

A MEMORANDUM OF DR. MANFORD G. GUTZKE'S EXPLANATION OF HOW HE EARNED HIS DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY DEGREE FROM COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY, NEW YORK CITY, AS GIVEN THE MONDAY NIGHT BIBLE CLASS AT NORTH AVENUE PRESBYTERIAN MAR, 8 1954.

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I have as time has gone on with my graduate work, felt the need of help that comes from people praying for you, and several years ago I began and dropped the word from here and there that people might pray for me.

Because it might be new to some of you, I might tell you in just a word what I was seeking to do. You know first I am out at the Seminary where I am a professor. My business is to help young men to get ready for the ministry. While I have tried to study the general job before me, there is a particular problem in front of all preachers. I have felt that my students when they go out to preach would have to preach to American congregations and American congregations made up of American people would have American minds, and as American minds it is a question whether or not they would be ready to accept the gospel because the American mind would be the kind of mind trained in the American school. The American school, high school and college, because that is where the most important work is done – maybe not all of you church members are college graduates, but you have enough college graduates in the church to effect the church frame of mind.

In the American school in the last generation or two, we have had a certain philosophy of education which has been developed on the basis of science, largely a matter of never accepting anything as it is said, experimenting with things trying to find out for yourselves what you think they mean and then make up your own mind about it. Our boys and girls have been trained for that, our college students have been trained for that and they have been trained to think, rather than told what to think, with the result that it has been a current thing that when boys and girls have been sent off to college they have been trained to criticize everything that they ever believed. Many and many a home has been saddened and many and many a parent's heart has been hurt because their boys and girls have gone off to college and have questioned the things that they had in the home and it has been the natural thing in the last fifty years here in America to think that the young generation knows better than the older generation, and the older people who have lived longer know that was not true. In any generation that is not true. You learn by living. People who have lived their lifetime know more than the people who are just coming along, but our school system would encourage our young people to think that because they were trained in the more technical and the more highly sophisticated intellectual ways of doing things in the school, that it was the appropriate and proper thing for them to question what their parents believed in, so that they could make up their own minds, with the result that all over our country we have had boys and girls question about God.

Of course, one of the first things they had to question was the bible, and that in college is very easy to do. They question the bible, they question the church, they question the gospel, they question morality, they question all kinds of standards until everything is questioned in this day and age in which they live.

Now our boys have to preach the gospel to that kind of people, and I tell my boys at the Seminary if they think the people are going to believe because they say it, they have another think coming, because the people sitting in those pews are going to think their own thoughts. What they do or do not do is their own business, and if the preacher thinks any different he can go on spouting all he wants to, but they are just going to do what they see fit to do. You have got to meet them on a different basis, so I decided that

inasmuch as I was going to take time out for study, that I find out whether or not there was anything in the American philosophical system of education that necessarily prevented a person from believing.

With that in mind, I frankly selected what in my judgment was the center of American educational emphasis and I went to Teachers College in Columbia University in New York city. Now those of you who are educators, and if you took your educational work at Boston, or perhaps you took it from New York University; or perhaps Chicago, or maybe you went to Duke, you would not agree; because among those schools there is a certain amount of rivalry, you know, as to which is which, but if you have not been up on that high level and you have just been in the length and breadth of high school teaching and college teaching over America as a whole, you would be pretty well satisfied that Teachers College in Columbia University with a student body of probably 15,000 or 17,000, with more than 8,000 graduate students, would be just about the center of educational business. And that is where John Dewey, the great thinker in education, did his work for more than 30 years Professor of Education up there and whose books, and whose name and whose ideas have permeated the school system.

So I took it on myself when I was going to work for a higher degree, to go to Teachers College to study the educational system that was being promoted through our American schools and take up the philosophy of John Dewey to find out if there was any reason why he ever found out anything that he could establish and prove that would mean that our Christian gospel could not be true in an intellectual way – so I went there. I started going there, I do not know just how long ago, but I would say about 13 years ago. I was away from the campus twice for a few months at a time, but most of the time I went there in the summer time.

I noticed that the book that I bought, which was a kind of reference work on Dewey, was inscribed in 1944, so for at least ten years I have been studying on this particular man, and I proposed up there to those people that I would prepare a study on some implications for education and religion in John Dewey's conception of intelligence, which is the heart of this philosophical system. So I went up there, and, of course, you know they would know who I was, they would know that I was from the Seminary, that I belonged to the Southern Presbyterian Church, and they would find out before too long I was one of those strange persons who believed the bible was the truth and wonder what in the world I was doing in Columbia University .

