
A Christian Philosophy Of Learning: Application to Literature (and Other Arts)

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CRPC Adult Sunday School
C. Michael Holloway
Class #9

<http://www.logicteacher.com/pol/>

Verities So Far

- P V^2_1 : A wise person will continually seek to acquire and apply truth for the glory of God. An unwise person will not.
- P V^2_2 : Truth consists of all the propositions that God affirms.
- P V^2_3 : A truth is still a truth, even if you do not believe it is true, or if you do not know whether it is true, or if God has not chosen to reveal that it is true.
- P V^2_4 : The starting point for acquiring and applying truth is regeneration.
- P V^2_5 : No person ever reaches a point where he should stop acquiring and applying truth.

Verities So Far (continued)

- P V^2_6 : All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work.
— 2 Timothy 3:16-17
- P V^2_7 : God does not need to reason from known truth to new truth, because He knows everything all at once.
- P V^2_8 : Humans must reason from known truth to new truth, because we do not know everything all at once.
- P V^2_9 : Human reasoning may be divided into two main types: deductive reasoning, which is evaluated as to validity and soundness; and inductive reasoning, which is evaluated as to strength, burden of proof, and standards of proof.

Verities So Far (continued 2)

- P V^2_{10} : Proponents of a particular theory rarely give accurate descriptions of opposing theories, no matter how hard they try to be accurate.
- P V^2_{11} : All legitimate apologetic methods affirm these two propositions: (1) Unbelief in the Gospel stems from sin, not from intellectual problems with the message; (2) Only God, by his grace, saves anyone.
- P V^2_{12} : All legitimate scientific inquiry operates within the framework and constraints established by God's revelation in Scripture.

Q²₄: Clark

"[Science, including] physics, with its derivatives chemistry and biology, is totally, totally incompetent, both positively and negatively, to make any metaphysical or theological pronouncement."

Foundations of Discussion

- P The Bible does not forbid the use of literature, painting, sculpture, or other arts.
 - ▶ Certain arts are explicitly condoned in the Scripture.
 - ▶ Others are condoned implicitly.

- P The Bible does not limit the arts to “religious” subjects alone.

- P The Bible does not require that Christians only read literature by Christian authors, or only view paintings by Christian painters, or

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- P Literature differs from the other subjects we've studied (and will study) in that many of the truth claims are not explicit.
 - ▶ The actual truth claims being made may not appear anywhere in the text, but must be inferred from the text.
 - ▶ For non-verbal arts, all truth claims must be inferred.

Valuable Verity (V^2_{13})

**Most truth claims in literature
(and all truth claims
in non-verbal arts)
are made through exemplification,
not through explicit stating
of the propositions
that are affirmed.**

W^2_8 Homework

- P Pick a short passage from a favorite literary work, and list some of the propositions affirmed in that passage.
- P You may also do the same for a painting, or some other work of art, if you like.

A Passage to Consider

From *Intruder in the Dust*, William Faulkner (original copyright 1948):

It's all *now* you see. Yesterday won't be over until tomorrow and tomorrow began ten thousand years ago. For every Southern boy fourteen years old, not once, but whenever he wants it, there is an instant when it's still not yet two o'clock on that July afternoon in 1863, the brigades are in position behind the rail fence, the guns are laid and ready in the woods and the furled flags are already loosened to break out and Pickett himself with his long oiled ringlets and his hat in one hand probably and his sword in the other looking up the hill waiting for Longstreet to give the word and it's all in the balance, it hasn't happened yet, it hasn't even begun yet, it not only hasn't begun yet but there is still time for it not to begin against that position and those circumstances which made more men than Garnett and Kemper and Armstead and Wilcox look grave yet it's going to begin, we all know that, we have come too far with too much at stake and that moment doesn't need even a fourteen-year-old boy to think *This time. Maybe this time* with all this much to lose and all this much to gain: Pennsylvania, Maryland, the world, the golden dome of Washington itself to crown with desperate and unbelievable victory the desperate gamble, the cast made two years ago; ...

What Truth Claims Are Made?

- P There is no such thing as history.
- P The Confederacy can still win the battle of Gettysburg.
- P The battle of Gettysburg was the Confederacy's last chance to win the Civil War.
- P There's a golden dome in Washington.
- P Many people think and talk in long, grammatically deficient sentences and phrases.
- P The past has a profound influence on the present.
- P with the Lord one day is as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day.

A Main Truth Claim

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Some Questions to Consider:

P Is this truth claim true?

- ▶ That is, does God assert this proposition?
- ▶ In symbols, is $p \in \mathcal{A}$, where $\mathcal{A}: \{p \mid A_{\text{God}}(p)\}$?

P Which is a more effective statement of the truth claim: the bare proposition, or Faulkner's prose?

Biblical Example of Two Methods

P Simple Statement: Love your neighbor as yourself.

- ▶ (Rom 13:9-10) For this, "YOU SHALL NOT COMMIT ADULTERY, YOU SHALL NOT MURDER, YOU SHALL NOT STEAL, YOU SHALL NOT COVET," and if there is any other commandment, it is summed up in this saying, "YOU SHALL LOVE YOUR NEIGHBOR AS YOURSELF." {10} Love does no wrong to a neighbor; love therefore is the fulfillment of the law.

P Literary Exemplification: Good Samaritan

- ▶ (Luke 10:29-37) But wishing to justify himself, he said to Jesus, "And who is my neighbor?" Jesus replied and said, "A certain man was going down from Jerusalem to Jericho; and he fell among robbers, and they stripped him and beat him, and went off leaving him half dead. And by chance a certain priest was going down on that road, and when he saw him, he passed by on the other side. And likewise a Levite also, when he came to the place and saw him, passed by on the other side. But a certain Samaritan, who was on a journey, came upon him; and when he saw him, he felt compassion, and came to him, and bandaged up his wounds, pouring oil and wine on them; and he put him on his own beast, and brought him to an inn, and took care of him. And on the next day he took out two denarii and gave them to the innkeeper and said, 'Take care of him; and whatever more you spend, when I return, I will repay you.' Which of these three do you think proved to be a neighbor to the man who fell into the robbers' hands?" And he said, "The one who showed mercy toward him." And Jesus said to him, "Go and do the same."

Some Closing Suggestions

- P When you read a book, or look at a painting, (or ...) don't only admire its beauty, also think about what propositions it affirms about God and His world.
 - ▶ What is it saying?
 - ▶ Is it true?

- P Careful and prayerful study of literature that is filled with non-Biblical truth claims may be helpful in understanding the culture.

- P If God has given you talents, use them to express His truths to the world.

Next Week: Learning History

PW²₉: Think about the following question:

- ▶ What is the best approach to trying to learn the truth about something that happened in the past?

P Quote ID challenge #2 continues

- ▶ Who said, “If a picture is worth a thousand words, then why did God give us His Word, instead of His drawings?”
- ▶ Five wrong guesses so far: Teddy Roosevelt, Woody Allen, David Holloway, Gordon Clark, and C.S. Lewis