



# Blair's Ideals and Expectations



in Theological Study  
Bishop Tucker Theological College  
Rev. Mark Blair

## PURPOSE

The purpose of this paper is to help students; (1) to understand my "ideals" as a theologian, and (2) to know my expectations as a teacher. These thoughts do not claim to be a statement for Bishop Tucker Theological College, merely the viewpoint of one teacher. Certain statements may contradict the ideas of my colleagues. In sharing these thoughts I welcome criticism. I want to learn, from students and colleagues, about how to be a better teacher and especially a more faithful disciple of our Lord. As I set forth my ideals, a kind of philosophy of doing theology, I want you to understand my outlook. I would be happy if you agree with me; yet you may not, I respect your freedom. The second part dictates some specific requirements I have set as a teacher. You will be expected to follow these, they will be the basis of my marking your work.

## Ideals

My prayer is that we may become more clear and articulate as heralds of the message of the living God. Perhaps some may cite Paul's argument in 1 Corinthians 1 that he never relied on the "wisdom of men," which really becomes "foolishness" when exposed by God's wisdom. Yet in the balance of Scripture we find that Paul is not advocating sloppy scholarship or lazy study habits. On the contrary, the God of all glory is worthy of service at the highest level of excellence we can offer. If slaves are to do their work for human masters wholeheartedly, as serving the Lord (Eph 6.7), how much more those who have been called by the Lord Himself to communicate His life-giving Word! Yet even when we do our best, our trust must remain fully in God; in His matchless wisdom and power. Neither intellectual prowess nor verbal manipulation can lead someone into the kingdom of God. Jesus calls us to be "like a child" forever; remaining humble, teachable, and spiritually inquisitive. Even more, God's call to the ministry includes a lifetime of reading and study.

As I write such ideals I am aware of how I have failed to live up to them. In many points I fail at my own standards, how much more in the searching judgment of God's perfect standard. Yet I do not apologize in asking you to strive to live up to these ideals. Be like the Psalmist who said, "I have more insight than all my teachers, for I meditate on all your statutes" (119.99). May this be true of you, for the upbuilding of God's church, and the praise of His glorious grace.

BASIC CONVICTION

My basic conviction about theological study is that it is both dangerous and demanding. Danger arises because of who you have to face. There is some threat in facing your teacher who holds the power of marking your work; or even more the unseen external marker who wields a more absolute decree. Perhaps one may fear their bishop, their families, or disappointment of folks at home. Yet you are not fit for ministry if you fear people (Ps 76.7; 2 Tim 1.7,8; Gal 1.10).

My concern is that you sense the far greater danger in facing the living God Himself. His word is living and active, the sharpest of all swords, and nothing can be hidden from His sight (Heb 4.12,13) Paul's charge to gospel ministers is "in the presence of God and of Christ Jesus, who will judge the living and the dead, and in view of his appearing and his kingdom" (2 Tim 4.1). His power is absolute and His judgment is eternal.

There is great danger in becoming too familiar with the things of God. That which is vital and essential can become trivial and mundane. I personally struggle with this problem. One way of avoiding this is to realize that the task of doing theology is first and foremost a spiritual one. This important truth can be missed as we study theology in a competitive academic environment. We award prizes for intellectual attainment, memorizing ideas and repeating them accurately. This is a minor part of God's criteria. It is possible to win the highest academic praise and be locked out of the kingdom of God.

The Word of God which we study is also studying us. In fact it will be our judge (John 12.48). Our highest aim should not be that we understand it (or that we can explain it away) but that we are transformed by it; these points are complementary, not contradictory. I define theology as "the application of God's word by people to all areas of life." Thus the purpose of doing theology is to meet the needs of people and to promote godliness and spiritual health (1 Tim 1.10,11; 4.6,16; 6.3; 2 Tim 1.13, 4.3; Titus 1.10-16). Doing theology is the task of all believers, all of whom could rightly be called theologians (1 John 2.20,27).