Well, I said I was an American, I was in the business of education, I thought they were in the business of education - if I could find out what made them tick in education, I would go up there for it, so that started it.

I want to say for all the men who were in my work there, that there is in all the men I met and had any dealings with, a deep inner integrity, men who did not believe the gospel that I believed in, but honest straight forward, sincere men. They could not see how I could see what I saw. I could not see how they could stay where they were, but they were honest, straight forward sincere men and they treated me decently all the time I was there. That does not mean that they agreed with me. It does not mean that they made it easy for me. They were almost sure that if any man still believed the bible was true it meant he was dumb, and that just a little exercise would show up he was dumb, so they exercised me in all these years. That was all right I went along with them on that basis.

That is the background, and so finally some four years ago I prepared a set-up, a discussion – they called it a dissertation, of some 400 pages of close knitted argument to show that the Dewey Philosophy itself, taken on a scientific method if carried out openly and honestly, was no barrier to believing in the way in which Christians have always believed. I presented it up there about four years ago, and they told me it was too long and too big, and so they turned it back. If you have seen me in these past years

walking around with a certain hang-dog expression and feeling inferior, I have had reason – I turned in a dissertation which was turned down. But I said, well then, let's get at it. You tell me what to do, and they said, "rewrite it". "How much", I said? They said, "You have three major divisions, take one". I said, "all right; I will take one".

I flew up there over a week end, left the seminary for a few days and went up there and sat down and had them tell me what to do. So I went ahead and wrote it again and this time had 336 pages and it was on the thing that they had particularly said was the background. I sent it up there a year ago. They had it in May a year ago. I thought maybe I would get my degree last year. They said they could not get to it very well, it was the end of the school year and they would just have to wait, and so it rocked along, but finally as I told you the other night, it came to pass, and March the second, last Tuesday, was set as the day when I was to go up there for the oral exam, at which time I was to defend my dissertation before this Committee.

On the Committee are at least four men who were expert in the field of education and religion in education. These four men are names that are widely known where Columbia University is known. They have written books on the subject, and they are honored Professors of long standing. Three of the four are retiring within this next year. They have finished their lifetime of work, and the thing that I presented in my 336 pages, if allowed to stand, means that they individually meant something in what they have done.

One of these men does not believe God is a person, but if there is a God he could have great power or something of that nature, but no person, and he taught for years and is going to retire honorably – a man who teaches education with authority – does not even believe God is a person, and in my dissertation I set out that is the very center of our whole conviction in the Christian faith, that it is between person to person, between man and his God. That is what I wanted to talk about, and I claimed that there was nothing in what I had that invalidated my position.

Another man would take this position – in the course of the oral exam, at one stage he was the only one that really got emotionally upset – if I had any emotions they were all froze, but I can't say that either because actually I was remarkably sustained – Many of you people have prayed for me and I want to say that I never walked across the campus from Butler Library to Lowell Library with more calm and peace than when I walked into the place where I was to meet those men – that was one of the sweetest kinds of fellowship I have had with the Lord for many a day.

If ever my Lord walked with me, He walked across that campus that busy morning at a quarter to ten o'clock, and I knew that whatever was going to happen that He would be with me. All that I wanted was that he would give me quietness of heart and peace. If I was not worthy all well and good, but when the opposition would arise and I would be put to it to defend myself, all I wanted was a clear mind. Just let me have what I have got. If it is not worth it all right, but if I have got it, let me show it; and I want to bear testimony to you people who prayed for me, I know what it is to be held steady nearly three hours long with these men on a high level of argument, nobody mad about anything, but men absolutely puzzled, frankly uneasy, could not see the point. When one of these men finally threw up his hands over his head, he said here I spend half of my life time to show that the religious practices of the Old Testament have no practical significance, that they were just the current social practices of the day, and you ask me to approve a dissertation that maintains that they are in there because they have actual intelligence in them. What in the world do you think of me?

I thought to myself, well there goes ten years of work down the drain. After all he is the man whose name is the leading man in the Department of Philosophy at Columbia University. I just said, that's

it, but the Lord gave me such peace at the time he spoke I did not feel chilly. I had no assurance what the future would be, but I was given the grace to turn to the Chairman and to say to him something like this – I would regret to think that such a conclusion as this were necessary and said no more, made no argument. Before the three hours were over, this same Professor speaking up said this – "Of course, I do not want to imply that this dissertation is not a worthy piece of work, in fact, I will tell you I have already been using it in my classes and quoting from it although it has not yet been published. I find it a very superior piece of work, I just do not see the point".

