self to the possibility of being convinced.

Indeed, scholars do find themselves being convinced, sometimes against their previous wishes. For example, philosopher John Hick once considered himself to be a fundamentalist, but he subsequently moved on to become one of the foremost defenders of religious pluralism. While Hick is a bit of an extreme instance, similar stories could be multiplied. It is not uncommon for scholars to find themselves abandoning positions to which they once held for views that they would once have rejected.

What is even more hazardous is that some scholars neglect to change their venues when they change their views. Their new ideas may be repugnant to Christian organizations with which they are affiliated, but they do not change their affiliations. Not uncommonly, scholars who have changed their thinking will attempt to subvert quietly the organizations with which they have been identified. The result is that entire institutions have sometimes been swept to deny the very thing they were created to defend. Scholarship does carry the risk of subversion, and some believe that risk is not worth taking.

The third hazard of scholarship is pride of intellect. Scholars spend long years mastering their disciplines. They typically earn the right to claim titles that command respect in the world at large. They are consulted on difficult questions. They may come to think quite highly of themselves, and correspondingly to think disdainfully of the non-scholarly world. In brief, scholars have potential to become arrogant and elitist.

Any scholar who is worthy of the name has earned the right to speak authoritatively within a particular discipline. Some scholars, however, presume the right to speak authoritatively outside of their disciplines. They may even speak authoritatively on issues of which they are largely ignorant. Pride of learning and arrogance of intellect can lead to such behavior. This, too, is a hazard of scholarship.

How do we weigh these hazards? Should they dissuade us from wanting to have or to be scholars? A few words of assessment are in order.

First, the expense of scholarship (and it is high) must be weighed against its benefits. It is impossible to know whether scholarship is too expensive until we know how valuable it is. We do know that it costs something, but we do not know whether it costs too much. Of course, some good things (sanity, family, devotion, ministry) are not worth sacrificing, even for

scholarship. We must not begin by presuming, however, that the pursuit of scholarship is less valuable than huge evangelistic campaigns, church building programs, or sending a particular number of missionaries. We might even ask whether evangelism or missions might be more effective if we had greater scholarly involvement in these tasks.

Second, while subversion is a serious risk, it is not clear that we can avoid subversion by avoiding scholarship. Three considerations bear mentioning. First, scholars are not the only people who abandon positions that they once held. Second, when people can only prop up a conviction by refusing to hear the evidence against it, they do not really hold the conviction. They have already *de facto* conceded that their supposed conviction cannot bear the light of examination. Third, in almost every instance the refutation of error has come from scholars who have studied and understood the error. Thinkers like Irenaeus, Augustine, Luther, Calvin, Edwards, and Machen possessed detailed knowledge of the errors that they refuted.

Third, pride of intellect is a sin to which some scholars are susceptible. Pride of ignorance is a sin to which some non-scholars are susceptible. Which is more comical: a girl who is proud of being pretty, or the homely girl who jealously accuses her of pride? Rants against scholarship by the *ignoranti* are sometimes amusing, but they are rarely persuasive. In any case, the problem is neither scholarship nor ignorance. The problem is pride, and it is the common property of the human race.

Granted, scholarship carries certain hazards. By themselves, however, these hazards are not a reason to forego the scholarly task. Therefore, we next ask the question, "Do we need scholars?" What do we lose if we do not have them? But that is a question for another essay. ✕

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Satisfied

Gerhard Tersteegen (1697-1769)

Draw me to Thee, till far within Thy rest,
In stillness of Thy peace, Thy voice I hear—
For ever quieted upon Thy breast,
So loved, so near.

By mystery of Thy touch my spirit thrilled,
O magnet all Divine;
The hunger of my soul for ever stilled,
For Thou art mine.

For me, O Lord, the world is all too small,
For I have seen Thy face,
where Thine eternal love irradiates all
Within Thy secret place.
And therefore from all others, from all else,
Draw Thou my soul to Thee...
...Yea—Thou hast broken the enchanter's spells,
And I am free.

Now in the haven of untroubled rest
I land at last,
The hunger, and the thirst, and weary quest
For ever past.
There, Lord, to lose, in bliss of Thine embrace
The recreant will;
There, in the radiance of Thy blessed Face,
Be hushed and still;
There, speechless at Thy pierced Feet
See none and nought beside,
And know but this—that Thou art sweet,
That I am satisfied. ✕

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January 25, 2008

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Fundamentalists and Scholarship

Part Four: Does Fundamentalism Need Scholars?

Kevin T. Bauder

Not all fundamentalists think that scholarship is a good thing. After all, scholarship comes at a high price and it carries certain risks. Why should they want to spend resources on something hazardous? The answer is that there are risks to not having scholars, too. Knowing these is essential to making a proper evaluation of scholarship.

Why do we need scholars? Let's start with something basic. We ought to be interested in knowing all that we can about God's creation and God's Word. Why? First, because they are His, and He discloses Himself in them. Second, because we have been invested with dominion over the created order, the right exercise of which requires us to know both creation and Scripture. Third, because human improvement (whether material or spiritual) demands the advancement of knowledge. Advancements in technology and medicine (e.g.) require increased knowledge of creation, and knowing the right use of those technologies requires increased examination of Scripture. All other things being equal, expanding the stock of human knowledge is a good thing.

Neither nature nor Scripture, however, is likely to yield many more secrets to casual observation. Therefore, in order to increase human understanding, we need people who will give themselves to the task. These people must make a focused effort to master all that has been learned within a particular discipline, to hone the skills that the discipline requires, and then to advance the total knowledge within that discipline. That is the task of a scholar.

Not everyone can or should pursue scholarship. Some people should repair cars and some should bake bread, for those are great and noble callings of God. Some, however, must give their lives to the focused study of some aspect of God's self-disclosure, whether in nature or in Scripture. That, too, is a great and noble calling.

The increase of knowledge is a lifelong task. Whether one is studying the structures of cells, atoms, or theological ideas, advancing one's discipline requires a lifetime of concentrated work. Just as a violin player becomes a world-class soloist only by devoting his or her life to music, scholars contribute to knowledge only by making research and writing their life.

So we need scholars—but do we need Christian scholars? Yes, we do. If Christians shrink from the task of scholarship, then they abandon the disciplines to unbelievers. That is a problem because there is no such thing as a brute or uninterpreted fact. While unbelievers can know some things, they know nothing as they ought. Whatever they do know, they do not place within the context of the ordered, transcendent, and moral universe that God has created, and therefore their knowledge is necessarily skewed. They may gain knowledge of specific facts or even networks of facts, but they will always misconstrue the facts to some degree.

If Christians shirk scholarly research and exchange, then the tasks of investigation and interpretation will fall to unbelievers. Two consequences will follow. First, the perspectives of the various disciplines will no longer be shaped by any significantly Christian contribution. We are already suffering this consequence in many ways. For example, we have scientists who know how to clone human beings, but they cannot guess whether they should. Second, Christians will be forced to get their understanding of the disciplines second hand, and they will always get it from people whose interpretations are askew. Ultimately, non-Christian perspectives will seep undetected into the consciousness of Christians. We will begin to adopt increasingly worldly assumptions without even being aware of what we are doing.

This is a point that bears repeating. Error creeps into Christianity in two ways. Sometimes it comes through learned heretics. More often it arrives through the unwitting absorption of erroneous thinking. Pragmatist revivalism and church marketing were not the inventions of unregenerate intellectuals. Too often, naïve believers have adopted clichéd philosophies that have their roots in disciplines dominated by worldly thinkers.

