



John Dewey & Decline Of American Education: How Patron Saint Of Schools Has Corrupted Teaching & Learning

Henry T. Edmondson III

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The influence of John Dewey's undeniably pervasive ideas on the course of American education during the last half-century has been celebrated in some quarters and decried in others. But Dewey's writings themselves have not often been analyzed in a sustained way. In *John Dewey and the Decline of American Education*, Hank Edmondson takes up that task. He begins with an account of the startling authority with which Dewey's fundamental principles have been-and continue to be-received within the U.S. educational establishment. Edmondson then shows how revolutionary these principles are in light of the classical and Christian traditions. Finally, he persuasively demonstrates that Dewey has had an insidious effect on American democracy through the baneful impact his core ideas have had in our nation's classrooms. Few people are pleased with the performance of our public schools. Eschewing polemic in favor of understanding, Edmondson's study of the "patron saint" of those schools sheds much-needed light on both the ideas that bear much responsibility for their decline and the alternative principles that could spur their recovery.

What They're Saying...

"Edmondson's critique of Dewey is useful, clear, and brief. He rightly sees Rousseau's primitivism as a major influence, and he rightly distinguishes Dewey from Jefferson, whose reputation and lineage Dewey was eager to claim as his own."

— **M.D. Aeschliman**, *The National Review*

"A distinguished Southern scholar who has written widely on ethics and literature, including on Flannery O'Connor and J.R.R. Tolkien, Edmondson has bravely trekked through the desert wastes of forty volumes of what must be the most muddled prose to ever attain to such demonic power over a culture. Keeping his bearings by the polestars of Plato, Aristotle, Newman, Chesterton, and others who understand genuine education as Edmondson tracks the beast of educationism to its ultimate lair, where lie the scattered bones of countless students devoured by relativism and nihilism."

— *New Oxford Review*

"Edmondson excels in demonstrating that the problem with public education in this country is not just a matter of bad policy (although there is certainly plenty of that going on); it goes much deeper. It is a matter of faulty philosophy...Edmondson lays out many more detailed suggestions, making this book not only informative but also a very capable handbook for moving educational reform in the right direction."

— *Townhall.com*

"John Dewey believed that education was the key to social change. Yet as Henry T. Edmondson effectively shows in his new book, Dewey could not defy the inherent contradiction of his own philosophy, which has left an indelible mark on American education."

— *Claremont Review of Books*

"While all of his suggestions are meritorious, Edmondson's greatest contribution toward school reform is his overall conclusion....One hopes that Edmondson's book, dedicated to teachers, will spark the long road to

renewal."

— *Crisis*

"Today, of course, public education has come under severe criticism and no book that I've read better explains the root cause of our national educational dilemma than Henry Edmondson's *John Dewey and the Decline of American Education*.

— **Bob Cheeks**, *IntellectualConservative.com*

"Edmondson doesn't draw the conclusion, but one puts this book down with the conviction that unless control of primary and secondary education is wrested from the U.S. educational establishment, corrective measures are not likely to occur."

— **Jude P. Dougherty**, *The Catholic University of America*

"If the title of Henry T. Edmondson's book leaves any room for doubt as to his views on John Dewey and [his] educational theories, the book's subtitle should make clear Edmondson's belief: Dewey's lasting influence on the U.S. education system has wrought nothing but diminishing returns, if not all-out catastrophic results."

— **Bruce Edward Walker** *Michigan Education Report*

"...a bold indictment of one of the fathers of modern educational thought and practise...Edmondson's critique of Dewey is in the vein of conservative scholars such as Allan Bloom and Diane Ravitch, who have voiced similar concerns regarding the loss of tradition in education. It is clear that Edmondson also believes that education can regain prominence only by abandoning Deweyan progressivism and embracing traditional Western values."

— *Perdue University Press*, Education and Culture



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James Peters:

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