

Career enthusiasts, at least if we can judge at all by their literature, seek to accomplish their goal.

In conclusion, it is our conviction that the practical arts and some kind of vocational training can have a legitimate place in the course of study of some high school students, but that Christian secondary education ought by all means to retain its strong emphasis on the liberal arts, and that teachers should make every effort to insure that students sense the relevancy of the liberal arts as they come to see their entire instruction as a mirror in which shines the glory of their God, Who has written His name on all His works.

LANGUAGE IS GETTING MORE WORSE

Mr. F. Hanko

I think I'm going to do real good on my English exam this time. I ain't never got no bad marks in English this semester. I always brung my book home and done by assignment real neat and careful. At first I didn't know nothing about them verbs and adverbs, but once I seen how to do it, I didn't have no trouble at all. On the test I done better than in my class. But then, everybody can't be good at English without he studies.

I got this here one friend. Me and him are going to study together. We both try to do better than each other, but I usually get less wrong, so I get the best marks. He can't get that there grammar very easy even though he tries kind of hard. Each of us want to do their best as far as this exam, though. But if I was him, I would have began by studying more earlier. Studying together, however, the exam ought to be easier both for him and me. If we try to really and truly concentrate like we should, his

mark will be different than the last time. I ain't worried about my mark, though, because, like I say, I always do real good in English

Perhaps you noticed a few errors in the two paragraphs above. I hope you did, because I put them in there. I wanted to give you a sample of the language I hear every day in the halls and classrooms and see every day on papers that the students hand in. Awful, isn't it?

I am sure that most of our eighth and ninth grade students could sit down with these paragraphs and correct most of the errors in them. We teachers work very hard on this sort of thing in our English classes. Yet these same students are guilty of the most flagrant assault and battery upon the English language the moment they step out of English class. What good does the teaching of correct English do if it does not result in correct speaking and writing?

It is true that skill in the use of language is not greatly admired today. In fact, just the opposite seems to be true. Perhaps this is due to the fact that we consider those who use correct speech to be "intellectual", and that is a quality to be avoided. Perhaps it is because precision of speech requires work, and work is undesirable. Perhaps we don't see clearly the usefulness of correct language, and "usefulness" is very important to us.

Skillful use of language is one of the most important skills a person can acquire. You would be surprised at the number of times I must mark answers wrong on test simply because I cannot make sense of the answer the student writes. Whether one is giving instructions, telling a story, explaining a fact, or using language in any other way, he needs to be clear, accurate, and precise if he hopes to accomplish his purpose.

I think that the only way we can learn correct use of language is to develop the correct language habit. We must learn to use language correctly ourselves. Then we must insist that our children use it correctly even in ordinary conversation. I'm not pleading for elegance of speech (splendid as that would be) but only for accuracy and precision.

Incidentally, I put forty-three grammatical errors in the first two paragraphs, not counting errors of syntax. If you like, you may test yourself or your children. If only those mistakes were removed from common usage, our language would be vastly improved.