Of course, Christians who become scholars will confront plenty of error. In most cases, that confrontation helps us more than it hurts us. On the one hand, a Christian faith that could not survive critical examination would not be much of a faith, and we need Christian scholars who are ready to test Christian ideas against every unbelieving challenge. That is how we learn to articulate our views carefully and coherently.

On the other hand, an error cannot be refuted until it is known and understood. Interestingly, the progress of Christian thought has almost always been propelled by confrontation with error. Our understanding of the Trinity grew from the challenges of Gnosticism and Arianism. Our understanding of human sinfulness was shaped by opposition to

Pelagianism. Our doctrine of Christ was enriched by confrontation with Apollinarianism and Eutychianism. Our articulation of justification gained specificity because of the errors of Romanism. Our most important doctrines have been articulated in the face of heresies. Furthermore, they have been articulated by individuals who had an advanced and detailed understanding of heretical thinking: Irenaeus, Athanasius, Augustine, Luther, Calvin, Edwards, and Machen, for example.

If we do not have Christian scholars, then the results are disastrous. We will not have responses for errors when they emerge. Worse than that, we will not even know the questions that need to be answered. We may not even be aware that an error exists until it has had years to entrench itself within the scholarly world, from which it will be able to exert a magnetic influence over popular thinking.

We need Christian scholars. Do we need fundamentalist scholars? Well, if we do not have fundamentalist scholars to engage the academic world, then we will be forced to look outside of fundamentalism for intellectual leadership. If fundamentalists want to get their questions answered, then they will have to turn to non-fundamentalists. After a while they will begin to wonder whether fundamentalists are really serious about Christianity, since they do not bother to answer the most fundamental challenges. In the long run, people will gravitate to the leadership that helps them the most.

Second, fundamentalism itself is an idea that is not generally held among contemporary Christians. In other words, fundamentalists believe that most gospel-affirming Christians are guilty of some level of error. To make a judgment like that without defending it is plain arrogance. To defend the judgment, however, fundamentalists must do more than deliver tirades and publish popular pamphlets. They must grapple seriously with the ideas that distinguish fundamentalism from other forms of Christianity, and that is the work of scholars.

To put it bluntly, if fundamentalism does not have scholars, then it can expect to see its credibility and following erode. Without scholars, fundamentalism runs the risk of being dominated by demagogues and pontificateurs. Without scholars, fundamentalists will not be able to answer the current questions or even to defend their own distinctives. People will have to look elsewhere for intellectual leadership, and they will inevitably transfer their loyalties to whoever provides that leadership.

We need scholars. We need Christian scholars. We need fundamentalist scholars. This is not to say that scholarship is more important than other callings. But the consequences of not having fundamentalist scholars will likely be far more serious than the consequences of not having fundamentalist mechanics or bakers. Somehow we must find a way to encourage scholarship within fundamentalism. ✘

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from *Preparatory Meditations Before My Approach
to the Lord's Supper*
Edward Taylor (1642?-1729)

What Love is this of thine, that cannot be
In thine infinity, O Lord, confined,
Unless it in thy very Person see,
Infinity, and finity, conjoined?
What! Hath thy Godhead, as not satisfied,
Married our manhood, making it its bride?

Oh, Matchless Love! Filling Heaven to the brim!
O're running it; all running o're beside
This world! Nay overflowing hell; wherein
For thine elect, there rose a mighty tide!
That there our veins might through thy person bleed,
To quench those flames, that else would on us feed!

Oh, that thy love might overflow my heart.
To fire the same with love! For love I would.
But oh, my straightened breast! My lifeless spark!
My fireless flame! What chilly, love, and cold?
In measure small? In manner chilly? See!
Lord, blow the coal. Thy love inflame in me.✠

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ΤΩ ΧΡΟΝΟΥ ΚΑΙΡΩ

“In the Nick of Time”

Occasional Essays
and Other Stuff
for Christian
Students

Presented by the
President of
Central Baptist
Theological
Seminary of
Minneapolis

American Christianity needs leaders. American Christianity needs *Christian* leaders. Christian leaders explain the Scriptures, bringing them to bear upon life's urgent questions. Christian leaders exemplify the life of faith, finding their ultimate satisfaction in God alone. They unite intellectual discipline with ordinate affection, turning their entire being toward the love of God. These essays are dedicated to the task of inviting today's Christian students to become tomorrow's Christian leaders.

—Kevin T. Bauder

“...Be instant in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort with all longsuffering and doctrine.”

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February 1, 2008

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Fundamentalists and Scholarship

Part Five: Does Fundamentalism Have Scholars?

Kevin T. Bauder

Let me summarize my argument to this point. Scholarship is a calling that is worthy of being pursued by Christians, and particularly by fundamentalists. While many fundamentalists do not understand what scholarship involves, fundamentalism needs at least a sprinkling of scholars. Unless fundamentalists are willing to allow those scholars to do their work, they will suffer at least two consequences. First, fundamentalists will leave themselves open to being influenced by philosophies that are contrary to their core principles. Second, fundamentalists will fail to advance a case for those principles that will seem coherent and convincing even to their own constituents.

Now the time has come to make a sober assessment. Does fundamentalism have the scholars that it needs? To answer that question I must mention a couple of caveats.

The first caveat is that fundamentalism offers few venues for the pursuit of scholarship outside of the theological disciplines. That is not necessarily a bad thing. Fundamentalism is an idea that is propagated by Christian churches, and the mission of churches is not to prepare physicists, paleontologists, or philosophers. It is to bring believers to maturity. Mature believers

will apply their Christianity to their vocations, whether they are butchers, mechanics, or scholars. Mature Christian scholars will be able to pursue their disciplines within the scholarly world, and they do not necessarily need a distinctively fundamentalist environment.

How many fundamentalists are scholars in the non-theological disciplines? It's a bit hard to say. I have known fundamentalists who made serious contributions to scholarly research in both the academic and the corporate worlds. Their scholarship, however, was largely invisible to other fundamentalists. Most of their church friends did not think of them as scholars, but simply as brethren who were in a slightly unusual line of work—and that is exactly as it should be.

Still, I suspect that the proportion of non-theological scholars among fundamentalists is lower than it is in the world at large. I have known several fundamentalists who contributed to scholarly research in disciplines such as physics, genetics, mathematics, and medicine. I have not known many who made significant contributions in literature, history, jurisprudence, or philosophy. Perhaps this situation simply reflects my own lack of exposure, but fundamentalists seem to have a greater level of tolerance for scientists than they do for humanists.

So fundamentalism does have some scholars in the non-theological disciplines, though it is hard to say how many. Probably the more important question, however, is how many theological scholars fundamentalism has. The answer to this question requires a further caveat, and this caveat takes the form of three distinctions. The first distinction is between scholars and students. The second distinction is between scholars and theologians. The third distinction is between scholars and professors.

As for the first distinction, the word *scholar* derives from a Latin progenitor that means *student* in a general sense. We have a few fundamentalists who have appropriated this older, more general use of the term and who claim to be “scholars.” What they are attempting to do is to cash in on the connotation of the modern usage by appealing to the denotation of an older usage that has fallen into obsolescence. This tactic is both dishonest and a bit comic. Every person who has ever lived is a student of something, and is therefore a “scholar” in the broad sense. To be a “scholar” in the broad sense is no more noteworthy than breathing air or drinking water. Fundamentalists are all “scholars” in the broad sense—but the question is whether fundamentalism possesses many scholars in the strict and technical sense of the term.

Second, not all scholars are theologians and not all theologians are scholars. Fundamentalism possesses a fair number of theologians who are reasonably competent at what they do. The question is not whether we have theologians. We do. The question is whether we have people who actually pursue biblical and theological research and participate in theological discussion at the scholarly level. A glance through the tables of contents in the major peer-reviewed venues will answer that question.

