

# THE TRINITY REVIEW

For though we walk in the flesh, we do not war according to the flesh, for the weapons of our warfare [are] not fleshly but mighty in God for pulling down strongholds, casting down arguments and every high thing that exalts itself against the knowledge of God, bringing every thought into captivity to the obedience of Christ. And they will be ready to punish all disobedience, when your obedience is fulfilled.

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## The Educational Establishment versus Civilization

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Almost sixty years ago, Walter Lippmann delivered an address titled "Education versus Western Civilization" to the American Association for the Advancement of Science. As his title indicated, Lippmann clearly understood the threat to civilization that the educational establishment in America posed. In his address, he propounded several theses on education:

*First:* That during the past forty or fifty years those who are responsible for education have progressively removed from the curriculum of studies the Western culture which produced the modern democratic state;

*Second:* That the schools and colleges have, therefore, been sending out into the world men who no longer understand the creative principle of the society in which they live;

*Third:* That, deprived of their cultural tradition, the newly educated Western men no longer possess in the form and substance of their own minds and spirits the ideas, the premises, the rationale, the logic, the method, the values of the deposited wisdom which are the genius of the development of Western civilization;

*Fourth:* That the prevailing education is destined, if it continues, to destroy Western civilization and is in fact destroying it; . . .

*And finally:* What is now required in the modern educational system is not the expansion of its facilities or the specific reform of its curriculum and administration but a thorough reconsideration of its underlying assumptions and of its purposes.

The educational establishment that Lippmann saw destroying civilization in 1940 has not only continued, it has grown and flourished. There has been no thorough reconsideration of its underlying assumptions and purposes. Instead, its curriculum has been reformed innumerable times, and its facilities have been vastly expanded.

But while the educational establishment has grown, moral and academic standards have all but disappeared. The evidence of abandoned academic standards, if not so dramatic as the evidence of abandoned moral standards, should be equally sobering: falling SAT scores, functional illiteracy, not merely of students but of teachers as well, and a vacuum of cultural and theological ignorance among both teachers and students. The decline of American education has been reported in dozens of

books over the past half century. The entire American educational establishment, from kindergarten to university, is in collapse. This is the generation that must begin all over again.

Many Christian parents are trying to begin again by teaching their children at home or enrolling them in Christian day schools. But parents teaching their children at home are finding that they must first educate themselves by unlearning many of the lessons they have learned in their schooling, at their church, and from the culture. Christian schools, unfortunately, are in too many instances teaching what the government schools teach (after all, many Christian schoolteachers attended state colleges and have never learned what Christian education is). At the college level, nominally Christian colleges are indistinguishable from secular colleges, teaching anti-Christian ideas and promoting anti-Christian practices and institutions. If the same laws against fraud that apply to businesses applied to so-called Christian colleges, the prisons would be full of college administrators and board members. Few churchgoers and alumni seem to realize the gravity of the situation; they continue to write the checks that support these fraudulent institutions. Fewer still have any idea just what is needed to correct it. Rather than preserving, protecting, and defending Christianity, so-called Christian colleges have been blown over by the winds of doctrine called Arminianism, liberalism, relativism, feminism, environmentalism, and socialism. How did education in America fall so far? There are several influences. We shall begin in historical order with Jean-Jacques Rousseau.

### *The Romanticism of Jean-Jacques Rousseau*

The first major influence in the collapse of education in America is the eighteenth-century Swiss philosopher Jean-Jacques Rousseau. The ideas in Rousseau's treatise on education, *Emile*, still echo in America, more Rousseau, deliberately in opposition to Christianity, began by denying the Christian doctrine of the total depravity of man: "Let us establish it as an incontestable maxim that the first movements of nature are always right:

There is no original perversity in the human breast." "Let him [the student] know that man is naturally good; let him feel it in his heart." To express Rousseau's idea in a modern maxim: "I'm OK, you're OK." The foolish Romanist priest who founded Boys Town in Nebraska earlier in the century had a similar motto: "There's no such thing as a bad boy."

Because man is naturally good, Rousseau held that "our passions are the chief instruments of our preservation; it is therefore a vain as well as ridiculous attempt to destroy them; it is controlling nature and reforming the handiwork of God." Since controlling our passions, our emotions, desires, and feelings is both impious and futile, self-expression, not self-control, is good: "Let him [the child] do nothing from a motive of obedience, but through necessity: thus the words *obey* and *command* will be expunged from his dictionary, and much more those of *duty* and *obligation*, but those of *force*, *necessity*, *impotency* and *constraint* are to be ranked in the first order."

In short, we have no duties save those imposed by physics and biology. One can hear an echo of Rousseau in the words of twentieth-century pornographer D. H. Lawrence: "My great religion is a belief in the blood, the flesh, as being wiser than the intellect. We can go wrong with our minds, but what our blood feels and believes and says is always right." The conservative version of this anti-intellectualism is, of course, reliance on gut-instinct, intuition, or common sense. Since the intellect is suspect and the feelings infallible, the student must be taught through practice: "real education consists less in theory than in practice," wrote Rousseau. John Dewey, one of his disciples, called it learning by doing.

Rousseau explained that learning primarily involves the senses, not the intellect:

Let us transform our sensations into ideas, without making a sudden transition from sensible to intellectual objects. It is by the former we are to arrive at the knowledge of the latter. Let the mind, in its first operations, be always guided by the

senses. Let there be no other book but the world, no other instruction than facts. The boy that reads does not think nor gain instruction, he only learns a parcel of words.

I have an aversion to books; they only instruct us to talk beyond our knowledge.

The anti-intellectualism of today's educational philosophies can be traced directly to Rousseau.

Rousseau's opposition to booklarnin'—a sort of philosophical redneckism also espoused by Dewey—extended to the sciences: "Let his [the student's] knowledge be not founded in your authority, but in his own investigation; let him not learn, but invent the sciences."

Finally, because of his belief in the innate goodness of men and consequently the rightness of their passions and the importance of learning through the senses, Rousseau proposed an explicitly atheistic education: "At 15 he [the student] was ignorant that he had a soul, and perhaps at 18 it will not be yet time for him to be informed of it."

