

Study and Reading Questions on Martin Luther,
John Milton, and the Puritans

Martin Luther, "To The City Councilmen of Germany That They Establish and Maintain Christian Schools"

1. What are the three main sections or divisions in Luther's treatise? What title would you give to each section? BIG HINT: there are four main sections and here are their page numbers:

Section #1: pp. 347ff.

Section #2: pp. 357ff. (see footnote #19)

Section #3: pp. 367ff.

Section #4: pp. 373ff.

2. Under what set of personal circumstances did Luther write this treatise on education? In what sense does Luther see God behind this endeavor? What personal virtues does Luther manifest in undertaking this project? Is he overweening in his confidence here in so presenting it? 347-348 *

3. What were the conditions prevailing in the schools at that time and according to Luther, what attitudes did typical Christian parents express toward education? What did Luther think their attitudes should be? 348-349

What are the most common attitudes of Christian parents today toward the education of their children?

4. What in Luther's judgment was Satan's past and present strategy regarding this issue of education? In this context, what does Luther have to say about the value and role of young people? 349-351

What do you think might be Satan's strategy today regarding the education of the Christian young, particularly his strategies against DBU and her students?

Do you agree with Luther that in matters of education, "we are fighting against the devil as the most dangerous and subtle enemy of all." Why or why not?

Comment on Luther's hope that Christian education could produce "one real Christian" and state what you think he might have meant by this expression?

What was Luther's attitude toward financial investments in Christian education?

5. To what extent did Luther see his present moment as a manifestation of God's grace in the matter of Christian education? Why did he call it a "jubilee"? 351-353

To what extent is our day also a propitious moment in the cause of Christian higher education? How is God's blessing and grace present today? Give a few specific examples to support your answer?

6. Luther was a salty dog! What do you think of his strong language in calling products of monasteries and RCC universities "asses," "blockheads," and "numskulls" and the schools themselves as "asses stalls" and the "devil's training centers"? Any modern parallels or applications you can think of? 351-352

7. How does both Scripture and nature teach us that the education of the young is a top priority for parents and older people? 353

8. Is education as important as Luther says it is? He uses some sensational language (“despoiling a virgin”) to describe and emphasize its importance. Offer your reflections on his words and on your take on the importance of the educative task. 353-354

9. List and explain the three reasons Luther gives for why Christian parents might neglect the education of their offspring. Is he justified, then, in making education a task of the city and how does such schooling eventually benefit the polis itself? How does the city of Rome serve as a superlative example? 354-357

Compare Luther’s understanding of the value of education for the city with Plato’s and Augustine’s.

What does Luther have to say about the role of liberal arts education in this process? See footnote 15 and 16.

10. Connect the last paragraph on page 356 and top of 357 with our notion of paideia. What does Luther have to say about the age, malleability, effort, expense, and responsibility for the education and training of the young? What is the gist of his sapling illustration? 357

Offer a solid definition or description of paideia in your own words?

11. Read and interpret the first complete paragraph on page 357 against the backdrop of Plato’s concern for the education of the guardians and philosopher-kings in the Republic.

What kind of concern should the Church have for producing responsible citizens and rulers for the city?

Whatever happened to civics classes, anyway? What would a civics class look like from a Christian perspective?

12. List very briefly Luther’s three main themes or points in this first part of his address on education. 347-357

13. Luther wants to know why the Germans—dubbed “fools and beasts”—question the value or usefulness of languages and the liberal arts, but never question the value or usefulness of preoccupation and the idolization of material goods and prosperity. Do we not do exactly the same thing? Elaborate. 357-358. What are the priorities of our society as well as our very own and our institution?

14. List as many values and roles language has played in the divine economy according to Luther (I came up with about seven). 360-365. What ought to be the role of language study in the DBU general studies curriculum?

Note Luther’s reference to Augustine’s DDC on 362. What similar error does Luther have to combat, just as Augustine did 365-366.

15. What two fundamental ends did Luther envision for education? 367. Compare this with Plato and Augustine and their view of the purpose of education. What do you understand to be the primary goals of an undergraduate education for DBU students?

16. What kind of transformation did Luther expect a program of Christian education to effect in young people? What words does he use to describe the impact that a Christian paideia program

could or should have on students? Did he expect change? In other words, describe Luther's well trained student on pp. 367-370. What did he include in his ideal curriculum? (see footnote 44). Comment on his phrase "fit for everything" (370).

17. Notice Luther's call to some advanced students to a life of scholarship (371). To what ends did he call certain individuals to a life of study? 371-372. What contemporary applications might this call have for church, school, and world?

22. Outline Luther's vision for a school library. 373-377. What is its biblical and historical basis? What should be the contents of its collection (censorship again!)? Outline your own vision for the DBU library and the role it should play in the life of DBU?

John Milton, "Of Education"

23. Explain the solid "Augustinian" point that Milton makes in the third line of the very first paragraph of his treatise 247. What other Augustinian point does Milton make in the first two sentences on p. 249 (esp. after the semi-colon)? What does it mean if someone identifies him or herself as an Augustinian? Are you an Augustinian?

24. Milton identifies his theme as the "reforming of education" 247. What all does this entail according to his list at the end of the first paragraph on p. 248? If you were seeking to "reform" education as you know and understand it today, what agenda would you develop and propagate?

25. According to Milton, what is the end of learning and how does or should that end be accomplished? 248. What philosophic doctrine governs Milton's epistemology and pedagogy? 248-249. In your opinion, what is the final end or *telos* of the learning process?

26. Identify what Milton believes to be the primary pedagogical blunders of the contemporary schools and the unfortunate consequences of such mistakes? What constructive suggestions does Milton make? 249-250

27. Comment on the descriptive elements of Milton's proposal for a "virtuous and noble education" and his oft quoted line "a complete and generous education" 251.

28. What did Milton have to say about the building in which education should take place? How important is the space and environment in which education takes place? 251

29. What are Milton's three basic curricular categories? 251. List the specific subjects of study in Milton's ambitious paideia proposal and any pertinent comments about these components? 251-256

30. Did Milton believe in the potential of education to change student's lives? Comment on the elements by which he answers this question in the middle of page 252. Do you agree with this optimism?

31. Why did Milton include "exercise" in his curriculum and what did it include? Is Milton's concern to train students for war as well as peace relevant for today? What do you think of his including the importance of travel in the curriculum? 256-259

32. What principles governed Milton's view of the diet of his students? What role should good nutrition play in an educational experience? 259.

33. Is Milton's proposal for everyone? Is it too idealistic? 259

Leland Ryken, *Worldly Saints: The Puritans as They Really Were.*

34. The categories Ryken addresses are crystal clear: what are your favorite quotes and why?