Third, good scholars and good professors are not the same thing. On the one hand, excellent scholars often perform poorly in the classroom. They may invest in scholarship without investing in students. On the other hand, the most effective professors are often so active in their teaching that they are robbed of time for scholarly research and publication. Good professors will have scholarly training (typically, a research doctorate). Whether those

professors are scholars, however, depends entirely upon what they do with the research skills and the literature that they mastered during their doctoral studies.

Fundamentalism does have its share of effective professors. The better colleges and seminaries have built their theological faculties around individuals who hold research doctorates from good institutions. For example, at the seminary in which I teach, every professor holds a doctorate from a recognized institution outside of fundamentalism. The better schools all have faculties of similar quality. Students who attend one of the four or five best fundamentalist seminaries will receive an education that will be comparable to the training that they could get in any other institution. (Incidentally, I know this by experience—I have taken doctorates at two non-fundamentalist institutions, where I have been in class with graduates of most of the leading seminaries and divinity schools. While my own masters degrees were from a fundamentalist seminary, I never met a classmate who was better prepared for doctoral work than I was.) The level of classroom instruction in the best fundamentalist schools is genuinely good.

What about the level of scholarship, though? How many recognizable biblical and theological scholars can fundamentalism count? How many are contributing to the scholarly literature? How many are recognizably articulating and defending their faith and the distinctives of their fundamentalism within the scholarly world?

The answer is, lamentably few. With rare exceptions, fundamentalists do not speak to or within the scholarly world. Even the professors in fundamentalist institutions (many of whom are fine teachers) seem generally uninterested in speaking to anyone but other fundamentalists. Some fundamentalist institutions will not even hire theological professors who are trained outside of their own school.

In short, fundamentalism suffers from a severe deficiency of recognizable theological scholars. As long as this deficiency remains, several consequences will follow. First, fundamentalism will lack a “distant early warning system” for developing heresies. Second, fundamentalism will lack credibility as long as it lacks able defenders. Third, fundamentalists will be forced to look elsewhere for the most cogent responses to current issues. Fourth, in the long run, fundamentalists will follow those leaders who provide the best answers, which means that we can expect to see people leave institutional fundamentalism.

If this price is too high to pay, then fundamentalists must become concerned about producing scholars who can articulate and defend their position. They must liberate those scholars to do the work that only scholars can do. And they must foster an environment in which scholars can do their work without having constantly to apologize for being intelligent and well-read.

What will fundamentalists have to do in order to meet this need? I hope to answer that question in subsequent essays. ✖

This essay is by Kevin T. Bauder, president of Central Baptist Theological Seminary. Not every one of the professors, students, or alumni of Central Seminary necessarily agrees with every opinion that it expresses.

Love. II
George Herbert (1593-1633)

Immortal Heat, O let thy greater flame
Attract the lesser to it: let those fires,
Which shall consume the world, first make it tame;
And kindle in our hearts such true desires,

As may consume our lusts, and make thee way.
Then shall our hearts pant thee; then shall our brain
All her invention on thine Altar lay,
And there in hymns send back thy fire again.

Our eyes shall see thee, which before saw dust;
Dust blown by wit, till that they both were blind:
Thou shalt recover all thy goods in kind,
Who wert disseized by usurping lust:

All knees shall bow to thee; all wits shall rise,
And praise him who did make and mend our eyes.✠

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February 8, 2008

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Fundamentalists and Scholarship

Part Six: How Do We Get Scholars?

Kevin T. Bauder

Fundamentalism needs scholars—particularly scholars who specialize in the theological disciplines. We don’t need many of them, but we do need some. Unfortunately, we do not have all that we need (though we do have a scant handful).

What would fundamentalism have to do in order to develop the scholars that it needs? I want to answer that question in two essays. Here in the first essay, I want to suggest two things that fundamentalists must *stop* doing before scholarship can begin to flourish. In the next essay I hope to offer a brief description of the investment that we will have to make if we really become serious about training scholars.

If we hope to foster scholarship, we must first stop believing a lie. The lie is one that we hear repeated often within fundamentalism. It is simply this: that scholarship is somehow antithetical to and prohibitive of either devotion or service.

This lie surfaces in various forms. It shows up in the smug sneering at seminary education (as in the jibe, “Why do you want to go to ‘cemetery?’”). It is evident in the oft-repeated canard that too much education will rob a person of spiritual vitality, evangelistic zeal,

or whatever. It is the whole rationale for the insistence that advanced learning is a waste of time when one could be preaching the Word and leading souls to Christ.

These arguments sound persuasive until you realize that the same things could be said about nearly any activity. Why waste all the time that we spend shopping for groceries, cooking food, and eating meals? Couldn't that time be devoted to prayer? Why spend energy marrying a spouse and rearing children when we could be winning souls? Why take the time to cultivate a field or practice the piano or make our beds in the morning? The answer is that these activities are aspects, and sometimes necessary aspects, of our very humanness. To be a good Christian does not require us to become less human or to abandon normal human activities. Rather, it requires us to submit every aspect of our humanness to the service of Christ.

The life of the mind is an essential aspect of humanity. The pursuit and consideration of truth is part of what it means to be human. Of course, not everyone is called to be a scholar, any more than everyone is called to be an accomplished chef or mechanic. But every human, and particularly every Christian, should recognize the value of intellectual excellence, just as we all enjoy the benefits of culinary excellence.

For a spiritual person, culinary activity is not an obstacle to devotion or service. Instead, it is one way of serving the Lord. The same can be said of farming or sewing or welding. It can also be said of scholarship. There is no particular reason that a person who cultivates a field cannot also cultivate a life of spirituality and service. The same is true of a person who cultivates the mind—the Christian scholar may also be (and often is) deeply pious and intensely committed to serving the Lord.

Fundamentalists are not likely to produce scholars as long as they tolerate leaders who denigrate scholarship. Frequent expressions of fear and distrust betray that some fundamentalists harbor an unreasoning hatred of the life of the mind, let alone the life of a scholar. Such people continue to insist that learning will kill piety and service. As long as fundamentalists believe their lie, fundamentalism will not have the scholars that it needs. We need to stop believing the lie.

We must also stop deceiving ourselves about the status of scholarship within our ranks. Granted, fundamentalism does have a few scholars in the hard sciences. In the humanities, however, it has fewer, and it has only a scant handful in the theological disciplines.

We fundamentalists have generally been afraid to face this deficiency. Too often, we have tried to kid ourselves into believing that we had all the scholars we needed. We have attempted to bolster this illusion by dumbing down the definition of scholarship. We have been content to compare ourselves with ourselves, and in doing so we have not been wise.

Fundamentalism does have some first-rate Bible teachers. It has some decent theologians. It has authors who are publishing good, popular works on various aspects of the Christian faith. All of these individuals are necessary and helpful. But they are not scholars.

At the risk of giving offense, let me be candid. No institution within fundamentalism can afford to congratulate itself on providing a haven for scholarship. Not one can preen over the scholarly voices that it has produced or that it is presently supporting. We do have a few such voices here and there, but without exception they are doing their work in spite of their institutions, and not because of them.

When the wheel bearings begin to wear out in a car, the problem never fixes itself. Left unattended, the situation becomes worse and worse until the wheels fall off and the car crashes. The longer the driver convinces himself that all is well, the more dangerous the situation becomes.

For a long time, fundamentalists have been telling themselves that they had all the scholars they needed. Many have convinced themselves, but they are living in self-deception. The wheels are in danger of coming off. Unless something is done, and soon, fundamentalism is headed for a crash. The time has come to stop fooling ourselves.

