

St. Andrew (JKP) Monthly Newsletter
August, 2012

Edification: What is the difference between saying "such and such is an art" vs. saying "such and such is a science"? Once upon a time I overheard two rabid fly-fishermen holding a rousing private symposium on their great passion. One zealot thrilled the other by saying: "*to know how to cast a fly-rod is an art, but to know where to cast a fly-rod is a science*". I had the urge to pull out a brandy snifter and cry out: "*good show old man!*" Instead, since fishing of any kind bores me I walked away. Cheerio! But was this wild-eyed enthusiast truly getting at something or was he splitting hairs - or fins, as the case may be? Is there really a difference between an Art and a Science and if so what's the diff? Noah Webster, or at least his followers of 1947 define "Art" as "*Skill in performance, acquired by experience, study or observation; knack.*" Those same word-nerds defined "Science" in this way; "*Knowledge. Any department of systematized knowledge*". So there you have it according to Webster's 1947 Dictionary. Art is a skill that is acquired through various, recognized means. And Science is effectively knowledge that may be systematized. If we were to back-fill with our fly-fishing buffs we would say that casting the rod is a skill that's acquired with experience. And we would further say that in order to cast that rod in a good, fishy spot we would need some knowledge. So when this knowledge and skill converge in one individual we have a true fly-fisherman, and quite possibly a braggart to boot! Often times it seems these two disciplines do go together, art & science that is. Like hand-in-glove they form a finished fit. In fishing having skill without knowledge will get you a wet hook, but maybe not much more. While having knowledge without skill will get you in the weeds or your neighbor's fleshy parts. Skill and knowledge; art and science; we must have both - especially if we're going to be "fishers of men".

"If fishing is like religion, then fly-fishing is high church." Tom Brokaw

Encourage: In 2 Peter 3 the Apostle Peter, with remarkable humility admits of our "beloved brother" Paul's writings; "*in all his epistles, speaking in them of these things, in which are some things hard to understand, which untaught and unstable people twist to their own destruction, as they do also the rest of the Scriptures.*" That's saying something if Peter found parts of Paul's writings "hard to understand". What hope do the rest of us mere mortals have if an apostle found them to be so? The hope is that he said they're "hard" to understand", not impossible. Most if not all ancient documents are hard to understand for several reasons. There's the language barrier, the cultural chasm between us and them, understanding the context and intent of the document and influential idiosyncrasies without number. Here, as in fly-fishing without skill and knowledge we can end-up in the weeds. Yet these weeds are far worse than those bordering a placid trout stream. We could find ourselves twisting in the weeds of our own destruction. So here too we must have skill and knowledge. There is an art and science for interpreting documents. This art & science is called hermeneutics. This discipline is indispensable when striving to unlock the meaning of any & all biblical text. So over the next few issues of this newsletter we'll consider several principals of biblical interpretation; the art and science of hermeneutics. This will be to us rod, reel & hook in fishing for men. It will keep us and them out of the weeds. *Here, Here!*