

Enduring for Education.

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'It is for education that ye endure.' Εἰς παιδείαν ὑπομένετε.—Heb. xii. 7.

THE first clause of this verse is rendered in our Authorized Version: 'If ye endure chastening': but the Revisers, reading from a text differing only by one letter from the Received Text, translate the clause as a separate principal sentence: 'It is for chastening that ye endure.'

The change is of very great interest to a Bible student; for, under its new guise, the clause aspires to be in condensed form a theory of the purpose of life—it is for chastening that ye endure¹—and a most forbidding and sombre theory it looks. 'Chastening' is a word of most dismal associations; and I suppose most of us, with a sense of personal detachment from the subject, would define 'chastening' as the effect which trouble and reverses are supposed to have upon religious people in the way of producing a resigned and submissive condition of mind. To tell a young man in the name of religion that he 'endures for chastening' would, I imagine, be the surest way to alienate his sympathies from the religion which issued such depressing memoranda.

But in point of fact the word 'chastening' does serious injustice to the Greek word which it professes to translate. That word is *παιδεία*; a word which, although in its appropriation by New Testament writers it does sometimes take on a more sombre colour than it had in its pagan days (owing doubtless to the sharpened sense which the New Testament writers possessed of the evil that is in the world), is nevertheless the ordinary Greek word for *education*.

Possibly *discipline* is the translation which would best conserve the original atmosphere of the word, while introducing the element of sternness which the Christian conception and experience of life demanded. And if we read, 'It is for discipline that ye endure,' already something of the sombreness, if not all of the severity, has been eliminated from the sentence. But in point

of fact there is nothing to hinder the atmosphere from being lightened still farther, nothing to hinder us from accepting the translation, 'It is for education that ye endure.'

Of course it will still depend on our definition of 'education' whether this view of life shall or shall not commend itself to us. Happily we are not in the first instance called upon to supply a definition of education; but rather to inquire what the word *παιδεία* stood for when it was carried over from pagan usage and implanted in Christian literature. And here we come at once upon a fact which in the meantime will yield us all we need to remember. It is notorious that among the Greek philosophers views upon education were prevalent which were greatly in advance of the views until quite recently held among ourselves. And in particular there are two directions in which we have lately been modifying our ideas of education, bringing them more into line with ancient Greek ideas.

First, the idea has come to be generally accepted that education consists in the drawing out of the powers of a child or youth, rather than in cramming him with information. That is a salutary reversion to the conception of Plato, who in this connexion uses the word *ἄλκη*—a constraining or drawing out of the faculties of the mind. And next, the public mind has been of late years impressed by the idea that education involves the development of all the faculties and powers in harmony. The elements into which an old-fashioned philosophy divided up our nature are felt to act and react upon one another; it is felt, therefore, that the nature must be dealt with as a whole; the information and discipline of the mind (once regarded as nearly the whole of education) being now supplemented by attention to the body, by training in taste, by care of the condition of the moral sensibilities, by calling out a sense of responsibility, and so forth. This more comprehensive view of education is also in harmony with the old Greek view. Plato speaks out with contempt of head knowledge merely.

¹ The verb *ὑπομένω* may be either active or neuter. As a neuter verb, it may mean no more than to continue (with the thought of perseverance).