The great danger we face is seeking to save others when we ourselves are not saved (1 Cor 9.27). A person has no business in the ministry, or in the teaching of ministers, if they do not have a genuine knowledge of the God whom they proclaim. Such a person becomes increasingly hardened by the things of God (Matt 13.13). Such a person faces a terrifying prospect of judgment (Matt 18.6-9; Jam 3.1). Never forget these sobering truths.

In view of this danger, I pray that we will all examine ourselves. Let the Spirit of God through the Word of God perform His scrutinizing search. And especially I pray that ours would be a community of love and encouragement. Strive to excell in both knowledge and wisdom, love and truth, believing and obeying.

## "Blair's IDEALS in Theological Study"

The study of theology is also very demanding. I am sometimes embarrassed when I realize that friends have spent their entire day performing exhaustive labor for their survival. Yet on most days my physical exertion is no more than turning the pages of books and pressing the keys of my computer. Nevertheless, I feel the burden of the demands of study, it is rarely easy.

Some students are surprised that I am a "hard" teacher. I set high standards and give low marks, most of the time. Some consider me downright mean. They thought that since I call myself "saved" then I should be easy, especially if they call themselves "saved" too. I regret that many have interpreted being saved with being stupid. Perhaps my own example promotes that interpretation! Too often the quality of evangelical "scholarship" is poor, this is a poor testimony.

There is nothing about God's work of regeneration that guarantees academic success. The believer does have a new motivation and a new power. Yet it requires work to utilize these; in a sacred and mysterious union of God's enablement through human ability. So that the believer must spend as much time in the library as in the fellowship. So under the Lordship of Christ we see reading (even the challenging works of "theologians") as a spiritual activity. Paul explains that ideas are powerful tools and the human mind is a spiritual arena (2 Cor 10.3-5). And as students and ministers of the gospel we must be about that task of "taking captive every thought and making it obedient to Christ."

The proper response to unbelieving intellectualism is not anti-intellectualism. The solution is not to stop thinking or to be indifferent to the quality of our thought. The believing student should be conversant with the challenges and conclusions of the unbeliever. False intellectualists are guilty, not of thinking too well, but of thinking too poorly - not of thinking too much, but too little. The demand upon the believer is a prayerful and careful investigation to "prove" all things from Scripture (1 Thess 5.21; Acts 17.11; 1 Pet 3.15).

Intellectual endeavor does not hinder our relationship with God or man, sin does. Of course it is possible for our studies to become sinful. The ugly beast of pride lurks behind every academic attainment. We must also define our priorities wisely. The demands of scholarship are not the only demands you face during your course here. You must eat, drink, sleep, exercise, care for your family, love the brethren, share the gospel, pray without ceasing, serve the poor, and on and on! It may be sinful to be in the library when you should be some place else. Each of us must work out our priorities before God; a continuous, life-long, ever changing, process.

If theology is a confrontation with the living God in His Word, then we dare not bring Him any less than our best. Reading these ideals may help you to better understand "where I am coming from," even if you do not agree with me.

ENGLISH IS A FOREIGN LANGUAGE!

Those whose first language is not English face additional challenges in their life of learning at BTTC. Indeed our community is very multi-linguistic. Yet the English language is the chosen "lingua-franca" of our community, as well as the national language. It is unfortunate that most of the books in our library are written for an English speaking, British/American, audience. Many of these are good books, yet their application to Africa is often indirect. I pray for the day that some of your theological writings will be found on the shelves of our library, and in theological libraries overseas. The world-wide church also needs to hear "what the Spirit says" to the churches of Uganda. What I write here about the discipline of studies applies to any language. Most of you will be using different languages throughout your life and ministry. My prayer is that whatever language you use, you do so with maximum effectiveness for the advance of the gospel.

Some students may have come with little knowledge of the fundamentals of English grammar and composition. Yet by the time you reach this level of study it is assumed that you have mastered the basics. If you have not done so, you should make every effort to strengthen these areas. Our college library has some books which will help increase your understanding and abilities in English.

