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J. Gresham Machen "The Importance of Christian Scholarship" Study Guide

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J. Gresham Machen - "The Importance of
Christian Scholarship"

I. For Evangelism

- 1) What has been the effect of modern pedagogy? (14) — emphasis on teaching methodology rather than content — education seen as a training of the faculties (Platonic)
- 2) Does it contribute to scepticism? (15) Yes — it is sceptical to the core. It is the precursor of "religious education" which supposes by training the "religious faculty" of the child. But the Bible presents a body of truth.
- 3) What is wrong with "simple faith"? (17) It is not faith in Christ. It is a modern anti-intellectualistic faith in the qualifications of the method.
- 4) What does this imply about conversion experiences? What is the biblical view (17-18) — conversions came after the preaching of the gospel.
- 5) What is the proper role of Christian scholarship here? (20) It is to help clarify, not obscure, the message.

II. For the Defense of the Faith

- 1) What ~~is~~ ^{is} modernism and why does it not require a defense? (23) Because it is in accord with the spirit of the age ^{but} Christianity cannot be maintained without a constant struggle.
- 2) What is the proper role of argument? (24) It is necessary perhaps to answer objections and may eventually touch the heart. It is not sufficient, but it helps clear the ground of obstacles. It is also useful in producing an atmosphere in which the acceptance of the gospel will seem to be something other than an offence against truth. (25)
- 3) What kind of defense is needed? (26) a) It must speak to opponents within the church as well as without — this means controversy, which is considered by many to be unlauding, but it should not be avoided. b) It must stand for biblical truth (29), c) It must attack error — it is negative as well as positive.
- 4) What method of defense should be used? (30) a) Be perfectly open and above board, and follow the golden rule. b) It should be scholarly — not a caricature.
- 5) How ~~do~~ should we acquaint ourselves with what is said against the Bible? By first grounding ourselves thoroughly in orthodox study.

III. For the Building up of the Church

- 1) Why has the work of edification been neglected? Exhortation has taken the place of systematic instruction.

- 2) Can we do without philosophy? (38-39) No. The role of a natural religion is important and enjoys the full sanction of the Bible. Systematical revelation, however, helps us recover and confirm it.
- 3) Why have we lost the sense of the security of our western civilization? (41) We have turned up the law of God.