

# Disclaimer

by Patch Blakey

A disclaimer is a statement that denies or repudiates a claim. These days, we're most familiar with disclaimers found on packages that contain something potentially harmful to the consumer and therefore act as a warning to the buyer. Not all disclaimers, however, necessarily deal with potentially dangerous substances or products. "Caveat emptor," a Latin phrase that means "let the buyer beware," is a disclaimer. It was used to communicate the principle that the seller of a product could not be held responsible for the quality of his goods unless it was written in a guarantee or warranty. The products themselves could be sundries that had no naturally harmful effects to the purchaser, but the warning implied that it was the responsibility of the buyer to ensure that the products he was buying were up to the standards he expected them to be, and if they were not, he could not take legal recourse against the seller unless he had received a written guarantee at the time of purchase.

This article is also a disclaimer. It is not a warning of a potential health hazard or even of a potentially bad product. It is a denial of an assumption that, although often not verbalized, is unknowingly held by many Christians, and held without Biblical warrant. The assumption follows the pattern of a syllogism. It may be stated like this: 1) God provides all good things, 2) All people are to enjoy what God provides, therefore, 3) All people are to enjoy all good things. This syllogism is true in one sense, but false in another. It is true in the sense that all men are to enjoy all the good things that God provides them, but it cannot be used as a warrant that all men are to have equal access to all of the same good things that every other man has access to. God gives good gifts, and He bestows them on whomever He will (1 Cor 12:11), not upon all alike.

On the selfish side there are those Christians who quote Acts 2:44 out of context and attempt to use it as justification for envy or covetousness. On the magnanimous side are those who selflessly, yet mistakenly, think that because one person benefits from some blessing, then all should. It's somewhat reminiscent of Al Capp's comic strip *Li'l Abner*, in which he lampooned, "What's good for General Bullmoose is good for the USA."

How does Classical and Christian education fold into this discussion? You've probably already guessed. It's not for everybody. That's the disclaimer. Classical and Christian education is only for some, not for all. But, someone may object, then it's not Christian! My reply is, "Of course it's Christian!" Jesus Christ is Lord of all, and Classical and Christian education seeks to honor Him as Lord by acknowledging the authority of His word in every area of life. God is the Creator, hence every area of life, including all classroom subjects, have their being in Him. There are no neutral ideas.

Our respected opponents may then counter that Christianity is for everybody and that any system of education that claims to be Christian but isn't for everybody can't truly be Christian. I will grant that the gospel is to be proclaimed to all creatures, but this does not justify giving the dog catcher the same wages as the CEO of IBM, even if they are both Christians. What is really undergirding the whole philosophical viewpoint that all people should be equally entitled to the same benefits regardless of their station in life is an erroneous and nearly ubiquitous commitment to egalitarianism.

Egalitarianism is pervasive in American culture. That all men are created equal is true in God's sight; all men are born sinners under the wrath of God. But to infer that God loves

all men equally is Biblically unsound. God causes the rain to fall on the good and the evil alike, but He still distinguishes between the good and the evil. God does hate sinners, not just their sin (see Psa. 6:5; 11:5; Prov 17:15, Rom. 9:13 as just a few examples). Not everyone is going to grow up to be President of the United States, and not everyone has the same opportunity to do so. Likewise, it is equally inconceivable that every child must be educated the same. To assert otherwise is dogmatic imperialism and egalitarianism.

Classical and Christian education is a return to the historical philosophy of educating our children. It is not “the” Biblical way to educate. There are many styles and methods employed in educating youth, even among Christians, but as a means of helping to raise up godly men and women who can think and distinguish what is true, the Classical and Christian model is unsurpassed. But let us guard against unsound philosophies, such as egalitarianism, that would lead us astray from the truth of the Scriptures. The benefits from educating our children in the Classical and Christian model are dearly superior to those derived by other methods, but that does not require us to commit to using this model to teach everyone. It may be used to teach any and all, but that doesn’t mean that it is the best method to teach any and all. The author of Proverbs noted, “Wisdom is found on the lips of him who has understanding, but a rod is for the back of him who is devoid of understanding” (Prov 10:13). Some students have understanding and some do not. They must be taught accordingly.