One wide-spread problem is the excess of flowery or complex phrases in the use of English. I suspect there are various reasons for this practice. Some are very conscious of their lack of ability so that when they are forced to use English they want to prove they really can do so! Also, there are different cultural ideas about the purpose of speech. Some cultures use language to entertain; e.g. poems, riddles, and word games. This is true of some African peoples. While most overly busy Americans consider the use of excess words a waste of time. Our telephone bills are higher when we talk too long! Or perhaps this practice is an attempt by some to perpetuate King James Version language. Some consider flowery and ornate language as being spiritual, good for church. Yet whatever the reason, I believe that most of the time such a use of English is unnecessary and unhelpful.

We see in Jesus a model of profound simplicity in the communication of the truths of God. Being "simple" did not mean his thoughts were not deeply stirring and challenging. Like Paul, we are to set forth the truth plainly (2 Cor 4.2), renouncing everything (not only deceptive motives, but also linguistic incompetence) that obscures the clarity of God's message. Someone has said that the task of the gospel preacher is to "make hard things easy." Speaking simply, especially in communicating theological truths, is no simple task. Critically evaluate your own writing and sermons. Seek the criticism of the brethren (dare I suggest your own spouse!), hard labor sets apart approved craftsmen of God's Word (2 Tim 2.15).

# Expectations

In this second half of the paper I attempt to list some specific requirements which I have set as a teacher.

## LECTURES AND HANDOUTS

It is my desire that class lectures be a thinking and learning experience for both myself and my students. For this to occur, it is imperative that you come to class having given some intelligent thought to the subject.

I hope to use handouts of the lecture outlines as a learning tool. (This gives students a chance to read the words which I pronounce so strangely!) I emphasize that I view the handouts as a learning tool. To whom much has been given, much will be required! I hope that the time and energy you save from not having to write will be devoted to reading and thinking about the lecture outlines. I expect students to come to the lecture having already done this. Challenge my conclusions, my logic (or the lack of it), my use of Scripture; share some additional insight or illustration; apply some of the theory to our lives and ministries; the floor is open. Iron sharpens iron, only let us seek to speak the truth in love to one another. I will do my best to maintain some order in the class. Answers to some questions may be postponed to another point in the lecture. Sometimes I would prefer discussing some issues in a smaller group, or in private. Nevertheless, no contribution is without some value.

I would also strongly advise you to take your own notes. Not every helpful point, offered either by myself or a fellow student, will be printed on the handout. Students must know how to take notes. Good note taking is not a mechanical copying of every word spoken; but an intelligent, selective recording of the key points.

I strive to include a large number of Scripture references in my outlines. Some of these are "proof-texts" offered to substantiate a point. Others are included as background to related words or ideas. I do not intend for you to memorize all these Scripture verses. Though there are often significant texts which should be remembered. Yet my main reason for listing so many references is to encourage you to study the concepts from the Scripture at some later date. A number of students have encouraged me to provide these references, saying they were beneficial in their life and ministry.

READING THEOLOGICAL BOOKS

I do not plan to tell you exactly which books you must read. I do try to give a suggested reading list as a guide. Most of my suggestions are books I have read or am familiar with. I would appreciate knowing other any titles which you think are beneficial. I will try to add these on any future reading lists. We are blessed with quite a good college library and I encourage you to explore.

One reason I do not insist upon the reading of specific titles is that not all people will find a certain book helpful. We come to the course from diverse backgrounds and with different abilities. I believe it is most important that you do read. I strive in my lectures to present some of the key ideas of a subject. Yet I have by no means said the last word. Perhaps I have even said the WRONG words. Reading will fill in the much needed details, and perhaps even the corrective. It will not be possible for you to have a good understanding of any subject from just the lectures alone. Reading is not an option it is a necessity. Sometimes I may give reading assignments. I would suggest a MINIMUM of 3 hours per week of reading for each course you are taking. I strongly urge you to take advantage of your being here, you may never again have access to such a library, electricity, and free time in this difficult Ugandan situation. Your hours of study are like a deposit from which you can draw as you minister to others.