The point of this essay is not to criticize fundamentalists, though the effect is critical. Rather, I have begun to sense within fundamentalism a growing interest in genuine scholarship. That is very encouraging. But we must be realistic about the obstacles that I have mentioned, and we must understand the cost of producing scholars. The next essay will attempt to estimate that cost by asking, "What will we have to do in order to produce scholars?" ✕

This essay is by Kevin T. Bauder, president of Central Baptist Theological Seminary. Not every one of the professors, students, or alumni of Central Seminary necessarily agrees with every opinion that it expresses.

V. Jehovah-Shalom. The Lord Send Peace William Cowper (1731-1800)

(Judges, vi.25)

Jesus! whose blood so freely stream'd
To satisfy the law's demand;
By Thee from guilt and wrath redeem'd,
Before the Father's face I stand.
To reconcile offending man,
Make Justice drop her angry rod;
What creature could have form'd the plan,
Or who fulfil it but a God?
No drop remains of all the curse,
For wretches who deserved the whole;
No arrows dipt in wrath to pierce
The guilty, but returning soul.
Peace by such means so dearly bought,
What rebel could have hoped to see?
Peace by his injured Sovereign wrought,

His Sovereign fasten'd to a tree.
Now, Lord, Thy feeble worm prepare!
For strife with earth and hell begins;
Conform and gird me for the war;
They hate the soul that hates his sins.
Let them in horrid league agree!
They may assault, they may distress;
But cannot quench Thy love to me,
Nor rob me of the Lord my peace.

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February 15, 2008

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Fundamentalists and Scholarship

Part Seven: To Make a Scholar

Kevin T. Bauder

Suppose we fundamentalists wanted to produce scholars—real ones. In what sort of resources would we have to invest? What does it take to make a scholar?

The first bit of news here is good: there are certain activities in which we would *not* have to invest. For example, there is no reason for fundamentalism to educate its own scholars in the sciences and humanities. If we equip church members to be serious Christians, then they will be able to integrate their faith into the scholarly training that they receive in any institution. The only scholars that fundamentalism needs to produce are theological scholars.

Nor does fundamentalism have to provide its own publishing venues. In fact, if we try to, we are likely to fail. The presses and journals of the scholarly world are open to fundamentalists. With rare exceptions, we have not been denied the opportunity to publish. We have simply failed to take advantage of the opportunity that exists.

Furthermore, fundamentalism does not need to produce a great host of scholars. Every church needs a pastor, and all pastors ought to be theologically knowledgeable, but not every church needs a theological scholar. Scholars are not shepherds over God’s flock. They are more

like veterinarians, or possibly like guard-dogs who repel wolves. They ought to be available to serve the shepherds, but their work is far more specialized, and it is not localized in particular congregations.

So much for what we do not have to do. Nevertheless, we must obviously spend something if we wish to produce scholars. What will we have to pay?

First, we will have to invest in serious, liberal education. Liberal education is so important that it cannot be left until college, or even until high school. It has to begin with fathers reading to their little children. Then it has to continue all the way through grammar school, high school, and college or university.

This is not the place to specify a program for liberal education, but I can summarize the results. By the time a student (*any* student in *any* major) has completed a bachelors degree, she or he should have mastered the liberal arts of the Trivium. A college graduate should hold at least a survey-level knowledge of Western intellectual history. College graduates should know and understand the permanent questions and the principal answers. Furthermore, they should be able to read and write in at least one foreign language. These are the marks of any educated person. We will not have scholars until we are serious about education.

Second, if we want to produce theological scholars, then we must provide training in the skills that scholars require. This is the role of academic institutions and Ph.D. programs. During graduate and especially postgraduate education, would-be scholars must learn to navigate the literature within their disciplines, master the skills required for scholarly research, and develop those powers of presentation that will be essential for functioning in the scholarly community. During the years of preparation, future scholars must also make their first forays into the academic arena, attending and offering presentations for the learned societies that service their disciplines. Simultaneously, they will begin to develop the networks of relationships that will lead to publishing opportunities. Most importantly, future scholars must begin to focus attention upon the areas of specialization in which they hope to advance the scholarly conversation and thereby to expand the scope of human knowledge.

If a school wishes to offer this kind of preparation, what will it need? First, it will need faculty members who represent a decent cross-section of their disciplines. In a credible doctoral program, the professors will have received their terminal degrees from a variety of institutions, and only a small minority will hold their final degree from the school in which they teach. These professors must not only have mastered the scholarly corpora and techniques, but also they must have devoted themselves to specialized sub-disciplines. For example, having a single New Testament professor is not adequate: a school that hopes to train scholars must have specialists in (among others) Pauline, Johannine, and Synoptic literature. A single historical theologian on the faculty is not enough: in order to train scholars, a school needs specialists in Patristic, Medieval, Reformation, and modern theology (I note in passing that I know of no fundamentalist scholar who has specialized in the theology of the Middle Ages). The other theological disciplines require the same kind of specialization.

Besides competent faculty, a school needs to provide an adequate research library. At the postgraduate level, a research library has to include specialized tools as well as primary sources. How large does a doctoral library have to be? That is not an easy question to answer, because each library (like each doctoral program) tends to have its own focus. Still, it is difficult to

imagine how any credible doctoral library could contain fewer than seventy or eighty thousand titles—assuming that they represented the right books.

Beyond faculty and library, a decent doctoral program needs to provide its students with the opportunity to interact with the scholarly community. Both faculty and students should participate in learned societies. Scholarship is not an isolated activity, but a conversation with a community. That conversation takes place in venues like the Evangelical Theological Society, the Society for Biblical Literature, the American Academy of Religion, the American Society of Church History, and dozens of other specialized societies and study groups whose memberships overlap and interlock. By the time students graduate with their Ph.D. degrees, they should already be reading papers in at least some of these societies.

All of this is necessary in order to provide adequate training for scholarship. If we suppose that we can produce scholars while making less of an investment, we are simply kidding ourselves. Nevertheless, people who have completed this training are not yet scholars. They have crossed the river so as to stand on the edge of the promised country, but they must now go on and possess the land. In other words, if fundamentalists want scholars, then they are going to have to do more than simply provide for scholarly training. They must also provide opportunities for scholars to do their work.

What does that provision look like? What opportunities do scholars need? I shall return to that question in the next essay. ✕

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I Thirst, Thou Wounded Lamb of God

John Wesley (1703-1791)

I thirst, Thou wounded Lamb of God,
To wash me in Thy cleansing blood;
To dwell within Thy wounds; then pain
Is sweet, and life or death is gain.

Take my poor heart, and let it be
For ever closed to all but Thee:
Seal Thou my breast, and let me wear
That pledge of love for ever there.

How blest are they who still abide
Close shelter'd in Thy bleeding side!
Who thence their life and strength derive,
And by Thee move, and in Thee live.

What are our works but sin and death,
Till Thou Thy quick'ning Spirit breathe?
Thou giv'st the power Thy grace to move;
O wondrous grace! O boundless love!

How can it be, Thou heavenly King,
That Thou shouldst us to glory bring;
Make slaves the partners of Thy throne,
Deck'd with a never-fading crown?

Hence our hearts melt, our eyes o'erflow,
Our words are lost; nor will we know,
Nor will we think of aught beside, —
My Lord, my Love, is crucified! ✠

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February 22, 2008

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Fundamentalists and Scholarship

Part Eight: The Scholarly Life

Kevin T. Bauder

If we fundamentalists want to produce scholars—and particularly theological scholars—then we must invest in their preparation. We must create training institutions with adequate faculties and libraries as well as classroom facilities and other infrastructure. We must expose would-be scholars to the scholarly community, working to bring them into the “big conversation” that constitutes scholarly exchange. The Ph.D. dissertation should constitute a significant contribution that actually begins to advance the conversation in some significant way.