Rousseau wrote: "Were I to exhibit a scene of disagreeable stupidity, it would be that of a pedant teaching children the articles of religion." What the Bible enjoins as the essence of education, Rousseau calls disagreeable stupidity.

In Rousseau one can find the germ of all that corrupts our modern educational system: a profound anti-intellectualism, an implicit and sometimes militant atheism, the notion of the innate goodness of men, the desirability of learning through the senses, the infallibility of the feelings, the importance of self-expression and self-esteem, the absence of any logical arrangement of studies, the relative unimportance of content, the denial of any duties or obligations except those "owed" to Nature. Rousseau's romanticism has been a major influence in destroying education in America.

### *The Socialism of Karl Marx*

The second major destructive influence on education in America has been Karl Marx. I might

have selected Plato or Aristotle to make this point, but Marx is nearer to us in time and few even today realize that public education was a major part of Marx's program for socializing the world. Aristotle, in the *Politics*, for example, wrote that

No one will doubt that the legislator should direct his attention above all to the education of youth. . . . The citizen should be molded to suit the form of government under which he lives. . . . [S]ince the whole city has one end, it is manifest that education should be one and the same for all, and that it should be public, and not private—not as at present, when everyone looks after his own children separately, and gives them separate instruction of the sort which he thinks best; the training in things which are of common interest should be the same for all. Neither must we suppose that any one of the citizens belongs to himself, for they all belong to the state, and are each of them a part of the state, and the care of each part is inseparable from the care of the whole. . . . That education should be regulated by law and should be an affair of state is not to be denied. . . .

Two thousand years later, the most influential socialist of modern times, Karl Marx, writing in *The Communist Manifesto*, listed ten measures for seizing power in the most advanced countries. The first was "abolition of property in land." Number 2 was "a heavy progressive or graduated income tax." Number 10 was "Free education for all children in public schools."

The great nineteenth-century proponent of public education in this country, Horace Mann, secretary of the Massachusetts State Board of Education, put it this way:

I believe in the existence of a great, immortal, immutable principle of natural law, natural ethics . . . a principle of divine origin . . . which proves the *absolute right* to an education of every human being that comes into the world, and which, of

course, proves the correlative duty of every government to see that the means of that education are provided for all.

Although Mann died before he could extend his ideas to higher education, others have done it for him. We now have, with the state university systems and government loans and grants to institutions, faculty, and students, a system of government education from kindergarten through university.

As a nation we spend more than \$600 billion a year on education, and government spends most of that. Government not only controls the bulk of educational spending, it affects education in many other ways as well: income and property taxation; compulsory attendance laws; licensing and certification of teachers, institutions, and accrediting agencies; subsidies to students, faculty, and institutions; to say nothing of innumerable regulations and rules on curriculum, hiring, administrative and academic policies, and promotion. All this government activity is illegitimate and immoral, and most, if not all, is harmful. It is all illegitimate because government has only two legitimate functions: the punishment of evildoers and the praise of the good, as Paul put it in *Romans* 13. Any monies taken by government for other purposes are stolen. The Eighth Commandment—You shall not steal—applies to rulers as rulers, just as surely as it applies to ordinary citizens.

The harm caused by government ownership and control of educational institutions, as well as its intervention in the small remaining private sector, is incalculable. Subsidies to students drive up the cost of education by increasing demand. Certification of teachers and institutions lowers quality and restricts supply, further driving up prices. Taxation inhibits economic activity, making those taxed, and those with whom they would have traded in the absence of taxation, poorer. Truancy laws compel children who have no interest in doing so to attend school, lowering educational quality. Tracing out the destructive ramifications of socialism in education would require several books.

Our present statist educational establishment is the sort of tyranny that Thomas Jefferson and James Madison denounced in their Bill for Establishing Religious Freedom in Virginia: "to compel a man to furnish contributions for money for the propagation of opinions which he disbelieves is sinful and tyrannical." It makes little difference that today's institutions are called colleges, public schools, and state universities, rather than churches; they are still propagating opinions with which many taxpayers disagree, yet the taxpayers are forced to support those institutions. All such tax-funded institutions—churches, colleges, public schools—are sinful and tyrannical.

Perhaps the words of Presbyterian educator J. Gresham Machen, when he appeared before a Joint Congressional Committee in 1926 to testify in opposition to a proposed Federal Department of Education, sum the matter up: "If you give the bureaucrats the children, you might as well give them everything else as well."

### *The Educational Egalitarianism of Charles Eliot*

A third important factor in the destruction of American education is the elective system, first introduced at Harvard by president Charles Eliot, a chemist, in 1872. Until that time, the colleges of America had a prescribed course of study for all graduates, which was based on the idea that there is a unified system of truth that must be taught to the next generation. After the Civil War that notion was abandoned. With the abandonment of Christianity, first in the churches and then in the universities, higher education became a *quest* for truth, not the teaching of truth already revealed by God. (How one is to discover truth, not knowing what truth is, is an insuperable problem for such a view of education. Education becomes the equivalent of hunting snarks.)

The elective system reflects the modern view that there is no body of truth, and whatever truths there may be, if any, are not and cannot be arranged in a logical system. Further, the elective system implies that teachers do not know more than students what

is worth studying, that all courses are of equal value, that there is no logic, rhyme, or reason to getting an education. The university—even before the institution was common in America—became a multiversity. It was an attack on education right from the start.

It is instructive to compare the curriculum of Harvard during the seventeenth century with the curriculum of any college or university today, Christian or pagan. Harvard College required 140 credit-hours of study—using the modern notation of one credit-hour per hour of class time per week—over a period of three years. Those 140 credit-hours were divided as follows:

Logic and disputations (in Latin) 30 hours

Greek 24 hours

Hebrew, Aramaic, and Syriac 24 hours

Rhetoric and declamation 24 hours

Theology 16 hours

Ethics and politics 8 hours

Arithmetic and geometry 6 hours

Physics 2 hours

Botany 2 hours

Astronomy 2 hours

History 2 hours

The student who successfully completed this curriculum was well educated. He was acquainted with a considerable body of worthy literature; he had been given the tools to reason cogently, to write clearly, and to speak persuasively; he had been taught the truths of theology, ethics, politics, and mathematics; and he had been introduced to the relevant science of his time. We may wish he had more history or less language, but he was well educated. A seventeenth-century Harvard graduate would be able to hold his own against any graduate of any twentieth-century American university. Moreover, the Harvard College graduate received

his education at a fraction of the cost in both time and money of his modern counterpart.