Reading may be something that we do so often we no longer think of "how" to read. Yet it may be helpful to review some of the basics again. What some people call "reading" may be better called a waste of time. I have heard students lament, "I spent an hour trying to read that book, but I could not understand it!" This kind of experience has become so common that many have completely given up on any serious reading. It is much better for a student to spend time reading and comprehending a book which is beneficial, than to struggle with a book which is too difficult. The sad fact is that many theological texts are extremely difficult, some of them unnecessarily. Some scholars arrogantly think it their prerogative to veil their supposed brilliance in complexity of speech. Probably because of my limited abilities of comprehension, I appreciate a writer who can easily help me to understand something!

Yet not every concept can be packaged in neat, effortless, booklets. We must not be lazy readers either. Some of the topics of theology are abstract and complex by nature. Many difficult books offer great reward to those willing to struggle with them. Reading ability, like any discipline, will improve the more you practice. As you increase your abilities in the discipline of reading, you will be better equipped to both discern which books are worth reading, and to better understand those which are. Do not get discouraged and stop reading. Your efforts will yield great rewards, books are filled with many treasures, waiting for you to discover them.

## "Blair's EXPECTATIONS in Theological Study"

When selecting a book it will be helpful to consider the following:

1) Find out something about the author. Where did s/he study? Work? Lecture? What other books has the author written? What qualifies the author to write the book?

2) Who recommends the book? If the cover is still on, some recommendations may be given. Try to find a review of the book in other theological journals. What do different staff or students of BTTC think of the book?

3) What is the setting or purpose of the book? For whom was the book written? Is it developed from/for course lectures? Was it given as a lecture series? To whom were they delivered?

4) Who published the book? You will notice that there are often similarities between books from the same publishers. Usually they are serving a particular audience of readers. Often they reflect a certain theological position.

5) Read the first pages of the book. Do not just turn to the chosen section for reading. Is there a sub-title which elaborates the author's intention. Read the table of contents. What is the over-view of the books material? Can you detect the pattern of the intended argument? Read the dedication, preface, and/or introduction. These will enable you to better understand the purpose and intention of the book.

6) Look over the end notes, bibliography, and indexes. What are the major sources of the author? What helped to shape their thinking? Many times these references can lead you to other helpful works on the same topic.

It is very important to take a few minutes to look a book over before you begin to read. It is possible to know in just a few minutes whether or not a particular book will be beneficial. Knowing some of these background issues will help you not to make false conclusions or misinterpret the author's meaning.

Above all it is imperative that you strive to understand and apply the books you read. It is far better to read a few pages well than to "cram" dozens of pages. Superficial reading produces superficial theology. Take time to read thoughtfully, carefully, and prayerfully. Think through what the author says, meditate! Do not try to read more than you can comprehend. Masses of words filling your head may result in massive confusion. Do not merely try to understand what the author is saying (this is assumed), allow their thoughts to stimulate your own. When you write a paper I am not impressed just by your having a long bibliography. I am more impressed when you display how well you use your reading as a catalyst for fresh insights and relevant applications to the work of God in Uganda.

EVALUATING THEOLOGICAL WRITINGS

Here I include this check list which was written by one of my seminary professors. I think these points provide a helpful standard to judge both your reading and your own writing.

1. SCRIPTURALITY. Are the ideas teachings of Scripture? Are they at least consistent with Scripture? This is, of course, the chief criterion.

2. TRUTH. Even if an idea is not found in Scripture, it may be true - for example, a theory about the influence of Bultmann on Pannenburg.

3. COGENCY. Is the author's case adequately argued? Are his premises true, his arguments valid?

4. EDIFICATION. (Eph 4.29) Is it spiritually helpful? Harmful? Hard to say?

5. GODLINESS. Does the text exhibit the fruit of the Spirit, or is it blasphemous, gossipy, slanderous, unkind, and so forth?

6. IMPORTANCE. Is the idea important? Trivial? Somewhere in between? Important for some and not for others?

7. CLARITY. Are the key terms well defined, at least implicitly? Is the formal structure intelligible, well thought out? Are the author's positions clear? Does he formulate well the issues to be addressed and distinguish them from one another?

