

found that all of these were red and that all of those were blue, you might be ready to make a hypothesis that all of those in this basket would probably turn out to be red and that all of those in that one would turn out to be blue. You would have two distinct bunches and you might theorize as to how this came about. But if you had one big basket with a lot of slips in it, and someone said, "Some of these slips are red and some are blue; therefore originally there were two baskets, one containing red slips and one containing blue ones, and they have come together here," that would be only theorizing. You say, "Look, I can take them out and put all the red ones here and all the blue ones there," but that would not prove it at all. I went through your church history papers and I put blue marks on the correct answers and red marks on the wrong answers, but I did not do all the blue at once and all the red at once. They did not come out of two distinct baskets. They all came out of the same basket. You could not take all the blue ones and say these are all seniors and all the red ones are juniors. If you did find that all the blue were of one class and all the red were of another, that would be a reason for saying that they originally came from two distinct groups, but we have to watch out in anything like this to make sure that we do not take a criterion and divide things on that basis and then use that to argue that there was an original division. The danger of reasoning in a circle is very real.

The critics are assuming the facts that they are trying to prove. To advance knowledge we must look at facts without jumping to conclusions. Then we can suggest various hypotheses and see how they fit with the facts. If we find one that fits with all the facts, we may conclude that it is the true one. The critics claim that their hypothesis fits with the facts, but in this case they are reasoning in a circle.

These alleged passages can be divided into three types. We should look at each of them. Some need to be thought through very carefully. It is easy to get into a frame of mind that says two similar events could not possibly have occurred. Actually, events that are very similar occur much more frequently than we would expect. One of the most interesting illustrations of this is the case of the two events involving the Graf Spee. Probably most of you remember the second event, for it occurred less than a dozen years ago, during World War II. I,