The point he was referring to refers to about ten pages out of the 336, but these were ten pages where his own foot was right in the shoe at that point and it pinched him terribly; and he just felt that way about it, but before it was over that man came to me and told me personally that that oral exam, the defense I had given it, helped him to see what he had not seen before. He urged me to include some two or three paragraphs in my final copy, which I am now preparing to send up there, and put that in so that no one will make the same mistake that he had made, was the way in which that ended.

Another man, for example, up there is not able to see, just not think that having a creed makes sense. He thinks if you were a real smart person you would not have a creed about anything, and he has a feeling, you see, that in the matter of religion, if you are really a strong person of faith you would not need a creed. My dissertation says that a creed makes sense and that it is an intelligent thing, and I laid out that I thought that a creed was essential to be intelligent in religion. In other words a man ought to know what he believes and he ought to say it so that the people will know what it is that he believes, and therefore the old historic creed, was an intelligent instrument used by people who actually used it to spread the gospel. That is what I maintained from an educational point of view.

Now that man who has taught his classes – he has just retired from Columbia University – he has a name if I named him to you, is known all over the country as a man who is an expert in the field of religion. He is a Methodist Minister – he was before he went into this work, and probably maintains his place with them, I do not know – well, now, that man struggled, he did not see how, when he had written books in the field and all those books implied that faith meant nothing, he was to approve something that said, well, your creed was intelligent. I will say for that man – at one point along the line, you might appreciate this – he suggested to me in the course of what I had to say on my dissertation, that he thought and he suggested we have two creeds. Every man have two creeds, one that we sing and one that we say, and he proposed that we sing the old historic creed, the Heidelberg Catechism, the 39 Articles, the Westminster Confession of Faith, the Apostles Creed – put them in our hymns for our own intellectual life, and for our straight forward honest thinking, make a creed that is more what we believe.

That is what he proposed, and I had to put a footnote in my dissertation that that proposition was made and certain prominent philosophers worked on such and such a page and have such and such a book, to straighten this thing out; and then I argued in this thing that I thought this would work some casualty, mar integrity, that if a man had things like that, that it would not be good for him to be saying one thing and singing another. I just had a feeling that he had better get it straightened out and get him to think clear so that what he says, he sings, and what he sings, he says, and so I put them in that way.

At one points for instance, they tried to press me down on this thing. They asked me did I believe that a man's belief had any intellectual content, did I not think that the discoverers of science would make a man change his belief, which is a way of saying, you see, to prove that the bible is no good, that it is not true. That is what they were really driving at. That was what was in the background all the time, because if the bible is true then we either take it or we don't. That is of course, the real issue, but, of course, they did not bring that up to that level, but that is what they asked.

I was able to tell them in the course of my training I had come across – the English language being what it is – that the word belief has two aspects to it. Now hold yourselves here – if I get in deep water if you will just tread the water a little bit, you will come on out, just follow me a little bit, that is all I ask. In the word belief we have what we call the cognitional aspect – cognition, what you recognize, to know, and in the cognitional aspect it is the kind if a man says I believe it is six miles to such and such a town. You can go and measure it and find out it is 5 1/2. He believed it was six, but you can check on it. You believe this is cotton, you find out it is one-half wool, but you believed it was cotton. Believing something that is factual. In that connection I told him that aspect of belief, wherever that belief comes in, you would have to leave the subject to science; but you can have belief like this – you can believe in a volitional way, what you will to do. I believe in tithing, I believe in prayer, I believe Christ Jesus died for me. There is no scientific way on earth that you can prove it. I believe God will hear me when I pray. There is no way to prove that.

I believe a certain person is going to meet me tomorrow evening at six o'clock. They said they would. There is no science on earth that will find out whether they will or not, because that is in the volition of that person and what that person wills to do, and I told him in the matter of religion all of my belief depends upon what God said he will do and I figured to be true – right or wrong, true or not true. It could be true and since I take it to be true and God said it, there is no science that can investigate what God is going to do in His will. You cannot find out. He can tell you and then He can do it or not do, and I trust Him, and I believe in Him and that is not subject to science. The man that was Chairman of the Committee thanked me and then said I take it from what you say that you think the volitional is the thing that is important in religion. I said, of course, it is. The intellectual will change, the years will come and go and from generation to generation people think – one time they thought the sun went around the earth. Now they think the earth goes around the sun. Do not think it makes any difference what man thinks about it, for the man changes his mind, but that is not what you call religious belief. That is belief about the world, but when you believe that God will save you if you come to him, if you believe He will save your soul, that is not anything science has a word to say about. That is what God says in His Word and you believe it or do not believe it. If you believe it, you are a believer and if you do not believe it, you are not a believer and if you are a believer you have the blessings that way. I believe and that is the gospel I preach.