8. PROFUNDITY. Does the text wrestle with difficult, or only easy questions? (Robert Dick Wilson, the great Old Testament scholar, used as his motto, "I have not shirked the difficult questions" - a good motto for all theologians to remember.) Does it get to the heart of the matter? Does it note subtle distinctions and nuances that other writers miss? Does it show extraordinary insight of some kind?

9. FORM and STYLE. Is it appropriate to the subject matter? Does it show creativity?

This check list can be found in Appendix E of "The Doctrine of the Knowledge of God," by John M. Frame, Phillipsburg, New Jersey: Presbyterian and Reformed Publishing Company, 1987.



WRITING THEOLOGICAL PAPERS

The exercise of writing can be one of the best ways to think through an issue. In other words, forcing you to write papers is for your own good! At least it is nice to think of it that way. The main purpose of your essay is to demonstrate an intelligent interaction with some of the ideas of the course. I would expect each paper to reflect the influences of various sources and to represent an advance in the church's knowledge.

Sources act as a catalyst to spark your ideas. Most often these will be books. Yet sources can also be films, tapes, sermons, discussions, lectures, conversations with learned people, life experiences, songs, drama, tribal myths, and other sources. Having good sources is essential to writing good papers. Usually it is helpful to have several different sources. What I do not want is a regurgitation of the sources. Too many essays do this, merely repeating ideas. Sources are to help generate your own ideas.

Your work should move the church ahead in its duty to know our Lord and His world. For instance, it is not enough to explain Calvin's view of the sacraments, this has been done many times. I expect you to both explain and apply his views. Many students find the idea of advancing the church's knowledge intimidating. Yet your contribution will also have a far reaching influence. As much as John Calvin wrote, he never wrote anything about Uganda, or your family, or those Christians you will serve. To these people your ideas will be far more significant than those of Calvin, or any other theological writer. Building on the insights of Calvin, and others you may read, it is your task to bring God's eternal message to their life situation.

Here are some specific suggestions regarding your writing:

1) Understand the Sources. Work hard at fully comprehending the ideas you interact with. Define the terminology. Discover the author's purpose. Note key points, lines of argument, illustrations, ask questions; strive to be conversant with the source. Follow Christian principles of love and integrity, do not make false accusations. Give the person the benefit of the doubt, even if you do want to criticize their obscurity. Realize that a subject like theology tends to be somewhat ambiguous. Not every question has a simple yes or no answer. Beware of the tendency to interpret your friends in the best possible light and your enemies in the worst. It will not be possible to gain this understanding if you begin your reading the night before the assignment is due.

2) Determine your intention for the essay. By now you have many ideas generated through your reading and reflection. It is necessary to determine both what topic you want to write about and how you want to approach the topic. Perhaps you decide to write about "Baillie's View of the Relation between Inspiration and Illumination." This would be a fairly well defined topic, yet

## "Blair's EXPECTATIONS in Theological Study"

5) Outline your ideas. Now comes the difficult task of sorting through the ideas to structure a good outline. There will be many good ideas that will not fit in your paper. Many people fail at this point. They want to include every possible good idea into one paper. Someone has given the editorial advice, "Prune ruthlessly." Cut back on all ideas that are not absolutely vital to your essay. Create a file where you can store all these "good ideas" for later use. You need to have a clear focus on exactly what you want to say in the essay. Try to capture the main idea in one carefully worded sentence. Then write sub-points which amplify the meaning of that one summary sentence. Share the outline with friendly critics. Work carefully on making this a clear, logical framework for your essay. A good outline, knowing where you are going when you write, makes the work of writing much easier.

6) Be Self-Critical. As you sit down to write, imagine that someone is looking over your shoulder and asking questions. If you are analyzing the views of another person, imagine that it is that very person who is reading your work. I once had a professor who sent our essays to the people whom we wrote about. This forced us to write with greater clarity and charity.