This regimen of training is more than any fundamentalist institution is doing at the moment. Implementing it will require a significant investment. Even if we were to make this investment, however, we still would not be producing scholars. We would merely be producing people with scholarly training. If we want actual scholars, we must also make it possible for these individuals to go on and to do the work of scholars.

What does a scholar do? Expressed in its most basic terms, the scholarly life is very simple. Scholars read and write. More specifically, scholars give themselves to research and to

publication for the community of scholars. Of course, most scholars are also professors, but being a professor and being a scholar are not the same task. The scholar *as a scholar* gives him- or herself to advancing specific aspects of the scholarly conversation. In order to do this, the scholar must know that part of the conversation in detail, must ponder the factors that affect the conversation, and must publish cogent research and argument in a form that other scholars will consider.

In order to perform this service, scholars must pursue several tasks. First, they must know the background of those parts of the conversation in which they are engaged. They must have read all of the books, theses, dissertations, articles, and papers that pertain to any area they choose to address. Furthermore, they must maintain ongoing currency in the new materials that are constantly being published. They will read everything in their subject areas, often before it actually reaches publication.

Scholars must also be engaged continuously in the conversation itself. Particularly, they must attend the meetings of the learned societies. Those meetings are the forum in which they will encounter the most recent thinking in their disciplines. They will hear, in the form of academic papers, the presentation of ideas that will often take years to appear in books. These encounters enable scholars to stay ahead of the academic curve so that they are alerted to new ideas that have not yet reached the general public. Such presentations also enable scholars to continue expanding their areas of academic competence.

Once they are doing all of the reading and attending all of the necessary meetings, scholars must find time to write. Scholarly writing is not simply a matter of putting one's prejudices into print. It is a matter of locating a manageable question within the overall scholarly conversation, inquiring into the possible ways that the question might be answered, amassing the evidence for and against each of those answers, and forming a judgment as to the likely conclusion, given a sober evaluation of the evidence. Scholarly writing is careful, meticulous, dispassionate, and usually quite tedious for the general public. Like it or not, however, such writing is what shapes the thinking of the academy, and whatever shapes academic thinking will sooner or later find its way into the popular mind. If we cannot make our case in scholarly publication, then we will be left to do repair work when our people have been influenced by the ideas to which we did not reply—and for fundamentalists, this repair work has often taken the form of demagoguery.

Scholars rarely begin by publishing books. Instead, they present their ideas in the form of papers at academic meetings. Also in attendance at those meetings are editors from the journals and publishing houses. Once a budding scholar has attracted attention through well-reasoned and well-defended scholarly papers, she or he may be offered the opportunity to publish articles or even to present a more lengthy argument in the form of a monograph. The ability to sustain this sort of academic contribution is the mark of a genuine scholar—two or three papers and a couple of peer-reviewed articles each year are a kind of minimal canon for scholarship. As a scholar advances within a field, the publication of a book every few years becomes more of a possibility. Of course, some scholars publish more, but a person who is able to maintain the output that I have described will be recognizable within the scholarly community.

If we wish scholars to perform these tasks, then we must equip them with specific tools. First, they must have access to research materials. That is why most scholars do their work in or

near educational institutions: they absolutely must have access to a good library. No single library is going to provide scholars with all the materials that they need, so they must also have the ability to travel. Their research will often take them around the country and sometimes around the world.

Scholars must also be able to travel in order to attend academic meetings. No scholar worthy of the name can be involved in fewer than three or four learned societies. Those societies meet annually, and some of them also hold regional meetings throughout the year. A scholar must be provided with the means to attend the meetings.

Mostly, however, true scholarship requires leisure. Scholars must spend hours reading every day. If they are going to write, they will have to spend hours more. In order to get from what they read to what they write, they must have leisure simply to think. People who have never tried to perform these tasks often believe that they are simple, but the fact is that scholarship is hard work and self-denial.

Most of all, if fundamentalists wish to produce scholars, then they are going to need a shift in thinking. They must come to believe that a person who sits at a desk for hours every day, reading, thinking, and writing, is performing an important—even a vital—work for the cause of Christ. They must be willing to recognize that scholarship is neither laziness nor a form of elitism, but a worthy calling that God gives to some individuals, just as He calls others to become physicians, attorneys, machinists, and janitors.

Fundamentalism has not produced many scholars. The reason is not that we lack bright individuals. We have as many intelligent people as the rest of the world. The reason is simply that we have not been willing to pay the price of scholarship. We have not been willing to pay the price because we have not valued the product. Indeed, we have not even understood what the product is, so we have often contented ourselves with thinking that we had scholars when, in reality, we had something else.

Some younger fundamentalists who read these essays may believe that God is calling them into a life of scholarship. What encouragement will they receive? And where will they go? That is a decision that the present generation of fundamentalist leaders is going to make. ✕

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The Waterfall

Henry Vaughan (1622-1695)

With what deep murmurs through time's silent stealth
Doth thy transparent, cool, and watery wealth
 Here flowing fall,
 And chide, and call,
As if his liquid loose retinue stayed
Lingering, and were of this steep place afraid,
 The common pass
 Where, clear as glass,
 All must descend
 Not to an end;
But quickened by this deep and rocky grave,
Rise to a longer course more bright and brave.

Dear stream, dear bank, where often I
Have sat, and pleased my pensive eye,
Why, since each drop of thy quick store
Runs thither, whence it flowed before,
Should poor souls fear a shade or night,
Who came, sure, from a sea of light?
Or since those drops are all sent back
So sure to thee, that none doth lack,
Why should frail flesh doubt any more
That what God takes, he'll not restore?
O useful Element and clear!
My sacred wash and cleanser here,
My first consigner unto those
Fountains of life, where the Lamb goes,
What sublime truths, and wholesome themes
Lodge in thy mystical, deep streams!
Such as dull man can never find,
Unless that Spirit lead his mind
Which first upon thy face did move,
And hatched all with his quickening love.
As this loud brook's incessant fall
In streaming rings restagnates all,
Which reach by course the bank, and then
Are no more seen, just so pass men.

O my invisible estate,
My glorious liberty, still late!
Thou art the channel my soul seeks,
Not this with cataracts and creeks. ✕

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ΤΩ ΧΡΟΝΟΥ ΚΑΙΡΩ

“In the Nick of Time”

Occasional Essays
and Other Stuff
for Christian
Students

Presented by the
President of
Central Baptist
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—Kevin T. Bauder

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February 29, 2008

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Fundamentalists and Scholarship

Part Nine: Models of Scholarship

Kevin T. Bauder

How does one do the work of a scholar? What does scholarship look like in day-by-day life? Can a fundamentalist hope to offer any contribution to the scholarly conversation?

In order to answer these questions, I want to consider three specific scholars. I choose these three as examples because they illustrate different ways in which scholars do their work. I will not mention their names, but these are people whom I have known and observed, and they are people who have modeled scholarly activity.

Example A is a man who is now at the end of his career. He has had a significant influence within fundamentalism, and his name would be recognized by most readers of this essay. His books have been read widely within fundamentalist and evangelical colleges and seminaries.

Much of Dr. A's life was spent in the classroom as a professor. He educated generations of individuals who became pastors, missionaries, professors, and administrators in Christian institutions. His load of teaching and advising was relatively heavy, as was his schedule for

traveling and lecturing. Yet he did manage to make an impression upon at least one corner of the scholarly community.

