

Chapter X: A Critical Estimate of St. Paul's Pedagogy

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The purpose of this study has been to bring together somewhat more fully than can be easily found elsewhere the material for making an estimate of St. Paul from a pedagogical standpoint. Having gathered this material, an evaluation of it is now in order. This evaluation will at least approximate for us what place should be assigned to St. Paul in educational history.

This raises the question: What place has been given to him in the history of education? The answer is a brief one: He has been recognized as a pupil of the celebrated Gamaliel;¹ as the second founder of the Christian Church;² as one of the leaders who "did much good, not only in building up the Church but also in promoting education, the chief handmaid of the church."³ In a word no definite place has been given him. Perhaps the reason for this is that "the complex environment of his time, and the not less complex ideas which his fertile and subtle mind expressed, have, it would seem, disguised from many readers the real Paul."⁴ On the other hand men have been so interested in his teachings that they have missed the pedagogy of the teacher. St. Paul did not display his art. "The Ideal teacher must have a readiness to be forgotten. And what is harder? . . .

¹ *Cyclopedia of Education*, Monroe. Article "Gamaliel."

² See Cubberley, *The History of Education*, 87.

³ Seeley, *History of Education*, 101-2.

⁴ Francis Greenwood Peabody, *St. Paul and the Modern World*, Preface, X.

A teacher does not live [147] for himself but for his pupil and for the truth that he imparts.”⁵ In this sense, St. Paul is an Ideal teacher. Consequently, those interested in St. Paul’s teachings have failed to sense his significance as a teacher, while those interested in education have not recognized the pedagogy latent in his teachings.

This study made entirely from the pedagogical point of view would be incomplete without a pedagogical evaluation.

1. St. Paul’s pedagogy was *effective* both immediately and permanently. His pedagogy influenced not only a large circle of intimate associates but embraced the bounds of the Roman Empire. Contemporary leaders paid him the unprecedented tribute that he had “turned the world upside down.”⁶ His influence is also permanent. A religion born on Oriental soil was projected by his pedagogy into Europe, thus uniting the Orient and the Occident, and consequently pre-determining the history of Europe for all these centuries. Next to the Master Teacher his influence is paramount on early Christian education. He made explicit in his teachings what the Master Teacher had made implicit by his life. His pedagogy is preserved in a literature written by himself, in the current language of the people, a literature which is unequalled by any other except that of which it is a part (the Scriptures). His words have a perennial potency. Under his tuition Augustine, Luther, Wesley came to their own and moved the world. Whenever men today sit at his feet and consider him seriously, something happens. His pedagogy not only spans the centuries, it girds the globe. His teachings, together with those of the Master Teacher, influence more people to-day than any other world teacher who ever lived.

2. St. Paul practiced many things which modern [148] educators preach. He did spontaneously and naturally what we seek so studiously to embody. He employed the pedagogic arts so effectively both in discourse and discussion that many besought and followed him with

⁵ Palmer, *The Teacher*, 25–26.

⁶ Acts 17:6.

glad and eager hearts. Yet, his art, like Socrates', had a blemish. He used the leading question to interrogate his pupil and bring him to his viewpoint. He did not seek to inform the intellect for its own sake, but to move to action. Yet, his pedagogy was directed to the mind in his appeals, which won interest and captured attention. He used various means to probe the consciousness of his hearers, appealing by way of perception, apperception, memory, imagination, judgment, and reason. He tapped the springs of feeling by words and actions, and set streams of worthy acts flowing from their lives by inviting imitation and prompting by suggestion. The ideas he taught found expression in action because they were felt by the pupils. Because he appealed to the whole man he received a response from the whole man. He stands the test of modern standards.

3. St. Paul was an Educator as well as a Teacher. He not only taught well but thought well. His educational views are concerned chiefly with the unit and the foundation of human society: the home and the church. His views of the home are a reflection of Hebrew domestic education intensified by a glowing Christian consciousness. They are unequaled for their completeness and sublimity, although not all his views are accepted by modern pedagogy (*e.g.*, the view of child nature), nor by modern sociology (*e.g.*, the submission of wife to husband). The educational function of the church according to Paul is to call out the whole man to complete living in the supreme adjustment of his personal relation to God and man. As a prisoner of his age he offered no place in the teaching function of the Church to [149] women. While this is a blemish from present standards and practice, yet we may infer what his view would be if he lived today. St. Paul omits reference to school education. This aspect of education receives our chief attention to-day. Yet his manner and methods of teaching find application in school education. The modern world would do well to practice his ideas of home instruction and aim at an achievement of his highly ennobling and practical ideals. St. Paul forgot neither man's social obligation nor his civic duties. His views in both cases are

distinctly pertinent and applicable to present day conditions. (See Chapter V.)

4. His aims as a teacher touched every side of man's nature, and all of them focused in one unique central aim, an aim which united religion and education toward the realization of complete manhood in this life (and his teachings further indicate, in the life to come), the perfect standard and dynamic of which is Christ. If early Christian Education may be characterized as "other-worldly," as it is by Graves, this survey of St. Paul's aims shows that his emphasis at least was not one-sided in this respect. His aim is so all-inclusive that it is in harmony with the combined aims of modern education, and it is so central and focused that it puts the emphasis where the modern emphasis is not, and ought to be. (See Chapter IV.) In this sense, he is a prophet to modern education, and his voice may well be heeded.

5. St. Paul's qualifications as a teacher emerge from this teaching career. He understood human nature; he knew and embodied what he taught; he had a high conception of the teacher's function; his physical presence, though possibly weak, was transfigured by a radiant personality; he had an effective voice and a speaking eye; his character is thoroughly human, predominantly positive in quality; his personality [150] was projected by means of a superior mental, emotional, and volitional endowment. These facts give St. Paul a high rating as a teacher in the light of present day standards.⁷

6. St. Paul's pedagogy was sourced in his training; a training to which his race, his home, his school, and his wider experiences in Tarsus and the Roman world contributed. His traditional Hebrew training with its emphasis on religion and morality, and pedagogic method (although laboriously memoriter) having given him the

⁷ See Alexander M. Dushkin, "Qualifications of the Ideal Jewish Teacher," *Jewish Teacher* I (1916): 51–61. A standard of evaluation based on such authorities as: Palmer, *The Ideal Teacher*; White, *School Management*, 17–48; Fitch, *Lectures on Teaching*, ch. 1; Seeley, *New School Management*, chs. 1 and 2; Milner, *The Teacher*, chs. 3-8; Colgrove, *The Teacher and the School*, chs. 2-4; Ruediger, *Agencies for Improving Teachers*; McMurray, *Elementary School Standards*, chs. 1, 4, 7, 8, 9, 12; Strayer, *Briefer Course in Teaching Process*; etc.

teacher's background and technique; the cultural influences in Tarsus having awakened in him the teacher's sense of appreciation; and his contact with the surge of the Roman world having given him the teacher's vision, he was made finally ready for his mission as a world teacher by transforming his life experience on the road to Damascus. Having been made "free," he henceforth has been a teacher of nations, the Apostle of Evangelical Freedom and of Justifying Faith.

"Who can calculate the mighty influence of his life upon maxims, upon manners, upon literature, upon history—in short upon the whole development of humanity!"

What then is St. Paul's place in educational history? Our conclusion follows logically from the facts. He is a world teacher of first rank, an educator of distinction. Therefore, he deserves a conspicuous place in the history of education.