Anticipate objections along the way. Have you really understood the other person's point? Can you understand their point more or less favorably? Are there alternative conclusions? As you avoid one extreme, are you adopting another? Can you think of counter-examples which refute your generalizations? Is it possible to interpret your point in several different ways? How can you more clearly, or more charitably, make your point? Will your conclusion generate more heat than light? e.g. more controversy than constructive debate?

Some student papers are unnecessarily dogmatic. Careless use of words like "always," "only," "never," is very common. There are times when such dogmatic assertions are proper, as when defending the truths of Scripture, e.g. Jesus is the "only" way of salvation. Yet the effectiveness of such words is lost when they are abused. There are times when a more tentative word is more effective, and more Biblical. Words like "possibly," "sometimes," "usually," and "probably" are often useful. We must choose our intellectual battles carefully.

You must also be critical in your use of the ideas of others (see comments on footnotes below). It is important to consider why you use someone's name or idea. It does not settle the matter to simply write, "As Barth has said.," or even to cite a long list of supposed experts. Why has Barth said it? What was his line of argument? Do his reasons fit the context of your point? Another mistake is to merely cite the work of another, seasoning your essay with several profound quotations at key points. You must make your purpose clear when using quotes. Do you agree with what is being quoted? Do you disagree? Do you agree with the main point but differ on the minor points? or vice versa? Often such problems arise because students really have not understood the

## "Blair's EXPECTATIONS in Theological Study"

sources. When a source is misunderstood, it is more easily misused.

7) Be Willing to Re-write. I know the great feeling of exhilaration when you finally finish an assignment. You just want to turn it in and you do not care if you ever see the it again! The very last thing you want to do the work all over again.

Yet sometimes it is best to write your paper all over again, even when you dread the thought. Surely you realize the necessity of proof-reading your work, you probably do it regularly. Yet sometimes our proof-reading is far too sympathetic, much more sympathetic than any marker will be. We are especially sympathetic just after struggling to finish the work. You are very tired, you may even notice a few weak spots, but the work is "somehow alright." It is far better to do the proof-reading several days after completing the work. It is even better when someone else does the proof-reading. Sometimes after this type of more objective analysis, you are convinced it is necessary to do the work again.

I realize there are many pressures and demands on your life in the college. I have already mentioned the difficult task of setting and keeping good priorities. It will not always be the best use of your time to re-write an essay. Yet I hope you see the need for high standards and quality work in the theological task. The Church of Uganda must become "self theologizing" even as it seeks to be "self supporting," "self ruled," and "self propogating." Your work in this college can be an important part of this vital goal. The theological insights of the Ugandan church are just as valid and benefical to the world-wide church as those of theologians in other lands. Certainly they will be far more benefical to Ugandan Christians. Keeping that goal in mind, I challenge you to set high standards for yourself in your studies. Develop and cultivate your communication skills. Make each learning exercise an opportunity to sharpen your skills. Do not be content with second-rate work, this can easily develop into second-rate standards. Re-focus your thinking on the Lord, on the depths of His saving grace, the breadth of His mercy, and the demands of His calling. Set your priorities in the light of His Word.

"Blair's EXPECTATIONS in Theological Study"

REFERENCE NOTES

Using reference notes when you are writing can become a habit. I believe it is a good habit and I want to promote it. Copying someone else's words or ideas and taking the credit for them yourself can also become a habit. I believe it is a bad habit and consistent use of reference notes will help correct it.

Perhaps this is your first course of theological studies. Doing theology means that you must do a good deal of reading and study of new ideas. As you read with comprehension you will certainly fill your mind with many of these new ideas. Perhaps you will embrace certain points so completely that you may tend to forget that they are not just "your" ideas, but do not forget! It is likely that your tutor has also read the books you are reading and can recognize when you are using the ideas of another.

I realize there are diverse cultural views on what is plagiarism; Webster's Dictionary: "to steal the words or ideas of another and use them as your own." New Testament authors often quote or allude to Old Testament writings, with no reference notes, with the apparent sanction of the Holy Spirit! Much of our greatest literature is filled with uncredited allusions to other sources. I also realize that much of the educational process in Uganda involves precise repetition of the teacher's words. Yet by the time you reach this level of study, you should be beyond learning by rote memorization and repetition.