How could Dr. A find time for reading, thinking, and writing? He was able to give himself to these activities by sacrificing avocations and domestic labor. Dr. A pursued few hobbies besides his scholarship. He engaged in few domestic activities. He did not spend hours in his woodshop. He did not remodel his own kitchen. He did not change the oil in his own car. He did not even balance his own checkbook. These tasks were performed or overseen by a gracious and willing wife. By absorbing most of the domestic oversight (i.e., by exercising genuine *oikodespotesis*), she enabled him to become a scholarly power. Such wives are rare, however, and no would-be scholar should reckon on finding one. Also, hiring carpenters and mechanics is expensive: Mrs. A could not have overseen these areas if she had not had money in the checkbook. Nevertheless, Dr. A illustrates the level of self-denial that is essential for true scholarship.

Example B is from the opposite end of the evangelical spectrum. A younger man, he had become a formative force in evangelical theology before his untimely death. Dr. B was a professor, but he spent only two days each week in his office on campus. On those two days he taught his classes, met with his students, and did whatever grading he could not entrust to graduate assistants. He would also peruse the list of titles from the current journals, and he would assign his assistant the responsibility to make copies of those that Dr. B wished to read.

On the remaining days, Dr. B would work from his study at home. He maintained a significant correspondence and always responded charitably to enquiries, even if they came from students in other institutions. Mostly, he gave himself to reading and writing. At the time of his death, he was publishing a volume every couple of years, besides numerous articles and papers. He had become a controversial figure, for his thought was reshaping the direction of evangelicalism in ways that some considered to be unhealthy. Nevertheless, he illustrates the kind of influence that a single individual can achieve by giving himself to the disciplined production of scholarly writing.

Both Dr. A and Dr. B had also engaged in popular writing, and in both cases their writings were enormously persuasive. The power of their popular work, however, derived from the depth of study and thinking that they did in order to produce their scholarly work. They did not become scholars by publishing persuasive, popular books. Rather, their popular books were persuasive precisely because they were already engaged in the work of genuine scholarship.

Example C is a middle-aged professor who has moved from mainstream fundamentalism into broad evangelicalism. When he taught in fundamentalist institutions, his responsibilities were heavy enough to preclude most scholarly involvement. In spite of this, he did manage to produce an academic paper or a scholarly article once or twice each year. He regularly attended the meetings of the key learned societies, where he fostered relationships that opened publishing opportunities for him. He managed to achieve a fair degree of recognition and credibility within his discipline.

I mention Dr. C for two reasons. First, I have heard non-fundamentalists speak of him as an example of how a fundamentalist could hope to have an influence within the scholarly community. His influence came, not through the publication of massive tomes, but by the presentation of modest projects, each of which developed some aspect of a single idea. By

sticking to one subject, he was able to explore it in detail and to offer a contribution to the world of scholarship.

The second reason that I mention Dr. C is precisely because he left fundamentalism. More than one factor entered into his choice, but at least one of the factors was the chance to have greater opportunity to pursue the work of scholarship. Scholarship takes leisure, and when professors are being overloaded in the classroom, they simply do not have time for scholarly work.

In order to do their work, scholars must have the two "L's": libraries and leisure. The leisure that scholars require is not laziness. It provides them with the time and opportunity to do what no one else will: to read, to think, and to write. If we want scholars within fundamentalism, then we are going to have to find ways to provide the two "L's." Until we do, we can expect to see a continued "brain drain" as bright young men and women are forced outside of fundamentalist institutions in order to pursue both their scholarly training and their scholarly careers. ✖

This essay is by Kevin T. Bauder, president of Central Baptist Theological Seminary. Not every one of the professors, students, or alumni of Central Seminary necessarily agrees with every opinion that it expresses.

Submission to Afflictive Providences, Job 1:21 Isaac Watts (1674-1748)

Naked as from the earth we came,
And crept to life at first,
We to the earth return again,
And mingle with our dust.

The dear delights we here enjoy,
And fondly call our own,
Are but short favours borrow'd now,
To be repaid anon.

'Tis God that lifts our comforts high,
Or sinks 'em in the grave;
He gives, and (blessed be his Name!)
He takes but what he gave.

Peace, all our angry passions, then!
Let each rebellious sigh

Be silent at his sov'reign will,
And every murmur die.

If smiling Mercy crown our lives,
Its praises shall be spread;
And we'll adore the Justice too
That strikes our comforts dead.✠

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March 14, 2008

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Fundamentalists and Scholarship

Part Ten: Scholarship and Separatism

Kevin T. Bauder

Scholarship is not merely a matter of private study and learning. It is a shared activity, carried on within the community of scholars. The function of a scholar is to advance the frontiers of knowledge by participating in and furthering the conversation among scholars. Through careful research and writing, each scholar contributes to and expands some aspect of that conversation. Scholarship is never a solitary activity, and there is no parallel universe of scholars. To be a scholar means to participate in the community of scholars.

To be a fundamentalist is to be a separatist. The advocacy of ecclesiastical separation is the most obvious feature that distinguishes fundamentalists from other Christians. Fundamentalists do not extend Christian fellowship to people who deny the gospel. They also limit their fellowship with other Christians who propagate certain forms of error. Ecclesiastical separation is part of the definition of fundamentalism.

This leads to a basic question: can a fundamentalist remain faithful to separatist principles while participating in the scholarly community? After all, that community includes

many who deny the gospel. Therefore, scholarship requires conversation and even collegiality with infidels and apostates. Is not such collegiality a violation of biblical separation?

Many have thought so. Some fundamentalists have assumed that Christians ought to have nothing to do with the scholarly community except, perhaps, for criticizing it from a distance. Others have sometimes assumed that fundamentalist separatism was driven by a strict anti-cultural and anti-intellectual bias that would make “scholarly fundamentalist” an oxymoron. Both perspectives are wrong.

Biblical separation is not grounded in anti-culturalism or anti-intellectualism. For that matter, it is not grounded in Dispensationalism, gathered-church polity, or even the biblical doctrine of holiness. It is rooted in a proper understanding of the nature of the church. That is why it is called *ecclesiastical* separation—not because it is about separating from churches, but because it is about separation *within the boundaries of the professing church*.

This is not the place to develop a theology of fellowship and separation. It is important to note, however, that a biblical doctrine of separation applies only to situations that involve Christian recognition and cooperation. That is why, in 1 Corinthians 5, the Apostle Paul requires that churches disfellowship certain classes of professing believers, but he refuses to require that Christians terminate their relationships with the same classes of people in the world at large.

Scripture requires Christians not to extend Christian recognition to apostates. A Christian church is not permitted to have openly apostate leaders or members. An evangelist must not ask an apostate to lead his meetings in prayer. Any work that is done in the name of the Lord must explicitly reject cooperation with apostates.

On the other hand, Christians are not required to avoid contact with apostates in day-to-day life. Christians might discover apostates in their political parties, their homeowners’ associations, their genealogical societies, or their philatelic clubs. They may find that they are linked with apostates in all sorts of civic, social, or commercial endeavors. The Bible does not require separation in any of these undertakings for the simple reason that none of them requires apostates to be recognized as Christians.

The rule of thumb is that ecclesiastical separation must be applied to all Christian endeavors, but not to the ordinary situations of life. Therefore, we must ask whether scholarship is an aspect of Christian activity or whether it is a part of ordinary life. The question is especially acute with reference to theological scholarship. Obviously, disciplines like astrophysics and Egyptology are not distinctively Christian (though a Christian may bring unique perspectives to them). But what about the theological disciplines?