The men who wrote the American Constitution and the Bill of Rights were educated in schools and colleges in which the curriculum was filled with information to be learned, arranged in a logical system. The curriculum was based on the Christian notion that God has revealed truth to us, that that truth can be arranged and studied systematically, and that it is the duty of the educational system to transmit that truth from one generation to the next. The elective system contradicted all three ideas. While President Eliot might merely have wanted to give the rising natural sciences a larger place in the curriculum, he opened the door to an educational egalitarianism in which one course is as valuable as another, and the student, not the teacher, is the competent judge of what is worth studying.

Lippmann, however, suggested another reason for the change to the elective system:

The real reason . . . is that we reject the religious and classical heritage, first, because to master it requires more effort than we are willing to compel ourselves to make, and second, because it creates issues that are too contentious to be faced with equanimity. We have abolished the old curriculum because we are afraid of it. . . .

Of course, the abandonment of a unified curriculum does not mean that modern education has no heroes or leading lights. But it is instructive to point out that the two philosophical heroes of academia in the twentieth century—Ludwig Wittgenstein and Soren Kierkegaard, the fathers of the philosophies of analysis and existentialism, respectively—both lived, as Yale philosopher Brand Blanshard put it, "on the outer borders of sanity." What began as educational egalitarianism in the nineteenth century has become educational anarchism in the twentieth.

### *The Instrumentalism of John Dewey*

The fourth influence corrupting American education is the Instrumentalism or pragmatism of John Dewey. Dewey acknowledged his dependence on

Rousseau. One of his most popular books on education, *Schools of Tomorrow*, bristles with quotations from Rousseau.

It might seem odd for an educator to do, but Dewey denied that there were such things as minds. If you think it odd, that is only because you have an obsolete view of education. Dewey wrote:

Habits formed in the process of exercising biological aptitudes are the sole agents of observation, reflection, foresight and judgment: a mind or consciousness or soul in general which performs these operations is a myth. . . . Knowledge . . . lives in the muscles, not in consciousness.

Given Dewey's behaviorism, his emphasis on learning by doing is completely understandable. Since the child has no mind or consciousness or soul, it is useless trying to teach him things intellectually. Content is irrelevant—so long as it does not contradict Rousseau's and Dewey's philosophies. It is the muscles that must be trained, the habits that must be formed. Here is the anti-intellectualism of Rousseau in spades. Here is also the philosophic rationale for the vocational view of education. Dewey's educational philosophy became known as progressive, and progressive schools changed learning into doing.

Arithmetic, for example, was no longer taught by memorizing the times table; nor by learning the commutative, associative, and distributive laws and the axiom of identity; nor by practicing addition, subtraction, division, and multiplication, but by "keeping store." The result of Dewey's atheism is that we now have a generation of students that cannot make change. That is why the cash registers at fast food restaurants have pictures of food items on their keys and automatically calculate change owed to customers, and some of them actually give the change to customers.

Drama is no longer taught by studying great plays, but by writing and performing bad ones. Discipline, which had been a characteristic of education before Dewey, was replaced by the fleeting and capricious curiosity of students. In college, learning by doing means studying drama by making stage sets,

studying art by taking photographs, and studying psychology by annoying rats.

These four men—Rousseau, Marx, Eliot, and Dewey—are some of the destroyers of education and civilization in America. Please note that they were all Westerners, and two of them were even Americans. It is not quite true that we are fighting for the survival of Western civilization, as though the West were a philosophical monolith threatened only by alien philosophies and cultures. It is not Western civilization that we are trying to preserve, but Christian civilization. Civilization was built on Biblical foundations. The erosion of those foundations means the irretrievable collapse of civilization. Many, however, fear to recognize the point. Others, such as Walter Lippmann, want civilization without Christianity. It cannot be done.

### *False Starts and Sandy Foundations*

Perhaps the biggest temptation for educational reformers is to tinker. There are two sorts of tinkers: conservative and liberal. The conservative tinker says: If only we could get sex education out of the schools. If only we could get phonics back in. If only children could pray in school. If only we can stop Outcome Based Education. If only we could raise SAT scores. If only we had testing for teachers. The latest form of conservative tinkering is vouchers, the moral and economic equivalent of food stamps for schools.

Then there are liberal tinkers: If only we could get more tax money for schools; if only we could pay teachers more. If only we had federal standards for students. If only we could get Outcome Based Education into the schools. If only we had more sex education. If only we had more federal regulations. If only our schools were truly integrated and multi-cultural.

Of course, there are some things liberal and conservative tinkers agree on: If only we could have magnet or charter schools. If only we could reduce dropout rates and have smaller classes. And more recently, if only we could get moral values back in the schools.

Conservatives, and many professed Christians, rally 'round "values" and "faith." They seek a broad coalition of "people of faith" on behalf of "religion." But they tend to mumble when asked what values they would like to see taught in the schools, and they give only "tradition" as the source of values. William Bennett, of the (Roman) Catholic Campaign for America and former Secretary of Education, has made a small fortune advancing his traditionalist and "classical-Christian" view of values in such eclectic books as *The Book of Virtues*. (His book, by the way, has been promoted for years by *World* magazine, putatively a sterling example of Christian journalism.) But Christianity, as distinguished from Roman Catholicism, liberal Protestantism, and Neo-evangelicalism, neither has nor seeks friends in other religions and other faiths. Christianity is the rejection, *in toto*, of other religions and philosophies. It claims to have a systemic monopoly on truth. Those churchgoers who do not agree either do not understand what Christianity is, or they reject its explicit claims to exclusivity. In either case, they are traveling under false colors.