Some people have a notion that the use of reference notes reflects poorly on their scholastic ability, as if they had no original ideas of their own. This is a mistaken notion. Actually they reflect the breadth of your reading and your scholastic integrity. They tell the reader how you have interacted with the ideas of other thinkers. Reference notes reveal something of the process you have gone through to reach your conclusions. The way that you arrive at your conclusions is often as important as the conclusions themselves. Reference notes show how you consider the ideas of others as you develop your own. They reveal something of your ability to reason and analyze.

In short, the use of reference notes is required procedure on all my assignments. I expect you to credit the source of any words or ideas which are not your own. This means that even if you are "paraphrasing" the words or ideas of someone else, you must give them credit. However, I do not expect you to note ideas which are "common knowledge." These include ideas which are written without credit by several different authors. When in doubt, I suggest you give credit to the source.

I do not require any one particular style or format of writing your reference notes, footnotes, or end notes. You are free to use the method which you prefer. My suggestions are on the next page. However, I do require that your method is clear and consistent throughout the entire paper.

"Blair's EXPECTATIONS in Theological Study"

REFERENCE NOTES: AN EXAMPLE

For my courses I allow you to use any style of reference notes. Yet I require that your style be consistent and understandable. However, be aware that some of your assignments in the college (e.g. research, exegesis, etc.) may dictate a particular method. I suggest below a method of noting the work of others which I find both easy to use and helpful to the reader.

I prefer to insert the reference in parenthesis within the text, immediately following the quotation. This method is most common in scientific writings, but it is becoming more widely used in liberal arts. Each note contains the author's last name and page number:

(Ridderbos, 259)

Example: "Some scholars have contended that here Luke has confused two groups of ethnic Gentiles at Antioch, full proselytes and uncircumcised "worshippers of God." I.H. Marshall, however, indicates that this is not the case: "The difficulty disappears if we recognize that 'worshipping' is not being used as a technical term but as a description of the proselytes." (Marshall, 229) Thus the flexibility of Luke's terms must be recognized and respected."

There are some exceptions to the general rule. (1) If you are using more than one work by the same author, then the first significant word in the title of the work should follow the name of the author:

(Ridderbos, Coming, 259)

(Ridderbos, Paul, 45)

(2) In multiple-author reference works (e.g. dictionaries, encyclopedias, etc.) List the name of the general editor(s), name of the article, reference work (abbreviated), volume number (if multi-volume), and the page number:

(Bromiley, "Ostraca," ISBE 3:618)

If you do use this method, you must include a more detailed bibliography which lists complete publication information. In this more detailed bibliography, it is more accurate and courteous to list the name of the specific author of the article you read in a multiple-author reference work.

Bibliographical Listings:

Single author volume: Author (last name, first name or initials).  
Title. (underlined) Publication place, publisher,  
publication date.

Example:

Ridderbos, Herman N. The Coming of the Kingdom. Philadelphia: Presbyterian and Reformed, 1962.

"Blair's EXPECTATIONS in Theological Study"

Multiple author works: Editor(s) (last name, first). Title. Number of volumes (if more than one). Publication place, publisher, publication date(s).

Example:

Bromiley, G.W., ed. The International Standard Bible Encyclopedia. 4 vols. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1986.

Journal articles: Author (last name, first) "Title of article" (in quotation marks). Journal Volume number (Year in parenthesis): page numbers (for the entire article).

Example:

Mosha, R.S. "The Trinity in the African Context." African Theological Journal 9 (April 1980): 40-47.