The short answer is that the theological disciplines *as academic disciplines* are not necessarily Christian in their content or activity. For example, the Society of Biblical Literature comprises scholars who are interested in the study of the biblical documents. Some of the members are conservative Christians, some are liberals, some are Jewish, some may be completely irreligious. The society exists, not to promote the Christian study of Scripture, but to further scholarly exchange about biblical literature.

Likewise, the American Academy of Religion comprises scholars who are interested in the study of religion—*any* religion. Some members are interested in Christianity, some are

interested in other religions, some are interested in religion *per se*. The society does not exist for the Christian study of religions, but for academic study of religions.

Therefore, Christian scholars need have no hesitation about participating in learned societies such as the SBL or the AAR. True, those societies will bring Christians into contact with individuals with whom they cannot fellowship as Christians. The purpose of the societies, however, is not Christian fellowship, but scholarly exchange. Involvement in this exchange does not violate biblical standards of separation. With respect to ecclesiastical separation, membership in an academic society (even one that specializes in theological disciplines) is no different than membership in a political party or a country club.

The one possible exception to this rule is when the society aims to be both academic and Christian. Under those circumstances, all of the biblical rules for Christian involvement and fellowship do apply. If the society is identified as Christian (or some subset of Christian, such as Baptist or evangelical), then it is responsible not to extend Christian recognition to apostates. If it does, then fundamentalists will most likely wish to apply their understanding of biblical separation.

The foregoing implies that Christian scholars stand in a dual relationship and bear a double responsibility. On the one hand, they stand within and are responsible to the scholarly community. On the other hand, they stand within and are responsible to the visible church. This dual responsibility bears further examination. We shall direct attention to it in the next essay. ✕

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[The Passion]

George Herbert (1593-1633)

Since blood is fittest, Lord, to write
Thy sorrows in, and bloody fight;
My heart hath store, write there, where in
One box doth lie both ink and sin:

That when sin spies so many foes,
Thy whips, thy nails, thy wounds, thy woes,
All come to lodge there, sin may say,
No room for me, and fly away.

Sin being gone, oh fill the place,
And keep possession with thy grace;
Lest sin take courage and return,
And all the writings blot or burn.✠

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March 21, 2008

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Fundamentalists and Scholarship

Part Eleven: The Dual Responsibility of a Christian Scholar

Kevin T. Bauder

In some sense, all Christians stand between two worlds. One part of their witness is to put Christianity on display in every sphere of human endeavor. This demonstration does not take the place of deliberately sharing the gospel, but the world ought to be able to see how Christian values affect the way that people transact business, raise livestock, overhaul engines, or perform any other task that is legitimate in its own right. People ought to see that Christianity makes a difference for brokers, ranchers, and mechanics, among others.

A Christian who becomes involved in any field of endeavor will owe something to that field. A Christian auto mechanic had better know how to fix cars. A Christian dairy farmer needs to know how to care for cattle and how to avoid contaminating the milk. A Christian truck driver who does not understand the rules of the road is a disgrace to his profession as well as to his faith.

Christian scholars, including theological scholars, stand in the same kind of dual relationship. As Christians, they owe something to the Scriptures, the Lord, and the community

of faith. As scholars, however, they also owe something to the scholarly disciplines and to the community that fosters those disciplines.

By definition, scholars build upon and contribute to a tradition. They become scholars by entering and advancing a conversation that has already been going on, usually for a very long time. If not for this conversation, each generation would have to begin amassing knowledge anew. Scholars can further their disciplines only because they have first received something, and though they may work hard to master the conversation, they receive it as a gift. Therefore, they are indebted to the participants who have furthered the conversation in the past and to those who maintain it in the present.

Scholars owe it to their disciplines to preserve all parts of the conversation. To be sure, the conversation will include many false starts and wrong turns, but even those should be instructive. Knowing the errors that have been committed is one way of avoiding them in the future. Studying why the errors were wrong is an aspect of understanding why the real advances are correct. Every scholar in every discipline discovers that part of the scholarly task is to gain an understanding of error.

Scholars also owe it to their disciplines to uphold the highest standards of academic integrity. That is why peer-review is so important, and it is why there is no such thing as a freelance scholar. The results of research are submitted to the community. The members of the community are responsible to detect and expose any fraudulence or sloppiness in the work. Involvement in both sides of this task (production and review) is the responsibility of every member of the community. When individual scholars or splinter movements seal themselves off from the community in intellectual ghettos, they are no longer recognizable as scholars.

Scholars are also responsible to defend the value of their disciplines, both within the larger academic community and before the world at large. Crypto-zoology is not a recognizable academic discipline, but physical anthropology is. Astrology is not a legitimate discipline, but astrophysics is. Alchemy will never become a genuine, academic discipline, even if alchemists begin to publish journals with footnotes and other scholarly apparatus. The public is often confused about which are genuine, academic disciplines. One of the responsibilities of scholars is to defend the value and legitimacy of their disciplines. Incidentally, this responsibility includes the duty to defend colleagues against misunderstanding and misrepresentation.

One of the most important tasks of a scholar is to uphold the collegiality of the discipline. The progress of knowledge within the scholarly community depends upon calm, deliberate discourse. Each member of the community is obligated to strive toward this ideal. Scholars address each other collegially. Activities and attitudes that undermine collegiality (territorialism, one-upmanship, demagoguery, and the “did you go to the right school” game) are genuinely destructive. They are the marks of the shabbiest sort of scholars.

This places Christian scholars in a delicate position. Because they are scholars, they must fully engage the members of their disciplines. Therefore, within the scholarly community, they will find themselves interacting with colleagues whose thinking is obnoxious to the Christian faith. They will be colleagues with infidels and apostates. How is a Christian scholar to handle those relationships?

On the one hand, Christian scholars must never treat apostates as if they are Christians. Anyone who comes preaching a false gospel falls under the anathema pronounced by the

apostle Paul (Gal. 1:8-9). With such a person, no ground of Christian cooperation ever exists. Insofar as an endeavor is carried out under the Lord's name, then a Christian scholar must insist that apostates be excluded.

On the other hand, within the sphere of academic relationships, Christian scholars bear the duty of collegiality toward all members of the community. This duty extends even to colleagues who are infidels and apostates. Within the academy, the Christian scholar must treat them with customary deference and uphold their right to free enquiry. Both inside and outside the academy the Christian scholar must defend his colleagues—including infidels and apostates—from misunderstanding and misrepresentation. Oddly enough, Christian scholars may find themselves defending apostates from fundamentalists when the fundamentalists offer critiques that are based upon misunderstanding. That is as it should be—even the devil deserves to be represented fairly, for the simple reason that a lie can never be made to serve the truth.

These are the responsibilities that Christians undertake when they wish to become scholars. They are the scholarly side of the Christian scholar's duties. Christian scholars also bear Christian responsibilities, however. They owe duties to their Lord, to the Christian faith, and to the communion of the saints. Those are the duties that we will discuss in the next essay.✘

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Despised and Rejected

Christina Rossetti (1830-1894)

My sun has set, I dwell
In darkness as a dead man out of sight;
And none remains, not one, that I should tell
To him mine evil plight
This bitter night.
I will make fast my door
That hollow friends may trouble me no more.

'Friend, open to Me.'—Who is this that calls?
Nay, I am deaf as are my walls:
Cease crying, for I will not hear
Thy cry of hope or fear.
Others were dear,
Others forsook me: what art thou indeed

That I should heed
Thy lamentable need?
Hungry should feed,
Or stranger lodge thee here?

'Friend, My Feet bleed.
Open thy door to Me and comfort Me.'
I will not open, trouble me no more.
Go on thy way footsore,
I will not rise and open unto thee.