Seventy years ago J. Gresham Machen warned against values education in secular schools:

There is something radically wrong with our public education, it is said; an education that trains the mind without training the moral sense is a menace to civilization rather than a help; and something must be quickly done to check the impending moral collapse. To meet this need, various provisions are being made for moral training in our American public schools; various ethical codes are being formed for the instruction of children who are under the care of the State. But the sad thing is that these efforts are only making the situation tenfold worse; far from checking the ravages of immorality, they are for the most part themselves non-moral at root.

Machen went on to explain that the only basis for morality is the law of God. Morality cannot be based on the experience of men or of the race, nor

on the speculations of philosophers, nor on the "revelations" of other prophets, nor on church doctrine, but on Biblical revelation alone. Any attempt to base values education in something other than Biblical revelation, said Machen, is immoral, irrational, and anti-Christian. Character Counts is simply the latest attempt to inculcate a non-Christian morality in the public schools. It was proposed and is supported by those who want some sort of civic morality, but reject the only theology that can logically support civilization.

Religious convictions per se will not save our educational system. There are some who say and many more who believe that it doesn't matter what one believes, for all that is important is that one's belief be sincere. President Dwight Eisenhower once said, "Our government makes no sense unless it is founded in a deeply felt religious faith—and I don't care what it is." But sincerity and religious conviction are worthless without truth. It is not sincerity but truth that counts. Sincerity, far from being all important, has importance only if truth is believed. If error is sincerely believed, it will prove harmful, not helpful. The same with faith. There is no magic in faith. There is no magic in believing. That notion is pure paganism. More than a century ago Matthew Arnold wrote a poem, *Dover Beach*, about the ebbing of faith in the modern world, which concludes:

#### The Sea of Faith

Was once, too, at the full, and round earth's shore

Lay like the folds of a bright girdle furled.

But now I only hear

Its melancholy, long, withdrawing roar,

Retreating, to the breath

Of the night wind, down the vast edges drear

And naked shingles of the world.

Ah, love, let us be true

To one another! for the world, which seems

To lie before us like a land of dreams,

So various, so beautiful, so new,

Hath really neither joy, nor love, nor light,

Nor certitude, nor peace, nor help for pain;

And we are here as on a darkling plain

Swept with confused alarms of struggles and flight,

Where ignorant armies clash by night.

The world that Arnold saw—without joy, love, light, certitude, peace, and help for pain—was not that way because generic Faith was ebbing, but because Christianity was ebbing. What has made the West as good as it is—that is, what has prevented the West from being as bad as some other cultures—is not some non-Christian values or minimalist version of Christianity, but the full, consistent Christianity of the Protestant Reformers, a Christianity whose philosophy has been completely articulated only in the twentieth century.

The history of education in America is the history of the decline of education from the Calvinism of its founders in 1636 through Arminianism and Unitarianism to atheism. The college that the Puritans began within 16 years of their first landing in the wilderness had more sound education in it than most built since then.

Today we face a new wilderness, not an uninhabited geographical wilderness, but a cultural and spiritual wilderness. It is our job as Christian educators to tame the wilderness by building a shining university on a hill. Already Christian parents are removing their children from government schools and educating them at home and in Christian schools. That movement, which still has a long way to go, is well underway. It will not have succeeded until the last public school is sold to the highest bidder, and no government—federal, state, or local—spends any money on education.

But long before that happens, we must offer the graduates of these Christian schools and home schools a Christian University. Unfortunately, some putatively Christian writers have attacked higher education, saying that the next generation of Christians should be taught a trade; they should not

pursue the illusion of college degrees, and certainly not advanced degrees. They need something "practical" instead. These anti-intellectuals—some of whom sport Ph.D.s—deprecate diplomas and advanced degrees. This Amish view of education is both anti-Christian and suicidal. Any parent who listens to them is sealing the fate of his child.

But where are Christian parents to send their children? There is no Christian University in the United States. There are plenty of colleges that masquerade as Christian, but none of them makes Christian philosophy control every classroom. It is our job to create that Christian University, so that the next generation of Christians, instead of being overwhelmed by or compromising with the world, will be equipped to take on the world in every field of endeavor—and win.

### *The Meaning of Education*

The place to begin building a Christian University is by defining what we mean by "education." There have been three principal views put forth over the centuries: the vocational, the informational, and the philosophical.

According to the vocational view, the purpose of education is to equip children for life, to give them a way of earning a living. This, of course, includes more than manual training schools, in which one might learn to become a carpenter or a plumber. Most of the graduate schools today—theological seminaries, law schools, engineering schools, music schools, medical schools, dental schools, business schools—are vocational schools. Their purpose is to equip the student for a career. It is a serious mistake to confuse such vocational training with education. Graduates of these schools are doctors, dentists, corporate managers, lawyers, clerics—they are not necessarily educated men. Technical proficiency must not be confused with education, as Dewey did. The graduates of our professional schools each has his own specialty, but they lack the understanding that characterizes an educated man.

Martin Luther understood the dependence of the practical men on the scholars. In his essay on the "Duty of Sending Children to School," he wrote:



Pay no attention to the contempt which the ordinary devotee of Mammon manifests for culture, so that he says: "Well, if my son can read, write, and cipher, that is enough; for I am going to make a merchant out of him." Without scholars it would not be long till businessmen in their perplexity would be ready to dig a learned man out of the ground ten yards deep with their fingers; for the merchant will not long remain a merchant, if preaching and the administration of justice cease. I know full well that we theologians and jurists must remain, or else all other vocations will inevitably go to the ground with us; where theologians perish, there perishes also the Word of God, and nothing but heathen and devils are left; when jurists perish, there perish also law and peace, and nothing remains but robbery, murder, outrage and force—the reign of wild beasts. But what the merchant will gain when peace vanishes, I shall let his ledger tell him; and the use of all his property when preaching ceases, let his conscience show him.

For the same reason, the second view of education, the informational view, which is a big step up from the vocational view, must also be rejected. That view is reflected in books such as E. D. Hirsch's *Cultural Literacy*, which became a best-seller a few years ago and spawned a school of imitators. In his book, Hirsch catalogues all the data that an educated American should know to function in American society. While having such facts at one's fingertips may be an important qualification for playing *Jeopardy*, it does not constitute an education. A person may be knowledgeable, he may be learned, without being educated. Just as the training of the hands and eyes for brain surgery does not constitute an education, neither does the memorization of 10,000 bits of information.

