



# THE CHRISTIAN SCHOOL OF GRACE BAPTIST CHURCH

## Modern Education – The Missing Foundation

By Peter Barnes

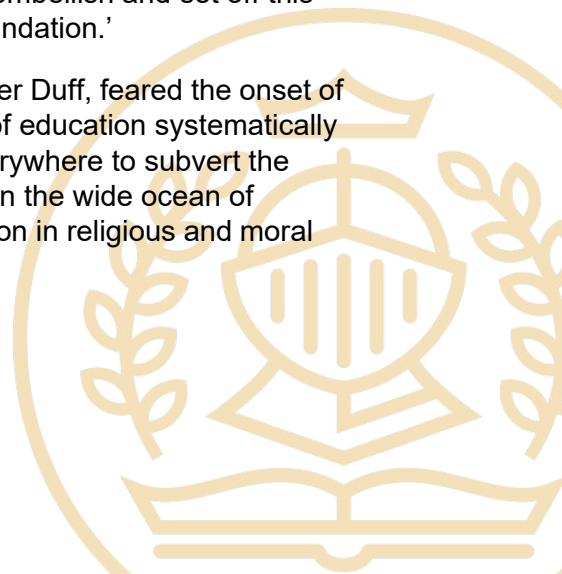
According to the Bible, the fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom. So keen is God that we grasp this that it is stated no less than five times (Prov. 1:7; 9:10; 15:33, Psalm 111:10, Job 28:28). It is not that Christian truth is the icing on the cake; it is the yeast in the cake. It does not provide a few extra insights; it is the foundation for every subject.

God is the God not just of prayer and worship but of everything. He is the God of science. It is he who created the world and upholds it. Hence the created world reveals something of the majesty of the Creator (Psalm 119:1, Romans 1:20). So obvious is this that we are without excuse if we fail to see it. In the fundamental sense, I cannot understand a cow or a cockroach unless I can relate it to God.

God is also the God of history. Even unbelieving kings are instruments in his hand (Isaiah 10:5-7). Again, I have no way of grasping the fundamental issues of the six o'clock news unless I understand that all history takes place under the sovereign will of God. Music, too, points to God (e.g., Psalm 150) and reflects the fact that God the Creator made man in his own image and therefore creative. The same can be said of art and technology (e.g., Exodus 35). In fact, without God, there is no basis for order and discovery and hence no basis for education.

There is a vast difference between educating for civic respectability and educating for eternity. This can be illustrated by an exchange between the renowned Deist Benjamin Franklin and the evangelist George Whitefield in 1749. Franklin planned to found an academy in Philadelphia and to this end sought to enlist the support of his friend Whitefield. Whitefield's reply is a cogent one: 'As we are all creatures of a day, as our whole life is but one small point between two eternities, it is reasonable to suppose that the grand end of every Christian institution for forming tender minds should be to convince them of their natural depravity, of the means of recovering out of it, and of the necessity of preparing for the enjoyment of the Supreme Being in a future state... Arts and sciences may be built on this and serve to embellish and set off this superstructure, but without this, I think there cannot be any good foundation.'

A well-known missionary in India in the nineteenth century, Alexander Duff, feared the onset of secular education in India. He wrote: 'As the government schemes of education systematically exclude religion, the necessary effect of their operation must be everywhere to subvert the idolatries and superstitions of the people and then cast them adrift on the wide ocean of infidelity.' Or, as Lord Shaftesbury put it: 'Education without instruction in religious and moral principles will merely result in a race of clever devils.'





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That is largely what has happened in the Western world, although perhaps the noun is doing better than the adjective. We have been bombarded with the view that we cannot explain anything by recourse to God. Hence the doctrine of evolution is compulsory in state schools, while the alternative of creationism is banned. English texts which are immoral or blasphemous are allowed, but not those which are sexist.

The result is either secularism (there is no God) or a truncated pietism (there is a god but he has nothing much to do with the workings of this world). There is no point of integration, no foundation, nothing to unify knowledge. The knowledge that is gleaned appears as fragmentary and unrelated to other subjects. There are no ultimate values, except the one that says that there are no ultimate values.

However, the West has almost passed that stage now. Into the vacuum of secularism- which lasted for many decades-has now swept the modern mania for all things 'spiritual', including witches, transcendental meditation, star signs, crystals, and an acceptance of all religions which accept all other religions. It is not 'in' to be Christian, but is 'in' to be 'spiritual'. Yet there is still no foundation. The battle continues. As C.S. Lewis so graphically put it: 'There is no neutral ground in the universe: every square inch, every split second, is claimed by God and counterclaimed by Satan.'

*(From The Banner of Truth magazine, Issue 450, March 2001, used by permission.)*