SUGGESTED ABBREVIATIONS

(proposed by the Journal of Biblical Literature)

Gen	Genesis	Jer	Jeremiah	Rom	Romans
Exod	Exodus	Lam	Lamentations	1 Cor	1 Corinthians
Lev	Leviticus	Ezek	Ezekiel	2 Cor	2 Corinthians
Num	Numbers	Dan	Daniel	Gal	Galatians
Deut	Deuteronomy	Hos	Hosea	Eph	Ephesians
Josh	Joshua	Joel	Joel	Phil	Philippians
Judg	Judges	Amos	Amos	Col	Colossians
Ruth	Ruth	Obad	Obadiah	1 Thess	Thessa-
1 Sam	1 Samuel	Jonah	Jonah	2 Thess	lonians
2 Sam	2 Samuel	Mic	Micah	1 Tim	1 Timothy
1 Kgs	1 Kings	Nah	Nahum	2 Tim	2 Timothy
2 Kgs	2 Kings	Hab	Habakkuk	Titus	Titus
1 Chr	1 Chronicles	Zeph	Zephaniah	Phlm	Philemon
2 Chr	2 Chronicles	Hag	Haggai	Heb	Hebrews
Ezra	Ezra	Zech	Zechariah	Jas	James
Neh	Nehemiah	Mal	Malachi	1 Pet	1 Peter
Esth	Esther			2 Pet	2 Peter
Job	Job			1 John	1 John
P(s)	Psalms	Matt	Matthew	2 John	2 John
Prov	Proverbs	Mark	Mark	3 John	3 John
Eccl(Qoh)	Ecclesiastes	Luke	Luke	Jude	Jude
Cant	Song of Songs	John	John	Rev	Revelation
Isa	Isaiah	Acts	Acts		
OT	Old Testament			chap.	chapter
LXX	Septuagint			chaps.	chapters
MT	Massoretic Text			n.	note
NT	New Testament			nn.	notes
AV or KJV	King James Version			p.	page
RSV	Revised Standard Version			pp.	pages
NIV	New International Version			NEB	New English Bible

## "Blair's EXPECTATIONS in Theological Study"

this is only part of the process. How do you want to view this topic? Will you (1) ask questions about the topic, (2) analyze the structure of Baillie's view (An analysis is not an exposition, but an explanation - describing why the text is organized or phrased in a certain way, its historical background, its relations with other ideas, etc.), (3) compare or contrast Baillie's view with some other, (4) develop useful implications and applications of his position. (5) supplement his view in some way (giving better arguments than he does, adding qualifications to his conclusions, noting balancing considerations), (6) offering criticism or evaluation, (7) some combination of the above. No doubt there are other valid approaches. Be clear on what you are doing.

3) Determine your Audience. Many times a student simply writes an essay without targeting a specific reader. As the marker, I then assume that they are writing to me. Then after I hand back the marked essay, it will be tucked away in a file somewhere and benefit no one (except possibly the cockroaches which may eat it.)

I would much prefer that I not be your intended audience. I know a little more about these topics than the average person and I will tend to be a more critical reader, harder to persuade. I suggest you target another audience. Think about the people you know, those you minister among, those who need to be persuaded about a certain truth. You may choose people of different age, education, literate or non-literate, nationality, tribe, belief system, spiritual maturity, denomination, etc.

Selecting a particular audience means that you will have to think through the issue carefully from their perspective, using their values and viewpoints. For instance it can be difficult to relate complex ideas to small children. Yet it is possible, and a good discipline. I hope you aspire to share the truths of God with your own small children. If you select your classmates as an audience you can assume a fair amount of common knowledge, use of terms, etc. Whoever you select, I hope that you view writing good essays as a ministry opportunity.

4) Determine your Format. There are many possible styles you may employ in sharing theological ideas. I think it is unfortunate that most of us are locked into the traditional essay format. Obviously different formats will communicate more effectively to different audiences. For instance, formal essays will bore small children.

Among the possible formats you may select (1) dialogue (with an author, person holding another belief, etc.), (2) drama, (3) poetry, (4) short story, (5) allegory, (6) song, (7) video scripts, (8) creative dance, (9) liturgy, (10) sermon (written or recorded), (11) use of several different formats, (12) straightforward discussion (as in a written essay), (13) lecture outlines (prepared to share with specific class or workshop). These are a few ideas, explore other possibilities. Be creative!