It is good, of course, to have such information at one's fingertips. A well-stocked mind is a thing to be desired. But having the information in mind is not the same as having an education. The Major General in Gilbert and Sullivan's *Pirates of*

*Penzance* was well informed, far more so than today's high school or college graduates, but he was not educated:

I am the very model of a modern Major-General,

I've information vegetable, animal, and mineral,

I know the kings of England, and I quote the fights  
historical,

From Marathon to Waterloo, in order categorical;

I'm very well acquainted too with matters  
mathematical,

I understand equations, both the simple and  
quadratical,

About binomial theorems I'm teeming with a lot o'  
news—

With many cheerful facts about the square of the  
hypotenuse.

American schools and colleges would be much better if they turned out graduates with the knowledge of the Major General, but if that were all they did, they would still be failing at education.

The only satisfactory view of education is the philosophical view, which includes both the learning of information and prepares one for the practical matter of earning a living. But education goes far beyond vocational training and the memorization of data to understanding the meaning and significance of the data and arranging them in a logical system. The philosophical view defines education as understanding. In Biblical language, one has knowledge, but one also has understanding or wisdom. Wisdom or understanding is seeing how pieces of knowledge fit together; it is seeing the whole picture and understanding how each part of the picture is related to the whole. It is the whole that gives meaning to the parts; it is the whole that tells us what is more important, what is less important, and what isn't important at all.

In summary, one may be knowledgeable and learned—he may be a star on *Jeopardy*—and be neither trained nor educated; one may be well

trained—he may be the world's foremost brain surgeon or pianist—and be neither learned nor educated; but the educated man has mastered his most important and flexible tool, his intelligence, and he has a well-stocked mind. He knows where to find the myriad facts he needs, and he knows how to use his intelligence to attack any problem that might arise. To quote Milton's *Tractate on Education*, "I call therefore a complete and generous education that which fits a man to perform justly, skillfully and magnanimously all the offices both private and public, of peace and war."

Education results in a disciplined and flexible intelligence that is the most useful tool of all. Far from being useless, as the vocationalists charge, a Christian education is the most useful discipline. Those things most "useless," the "impractical" subjects, the philosophy and theology courses, turn out to be most useful, after all.

### *The Need for a Worldview*

Apart from this sort of education, a philosophical education, the specialists—the scientists, engineers, lawyers, doctors—live in their own worlds, not knowing what medicine has to do with law or literature. When they meet in social situations, they talk about the weather or sports or the latest political scandal. The latter, of course, ensures that they do not lack for topics of conversation. But they cannot carry on a significant or sustained conversation because they live in different universes, despite having been to the university. Specialization, which can and should be a good thing, for it allows us to concentrate our limited energies, select a field that interests us, and make a significant contribution to that field, becomes harmful. Specialization can be good only if one first knows where his specialty fits into the overall scheme of things—only if the specialist has a worldview.

Specialization need not be harmful, provided the proper basis is laid for it. On the contrary, specialization is valuable. Specialization can allow one to develop those habits of mind that can be carried over into other disciplines: orderliness, thoroughness, honesty, rigor, clarity, precision, and

cogency. Specialization is not only valuable, it is inevitable. It is impossible to master the whole of learning; it is impossible for a chemist, for example, even to master all of chemistry. Given the quantity of information available, we all must specialize. There is the old story of the Professor of Greek who cried: "I have wasted my energies; I have devoted my life to the study of the ablative and the dative. Why didn't I specialize? I should have concentrated on the ablative and let the dative alone."

The Apostle Paul makes several points about specialization by demonstrating that Christians, as members of the body of Christ, are all specialists. Some are eyes; some, hands; some, feet. Some are elders; some, deacons; some homemakers are hospitable to angels. But the only reason such specialization is and can be good is that Christians do not specialize in doctrine—we all have the same mind—the mind of Christ. Thus while Paul encourages a diversity of gifts, activities, and congregations, he does not encourage a diversity of doctrine. In Paul's school there is divine Election, but there are no electives. There is, rather, a rigorous systematic theology, summarized for us in his letter to the Romans.

It is common to hear that we must have a worldview. But if that is where the argument stops, it is inadequate. There is no magic in having a worldview, just as there is none in having faith or religion. What is important is having the right worldview, the true worldview. The primacy of truth is most important. Education does not consist in the quest for truth. Education is, rather, the communication of truth from one generation to another.

Most of the private colleges in America were established by Christians and were originally founded on that principle, yet few of those colleges remain Christian today. More than 30 years ago, in 1966, a major study of *Church Sponsored Higher Education in the United States* concluded that "the intellectual presuppositions which actually guide the activities of most church colleges are heavily weighted in the secular direction." The situation is much worse today.

How is a college to avoid—or at least postpone—such a fate, which indeed is a fate worse than death? Perhaps we should look more closely at what the Puritans did, discarding their errors and improving their insights. After all, the Puritans are the only significant group of Christians in America who have attempted a Christian reconstruction of thought. At Harvard College the student was clearly informed that "the main end of his life and studies is to know God and Jesus Christ . . . and therefore to lay Christ in the bottome, as the only foundation of all sound knowledge and learning." The Harvard statement is the principle of *sola Scriptura* applied to education. Notice the words "only" and "all." The Harvard statement excludes all appeals to observation, experience, nature, science, and secular philosophy.

Many professed Christians today might initially agree with the Harvard statement, only to run after strange gods—psychology, science, the "classics," secular philosophy—no sooner than the statement had passed through their minds. "They honor me with their lips, but their hearts are far from me." It is important to have a worldview, but it is far more important to have the correct worldview. Only the correct world-view will provide a thoroughly Christian education, equip a new generation to proclaim, explain, and defend the Christian faith in the twenty-first century, and eventually create a new civilization, rising from the ruins of the old.