We got by that one and we kept on. At one point they asked me how in the world had I thought Dewey's Philosophy could be used for religion since Dewey himself did not promote religion. I said the only way I could answer that was to pass judgment upon John Dewey and I do not think I am that big a man. I will not pass judgment on John Dewey, but I will pass judgment upon what you say and I will put it this way, that if you are going to think that what you have in Dewey's Philosophy is something adequate for Americanism, if you are going to have something adequate for the American school, I do not mind telling you that I think every Cathedral in every American city and every little white church on every country road in America means something in this country. I think these Churches stand for something and I think they ought to be in the warp and woof of our national life and I think that an education that leaves these things out is an inadequate education. Frankly, I do think it is important, and my point is to show if you are really going to be intelligent you will include these things, and I believe, understand them. It gives you a lot of satisfaction to say that. I waited ten years to be able to say that and get that to them and try it out up there.

And now the time has gone from this, I have just reported what I can remember. I just want to tell you that after they sent me out, I walked up and down the hall and there had a little fellowship with the Lord

then, I do not mind telling you, because they were deciding my fate in there. They had the right to say it would not do, and when they called me I knew from the way they all arose when I came in that things must be all right. Patience was going to win, I could just tell, and the Chairman very courteously congratulated me on having withstood as he called it, a brilliant examination – those wore his words – and went on to say that the Committee had voted unanimously to accept my dissertation and to approve my defense of it, and that when I submitted the copies to the library my degree would be granted forthwith.

I do not mind telling you that when I thanked them that deep down in my heart I was praising the Lord, and I thought about you folks at the Monday night bible class, and I said to myself there are a lot of folks there and boys out at the Seminary and there are Christians all over this country who know what I was doing, some of our own family, that would be remembering that from ten o'clock to one o'clock that day I would be standing in that place, and the quietness and peace I felt, stronger and stronger as the time went by, and the wonderful thing when I knew that they just had to put thumbs down and I would not get it – I had had a chance before those people to set forth the truth of the matter – and then when they came and said that they would – I was just grateful and humble about it.

And may I add this one little word for the sake of some of you, and I know this will sound very personal, let me add one little thing in it, that when I came away and my sponsor walked with me across the campus, he said I would be gratified to know that in the time I was out and they were discussing among themselves, and this is his word – that the Committee was astounded at the prodigious amount of labor that had gone into the preparation of this thesis. It made me feel that the time I had spent had not been entirely wasted, and so that is the story, that has in it a tribute to the grace and glory of God. It is a story, but I think it is possible, it could be we might give the fork-lift to our educational situation.

Some of those men urged me to publish the book. Since that time other people have urged me to publish it. I do not expect many people will read it, but they say it ought to be in the libraries. People ought to know that that work has been done and, of course, that is my next project. I expect it will cost me about \$ 2,000.00 to get it published and to have it put out. There may be some returns in the sale. The main thing before us will be to have it published as it is and then after that, the Lord willing, giving me grace, that I shall have the privilege of writing some of my more simpler ideas, something you have heard me preach and teach, putting them in shape and form that they can be released.

I feel more humble than I have felt for years. I knew all the time that the Light was there. I did not know whether in God's providence I would ever live to see it, that it would be recognized, but I am frank to say that when this has been done, because that is why I went there – that is why I went right up there to their place. I wanted to get right into the very center. Pardon me for this word of reminiscence – in the course of the procedure about five years ago – one of the Professors said to me, if you are not going to agree with what he said, why did you not go to some university that criticizes him and named several universities on the Atlantic Seaboard where they do not believe in Dewey and where they do not like him, and he said why did you no go there. They would have welcomed your dissertation, and I asked him this question – I said, if I had gone to one of those universities and I had prepared this subject, what would you have said I know about Dewey, and he laughed and said, we would have said you did not know anything about him, you only trained with his enemies. I said that is why I wanted to come and be with his friends. I wanted to come up here and get the real truth of the matter where you folks were, that all I wanted to find out was, have you got anything up your sleeve that prevents a sinful Christian person from believing the gospel and from what I can see you have not . . .