'Then is it nothing to thee? Open, see
Who stands to plead with thee.
Open, lest I should pass thee by, and thou
One day entreat my Face
And howl for grace,
And I be deaf as thou art now.
Open to Me.'

Then I cried out upon him: Cease,
Leave me in peace:
Fear not that I should crave
Aught thou mayst have.
Leave me in peace, yea trouble me no more,
Lest I arise and chase thee from my door.
What, shall I not be let
Alone, that thou dost vex me yet?

But all night long that voice spake urgently:
'Open to Me.'
Still harping in mine ears:
'Rise, let Me in.'
Pleading with tears:
'Open to Me that I may come to thee.'
While the dew dropped, while the dark hours were cold:
'My Feet bleed, see My Face,
See My Hands bleed that bring thee grace,
My Heart doth bleed for thee,
Open to Me.'

So till the break of day:
Then died away
That voice, in silence as of sorrow;

Then footsteps echoing like a sigh
Passed me by,
Lingering footsteps slow to pass.
On the morrow
I saw upon the grass
Each footprint marked in blood, and on my door
The mark of blood for evermore.✘

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March 28, 2008

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Fundamentalists and Scholarship

Part Twelve: The Christian Scholar’s Christian Responsibility

Kevin T. Bauder

Christian scholars—especially theological scholars—owe certain duties to the academic world, but they also owe duties to the Christian faith. For the most part, the Christian duties of scholars are exactly the same as those of Christians in any calling. What Christian scholars owe to their faith is not different in kind than the obligations of Christian farmers, dock laborers, or truck drivers. Two areas of duty, however, merit special emphasis for Christian scholars.

One is the defense and exposition of the faith. All Christians have a duty to defend and expound the faith, but this is an area in which Christian scholars should exercise genuine leadership. They must provide that leadership in at least three ways.

First, Christian scholars act as a “distant early warning system” for heresy. Because of their involvement in the academy, they will usually be among the first to confront new attacks upon the faith. Errors such as Open Theism and the New Perspective on Paul were first voiced in the academic world. One responsibility of Christian scholars is to alert the rest of the Christian world to the presence of theological aberration, not only by pointing it out, but also by helping church leaders to understand what it means and why it matters.

A good example of a scholar who performed this duty well is J. Gresham Machen. He lived in a day when few people understood what theological liberalism was, and fewer could explain why it was not Christianity. Because he had been schooled under liberals, Machen knew their system in detail. In *Christianity and Liberalism* he was able to pinpoint the specific characteristics of theological liberalism that disqualified it as a Christian theology. His voice sounded a fearless warning against the liberal theology. Like Machen, Christian scholars must be willing to expose serious error.

Second, Christian scholars bear the special responsibility of developing detailed answers when the faith is challenged. They are the people who are best positioned to hear the arguments and to examine the evidence. Their job is that of “Casting down imaginations, and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ” (2 Cor. 10:5).

The Christian faith can withstand full examination. It has nothing to fear from exposure to the truth. The bare facts are never against Christianity for the simple reason that a bare fact has never existed. Every putative fact has already been interpreted through the lens of some set of presuppositions. The responsibility of Christian scholars is to expose the failures of false systems of interpretation and then to demonstrate how the evidence appears when interpreted from the perspective of truth.

Machen again serves as an outstanding example of a Christian theologian who was faithful to this duty. He lived during the era when biblical criticism was at its apex. Critical scholarship as a whole seemed determined to drive a wedge between the religion of the (historical) Jesus and the religion of Paul, which was supposed to have been derived largely from pagan sources. Machen knew the arguments and he knew the evidence. In *The Origin of Paul's Religion* he offered a full exposition of the best and latest critical scholarship, but then answered it so thoroughly that his treatment has never been refuted successfully. After nearly a century, Machen's book remains a convincing refutation of the liberal position.

Third, Christian scholars are responsible to expound the faith for the people of God. Christian teaching includes many matters that are difficult to grasp, and God's people are not greatly edified by affirming a faith that they do not understand. Christian scholars have the duty to explain the faith so that ordinary Christians are able to comprehend it and to respond rightly.

Machen again illustrates the point. Besides his works of scholarship and apologetics, he published several volumes of addresses and essays that expounded aspects of the Christian faith. Books such as *God Transcendent* and *The Christian View of Man* were meant for ordinary Christians, not just other scholars. Popular articles flowed from Machen's pen. Without ever relinquishing his responsibility toward the scholarly community or his duty to defend the faith, Machen produced an exposition of Christianity that continues to edify God's people more than six decades after his death.

Defense and exposition of the faith is one area in which the duties of Christian scholars should receive special emphasis. The other area involves the demonstration of servanthood and Christian humility. Again, this obligation is not unique to scholars—all Christians are to serve humbly within the body of Christ, but scholars probably face some unique temptations in this area.

Christian scholars must realize that they are not the appointed leaders of the Church, nor are seminaries and universities divinely ordained. God has determined that His work should be accomplished primarily through local churches under the leadership of pastors. Theirs is the teaching office of the church. Scholarship is a nearly impossible pursuit for all but a few pastors, but pastors can benefit greatly from the insights that scholars provide. For their part, scholars must understand that their primary role within the churches is to use their gifts in support of pastoral ministry.

Christian scholars must also realize that their calling, while dignified, is not a higher calling than any other. Granted, it is unique, and the number of people who can answer the scholarly calling is small. Some Christians display a tendency to view scholars (especially theological scholars) as a kind of elite corps. Scholars must remember, however, that their abilities are purely a gift from God. All callings have their places, and in the providence of God the accountant, the mechanic, and the grocery clerk serve with as much dignity as the scholar.

Scholars have a tendency to define the value of persons according to their intellectual contributions. This attitude has no place in Christian scholarship. The Christian scholar is first and foremost a citizen of the New Jerusalem. Therefore, Christian scholars must never be embarrassed to acknowledge any brother of whom God Himself is not ashamed (Heb. 11:16).

Christian scholars must not lose their focus upon piety. Churches do not need cold intellects. They can, however, be edified by sharp minds, as long as those minds are directed by warm hearts. The life of study does not replace the life of prayer, and intellectual understanding is no substitute for obedience. Many scholars may find themselves beggared at the Judgment Seat of Christ, while simple widows and illiterate laborers receive great reward.

Most of all, Christian scholars must cultivate the virtue of patience. Not everybody will grasp the implications of biblical ideas as quickly as scholars do. The work of the scholar is partly to explain the truth over and over again, laboring patiently until the people of God begin to understand where it leads.

Fundamentalism needs scholars. Fundamentalism especially needs scholars in the theological disciplines. Those scholars will be a tremendous help as long as they remember their twofold responsibility. They hold duties toward the academic world, but they also hold duties toward the Lord, the faith, and the church.✘

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Prayer to the Father of Heaven

John Skelton (c. 1460-1529)

O Radiant Luminary of light interminable,
Celestial Father, potential God of might,
Of heaven and earth O Lord incomparable,
Of all perfections the Essential most perfite!
O Maker of mankind, that formed day and night,
Whose power imperial comprehendeth every place!
Mine heart, my mind, my thought, my whole delight
Is, after this life, to see thy glorious Face.

Whose magnificence is incomprehensible,
All arguments of reason which far doth exceed,
Whose Deity doubtless is indivisible,
From whom all goodness and virtue doth proceed,
Of thy support all creatures have need:
Assist me, good Lord, and grant me of thy grace
To live to thy pleasure in word, thought, and deed,
And, after this life, to see thy glorious Face.✠

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