## *The Future*

The Trinity Foundation is uniquely poised to establish this new Christian University. For the past twenty years, by the grace of God, we have developed and published the ideas, the system of ideas, the Christian philosophy on which any new civilization must be built. These ideas have been outlined and articulated by Gordon Clark, the philosopher of the Reformation. Some other organizations have glimpsed a part of the system, but not the whole. To the extent that they have lacunae in their philosophies or have compromised with the world, they must fail at perpetuating and defending the faith. The case for Christianity must be watertight. If there is an open seam anywhere, it may prove to be the fatal gap.

The Trinity Foundation, God willing, is about to enter a new and long-term phase of its life. We have been publishing books for nearly twenty years, developing, as it were, the curriculum for a Christian University. We still have much to write—I have half a dozen new books in various stages of preparation—and to publish, and we hope that our publishing program will continue to expand. But the basic curriculum is ready; what we must do is to develop the mechanism to deliver it to the upcoming generation of students. The students who have been educated at home or in Christian schools must be told that there is an entire world of Christian thought; that they ought not be satisfied with the secularism of the state universities or their cousins, the private and "Christian" colleges; that they do not have to settle for a humanist higher education.

While we continue to write and to publish, we intend to institute a series of conferences, seminars, and courses, taking the initial and exploratory steps to establish a genuinely Christian University. We hope that many will cooperate with us in this undertaking, for there simply is no thoroughly Christian college in America.

We are asking all those who understand the need for a Christian University to do three things:

- (1) to pray daily for the success of our efforts;
- (2) to let others know about our efforts;
- (3) to contribute financially to the establishment of a Christian University.

Like the Puritans, we face a vast wilderness. Do we, like them, have the understanding, the vision, and the courage to establish a Christian University?

# THE TRINITY REVIEW

For though we walk in the flesh, we do not war according to the flesh, for the weapons of our warfare [are] not fleshly but mighty in God for pulling down strongholds, casting down arguments and every high thing that exalts itself against the knowledge of God, bringing every thought into captivity to the obedience of Christ. And they will be ready to punish all disobedience, when your obedience is fulfilled.

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## The Relationship of Public Education to Christianity

Gordon H. Clark

*Editor's Preface: Fifty years ago, on October 31, 1935, Dr. Gordon H. Clark delivered the following speech to the 42<sup>nd</sup> Annual Convention of the Ruling Elders' Association of Chester Presbytery in Kennett Square, Pennsylvania. In the following 50 years, the burgeoning Christian school movement has sought to thwart the menace to Christianity represented by public education, but we still have a long way to go. The "complete Christian culture" of which Clark spoke is not yet in sight. But more and more people are beginning to understand the necessity of replacing public education with Christian education. Clark understood that need fifty years ago.*

The subject of this morning's address is of such breadth and depth that many and important phases must be omitted. Since the theme of this conference is "Perils Confronting the Christian Church," one might expect the paper on public education to deal with accounts of young men and women whose faith and life had been ruined in college. Yet this phase of the matter is one which must be omitted. As a matter of fact, at the opening of Westminster Theological Seminary this autumn, the speaker, the Rev. John McComb, of New York, asserted he had never known a case of Christian faith ruined by college contacts. In the alleged cases, he said, the young man had no true faith to begin with; and further, wherever a boy or girl is properly instructed by parents and forewarned of the existence of enemies, the enemies do little damage.

Now while my experience has been the same as Dr. McComb's, it may well be that my experience is limited. There has been recently published a book entitled, *Crucifying Christ in Our Colleges* by Dan Gilbert. Mr. Gilbert states and then gives his evidence that "for many, a college education has meant an applied course in immorality." He quotes the anti-Christian Aldous Huxley as saying, "American college boys and girls copulate with the casual promiscuousness of dogs." And he further refers to statistics that show that a certain college town in Michigan has a greater population of venereal cases than New York City.

Although the book is distressingly extreme, the collection of incidents and cases compiled by Mr. Gilbert is probably true and accurate. The author then traces this immorality to temptations and seductions presented to the student by anti-Christian professors. He has amassed a large number of quotations from college textbooks on psychology, sociology, biology, in which the Christian religion and the Christian standards of morality are attacked and repudiated in favor of promiscuity in sex, revolution and bloodshed in politics, thievery and even murder in private affairs. Assume, if you will, that the author has collected the most outrageous statements; it is nonetheless true that this is what the students get in some textbooks and in some colleges. If other textbooks are more cautious, it still remains possible that the lectures in the classroom promulgate paganism. Lectures, moreover, have this two-fold advantage over

textbooks—they are more effective than textbooks in molding the ideas of the students, and in the case of dangerous doctrine they vanish in air and leave no accurate evidence behind.

All this is a menace to Christianity; it is an urgent phase of the problem; nevertheless it is a phase we must omit from this morning's considerations. We omit this phase for a reason, and the reason is that these distressing facts are the result of underlying causes. The causes are not as spectacular as the results, but they are the root of the trouble and require recognition in a proper diagnosis.

No doubt these causes are numerous. Perhaps the basic cause is the inherent depravity of human nature. Born in iniquity, implicated in Adam's guilt, a man is naturally a sinner. However, the most basic cause of the evil educational situation is not restricted to the field of education. Anyone who has worked in a factory knows that "one taint of nature makes the whole world kin." And so it might seem proper to pass by the subject of human depravity as being a theological consideration and not peculiar to education. On the other hand, although it is not peculiar to education, an educator's belief or disbelief in hereditary depravity determines his attitude toward school problems. The non-Christian educator who believes that the child's nature is inherently and positively good, or at very worst neutral, aims to develop that nature as it is. Restrictions and inhibitions are regarded as evil, and self-expression is regarded as good. That the result of such an attitude is often a decidedly immoral life is not surprising; but even in the very limited field of intellectual attainment, the results are disastrous, for the child chooses to learn what he feels like learning. The child chooses the project, and the teacher is there only to amuse him. The Christian educator, on the other hand, believes that every child he teaches inherits an evil nature, praises self-control rather than self-expression; he believes the teacher, rather than the pupil, knows best what lessons should be studied; and he is convinced that the popular shibboleth, learning by doing, is unmasked when we see that evil learned in such a manner does irreparable harm. The theological doctrine of human depravity, it is true, is not limited in its application to education; but certainly it has a

very definite bearing on the problem, and should be so recognized.

It may be well, however, to attempt to limit this discussion to purely educational theory. At least the attempt will prove whether such a limitation is possible or not. But what is educational theory, and what is education? Disagreement on this initial question produces divergence all along the line. It should be obvious from the mere statement that a school system founded on the idea that education is a moral and spiritual preparation for all of life will train children in a manner totally different from a school system which conceives education as a preparation for getting the most money in the shortest time. It would be difficult if not impossible to find in the United States a public school system whose operation is based on the supremacy of moral and spiritual values. It would be relatively easy, however, to find more or less open proponents of an education completely materialistic in its philosophy and purely vocational in its contents. It sees only this world, and in this world it knows only economics.

Aside from any religious implications, this type of education tends to turn men into machines. As long as the victims of this type of instruction are actively engaged in following their own little rut, as long as they are occupied by their business, the machine works smoothly. But take away the business, get the machine out of the rut, give the man an evening of solitude or leisure, and his essential poverty of spirit is revealed. If he can find no acquaintances to prevent him from boring himself, he must turn on the radio. What noises the radio transmits is irrelevant, at least it fills the vacuum between the ears.

Other educators attempt to substitute a view of education more plausible to common sense. They assert either that there is no ultimate aim of education, or, if they are more cautious, declare they know of no such aim. Enamoured with scientific experiment and observation, they have discovered, so they say, that education has many disconnected and unrelated ends. Discarding what they consider impractical metaphysics, they hold that everyone agrees that spelling is useful, and

arithmetic, and, let us say, football. To develop the student along these unrelated lines, then, is the purpose of education. Of any synthesis of human activities, of any primary purpose in life, they profess ignorance or disbelief.

Plausible as this theory is, the person who reflects stumbles on some embarrassing questions. In any list of unrelated aims of education, one may ask, has anything been omitted? Is the list complete? Certainly every consistent Christian would regard the list of a pagan educator woefully inadequate. Does the professional educator, in particular does the public school system of our country, wish to force on Christian people a type of schooling from which all spiritual values are banned? When the educator composed his list, what was the motive behind his omissions? Was it his concealed conviction that certain ends, especially the more comprehensive ends, are valueless? It may be that such lists occasionally include subjects omitted from the purely materialistic vocational theory; but on the whole, these two theories—the dogmatic materialism of the one and the dogmatic skepticism of the other—amount to much the same thing.

A third theory, however, seems definitely more promising. It is precisely the opposite of the first theory. If the aim of vocational education is to make man into a machine and to regiment him in a rut, the aim in this case is to prevent man from becoming a machine and to save him from a rut. The aim is to make him independent of radios, in short to make him a man, a complete man instead of a dependent child in need of amusement.

A pertinent suggestion for modern school systems is that they banish everything vocational, and banish it on the ground that it is not education. Technical schools are to be encouraged—the finer they are the better; but let not the common confusion remain that technical training and education are the same. Education, properly understood, does not prepare a youth for this or that specific type of life; education is not for the purpose of producing chemists, brokers, or engineers; it is for the purpose of producing men. It does not prepare for any one type of life in particular, but for any and all kinds in

general. Its lessons are applicable to all life, not to just some life.

Let it be perfectly well understood, however, that this education can be and should be as thorough as technical training. The theory does not imply that the school year is a holiday, that hard intellectual labor can be dispensed with, or that college is a young gentleman's finishing school. A course at the Sorbonne will impress one with the thoroughness of French education, and while their system is not ideal, American systems would improve if they should copy some of the French thoroughness. Education should be as thorough as technical training, but not so narrow and restricted; for the aim is a complete man and a well-balanced life.

Unfortunately, just as we are arriving at an apparently satisfactory view of what education aims to do, we are confronted with the most basic and most serious problem of all. Education may well aim at a well-balanced life and a complete man; but what is a well balanced life, and what constitutes a complete man? No strictly educational theory can answer these questions; the attempt to exclude all but purely educational material fails, because each educator adopts a particular philosophic worldview and bases his educational theory on his philosophy. Some educators hold that man and the world he lives in should be humanistically conceived. They do not believe in God; religion in their estimation is superstition; and the well-balanced life becomes the gratification of as many senses as possible. Some of the worst results of this view give Mr. Gilbert material for his book mentioned above. Other educators, too few in number, hold to a theistic worldview. They assert that God is, and is Sovereign; that disregard of God results in inevitable calamity; and that the chief end of man is to glorify God and to enjoy him forever. On the one side we have John Dewey and most of the professional educators: on the other side, the Christian.

It cannot be too strongly emphasized that the educational policies of a public school system derive their character from the philosophy of its higher officials. Let these directors, superintendents, and principals claim they base their views on

experiment and observation; their claim is untrue. Experimentation in psychology and pedagogy may indeed improve the technique of teaching, but it cannot choose ends or goals. And ends or goals are far more important than technique. Scientific technique can only be a curse when it is headed in the wrong direction. No better illustration of this truth could be desired than the constantly improving technique in chemistry. Improved chemistry can work wonders in medicine; but if improved technique in chemistry is used to produce poison gas for war, we may well wish chemistry less success. Technique in education will make the teaching of children more efficient, but if the educator teaches wrong ideals, the more efficiently he does so, the worse. Scientific experiment may tell us how children learn, but no amount of observation of children will tell us what they ought to learn. And this is the most important phase of education; not the description of the learning process, but the goal of the process. In philosophic language pedagogy is not a descriptive science, it is a normative science. It deals not so much with what is, but with what ought to be. And views of what ought to be do not come, as some educators envious of a scientific reputation claim, from observing how children learn. Views of what ought to be depend on the underlying philosophy. The anti-Christian educator wants to produce one kind of man; the Christian has chosen a far different goal. They may both talk about a complete man, but that they mean different things is obvious when we quote perhaps the best verse in Scripture on the goal of education: "All Scripture is inspired of God and is profitable for teaching ... for instruction in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, furnished completely unto every good work."

If now as Christians we have some idea of our goal, it is time to pay attention to the methods for providing children with the education we favor. Methodology could be discussed indefinitely; its intricacies are infinite. This morning only certain very general principles of method can be mentioned. First of all, education is and should be regarded as the responsibility of the family. It is primarily to parents, not primarily to the State, nor even to the Church, that God has entrusted the children and their upbringing. This principle needs

emphasis in these days because so many educators neglect or deny it. There are powerful forces at work in the world and in these United States to destroy the family and to make children, yes and adults too, the creatures of the State. Loose morals and easy Nevada divorces go hand in hand with dictatorship to destroy the family and to exalt the State. Americans need not point the finger of scorn at immoral, atheistic Russia, nor at the efforts of Hitler and Mussolini, to make of public education a means of political propaganda. Centralization of authority is well developed in this country, too. Never before in this country has so much power been put into the hands of one man. If these tendencies toward loose morality, exemplified both in easy divorce and in the repudiation of national debts, and toward dictatorship exemplified again in the repudiation of debts and laws concerning potatoes, if these tendencies are not combated and overcome, the family stands to lose. Dictators never have and never can annihilate the family, simply because it is an institution established by God and ingrained in the human constitution; but dictators can ruin many families, cause widespread misery, and even civil war. In education, the dictatorial policy is pursued with every centralization of authority. A federal Board of Education which could control local systems would turn the schools into instruments of party politics, and in short would be the most effective method possible for preventing any true education. All this, too, is in line with the so-called Child Labor amendment, which—if it should ever become a part of the United States Constitution, at least in the form in which it was originally presented—would take the control of children from the parents and give it to Congress. If I am correctly informed, its sponsors are Communistic and they emphatically rejected limiting the scope of the amendment to industrial employment, but insisted on including the power to take control of children away from the parents. In these troubled times, the Christian must make himself vocal and reassert the responsibility of the family for the education of the child.

Parents, however, because of the exigencies of life, cannot personally give the children the instruction they need. Schools are necessary. But to what sort of school should Christian parents send their

children? Does it seem reasonable that a Christian child should be given pagan instruction? There are Christians, even Christian ministers, who refer to Moses as being learned in all the wisdom of the Egyptians and from this fact conclude, by some sort of private logic, that there is no need for Christian schools. We agree that Moses' character was so formed by his mother's training that his Egyptian education did not ruin him, but if pagan education did not ruin Moses and does not ruin true Christian young men today, we should give glory to the power of God's grace instead of being satisfied with pagan education. Just because a young man survives pagan instruction is no reason for subjecting him to it. Children sometimes survive diphtheria or infantile paralysis, but we do not try to give it to them.

Now, in public schools, children receive a pagan education. One hardly expects the public schools to teach that most compact and most consistent expression of Christianity, the *Shorter Catechism*. But the teaching of the Bible is also prohibited, and in some places even the reading of the Bible is outlawed. Obviously the public schools are not Christian. But many people reply, though they are not Christian, they are not anti-Christian, they are neutral. But, let one ask, what does neutrality mean when God is involved? How does God judge the school system which says to him, "O God, we neither deny nor assert thy existence; and O God, we neither obey nor disobey thy commands; we are strictly neutral." Let no one fail to see the point: the school system that ignores God teaches its pupils to ignore God, and this is not neutrality but the worse form of antagonism, for it judges God to be unimportant and irrelevant in human affairs.

Any Christian, it seems to me, should have sense enough to see that subjection to pagan influences works an injustice to the child. Any Christian should see that, but a Presbyterian should see it still more clearly. Unfortunately the Presbyterian Church in the U. S. A. is dominated by men who share the views of the heretical Auburn Affirmation. The Bible is repudiated and the chief events of Christ's ministry—his Virgin Birth, his vicarious Atonement, his bodily Resurrection—are called unessential to the Christian religion. The

*Westminster Confession* with its glorious Calvinism is a dead letter. But a true Presbyterian, one who really believes the system of the Confession—one to whom total depravity, limited atonement, perseverance of the saints, mean something—such a one can see more clearly than any other type of Christian the injustice of subjecting a child to pagan instruction. With his profounder and more consistent understanding of Christianity, the Calvinist sees this more clearly because he more fully appreciates the Covenant of Grace.

In *Genesis* we read that God established a gracious covenant between himself and Abraham, but it was not with Abraham alone that God established the covenant. The words are "I will establish my covenant between me and thee and thy seed after thee ...." The covenant therefore definitely included the children. Hence the children of Abraham stood in a relation to God different from the relation of heathen children to God. In Paul's letter to the Galatians, God teaches us that the New Testament dispensation is but the revival and fulfillment of the covenant with Abraham. This does not mean that actual salvation is a natural inheritance from father to son. Much less does it deny the need for regeneration. But it does mean that God ordinarily works through families; and for these reasons Presbyterians administer baptism to infants, just as the Hebrews circumcised their sons, to show their formal inclusion in the covenant. The parent at baptism promises to bring up the child in the nurture and admonition of the Lord, or in some other terms promises to educate the child along Christian lines. It is inefficiency to say the least to restrict this education to Sunday School and the little at-home training the public school educated children of Christian parents might receive; logically the day school also should be utilized for Christian instruction.

Now once upon a time our country was two-thirds Calvinistic, and the civilization in a large sense was Christian. This unfortunately is no longer true, and schools and colleges are accused—with some degree of truth—of giving the students courses in applied immorality.



What suggestion can be made to help the parent in the present situation? There is one very concrete suggestion—whether it is practicable or not the parents must decide for themselves. Suffice is to be said that the suggestion is in actual operation in a number of places. The suggestion simply is that Christian parents band together to form Christian schools. A single family cannot provide a Christian education for its children, but a large number of families can. Some financial sacrifice, no doubt, would be needed; but Christianity in general and in particular its most consistent form, Calvinism, are not known for shunning sacrifice. Christian civilization and Christian culture are disappearing. Large groups of earnest orthodox Christians are totally unaware of the rich heritage that is theirs; they are as babes drinking milk, and they need strong meat for maturity. They believe the fundamentals, they preach the heart of the Gospel, and souls are saved through their instrumentality. We praise God for that. But they are not completely furnished unto every good work. A system of Christian schools will give us a knowledge of Christianity as it embraces the whole of life, and will produce a complete Christian culture for a complete man.