'Education in the real sense,' he says, 'is that education in virtue from youth upwards, which makes a man eagerly pursue the ideal perfection of being a perfect citizen, and teaches him both how rightly to rule and how to obey. That is the only education,' he goes on warmly, 'which upon our view deserves the name. The other sort of training which aims at mere cleverness apart from intelligence and justice is mean and illiberal, and is not worthy to be called education at all.' It is, then, with something of this connotation,—namely, of calling out and developing harmoniously all the powers of the nature,—that the word *παιδεία* was carried over into the Christian mind. There the word underwent—was bound to undergo—considerable modification. (a) Under the influence of the new thoughts of our relation to God which were introduced by Jesus Christ, the end of education came to be conceived and expressed, not in terms of self-culture, but of *the fulfilment of the purposes of God*; and (β) that purpose being that we should become partakers of His own character, a new emphasis was laid on the *moral* aspects of education, and whatsoever assisted to tear up the moral evil in the heart and check the immoral tendencies of our dispositions was conceived as a specially effective instrument of education. Hence, the experience of the stress of life, the delay of cherished hopes, the endurance of the winnowing process of tribulation—these things were regarded as peculiarly educative, if rightly used. Thus a certain air of sternness and stringency came to surround the word education, but without obliterating its original meaning.

Here then, in the rough, is an idea of that education for which, according to the writer of the Epistle to the Hebrews, we are allowed to 'endure'; it is the calling out into activity, and perfecting in harmony, of every faculty in us,—the strengthening and disciplining of the intellectual powers, the stimulating and directing of the sympathies, the reinforcement of conscience, the training of the will, and the due discipline of the body that it may be made the servant of worthy purposes,—all with the view of the production of a character marked, as God's is, by the free choice of what is good.

It is for this sort of education that we endure; all life is its opportunity and furnishes its material.

It is evident that as we look round upon our life we see much that seems to support this view, that things are so ordered as to provide for the training and education of our faculties. Take for example the training of our *intellects*. In any department in which we crave knowledge, we find, in the scheme of things around us, the facts or forces or ideas with which we shall have to deal so ordered as to provoke and stimulate investigation. We never find them already ordered and classified like the specimens in a museum; but scattered about like wildflowers in a beautiful and tempting chaos—a chaos charged with the potentiality of order. This is equally true, whether the realm be that of what we call the natural sciences, or the realm of history, or of the human mind; everywhere there is *prima facie* the same inviting disorder, the same suggestion of the possibility of order,—the same summons, therefore, and stimulus to the human intellect. Or take again the training of our *bodies*. We find in point of fact that the disposition and distribution of the resources of nature, and the effect of our environment upon us, are so arranged as to encourage us to the observance of those practices which make for the preservation of the body in health. Our food, for the most part, comes to us through such conditions as make for the securing, in the discipline of *work*, of precisely that which is most calculated to make the food useful for the body's development.

Or, once more, take the direction and regulation of our *desires*. We find, as a matter of fact, as life spreads out before and on either side of us, that the facts and observed laws around us do at once so call out desire, yet warn from its immoderate or untimely indulgence, that we find ourselves directly encouraged to the healthful control and regulation of desire.

On the face of it, then, life *looks like* a place of education, a school for the orderly development of our powers and faculties; and even if a man had no 'religion,' yet if he use life in this way, he will not only enjoy a certain detachment from life's present ills, but he will become increasingly persuaded that there must be a life beyond this present, where the results of the training received here will be gathered up.

But the fact is, that it is only under the influence of the Christian faith that this conception of life's purpose as educative really flourishes. And

the reasons are not far to seek. For one thing, the coming of Christ made much clearer to men the *purpose* of God with human life, and involved especially a revelation of the eternal life in which the purpose is to be fulfilled. In Christ men perceived a new light thrown upon God, upon His design for men, upon the sphere of the fulfilment of that design. When Christ had come, bearing God in upon human life, and illustrating and enforcing in His own programme of work the earnest, age-long solicitude of God ('My Father worketh hitherto, and I work'), there was no longer any doubt among those to whom Christ successfully appealed for allegiance and co-operation, that their lives were within the stream of a Divine Purpose, and moving to its fulfilment. Plato, despite his enlightenment, was never quite sure whether we were here for a definite purpose, or were simply playthings of the Higher powers. But to the Christian who had been baptized into Christ, the heavens had been opened, and the purpose of God revealed. Henceforth life was a school of training, an expectation, a hope; God was dealing with men as with sons. The adulthood was in the glorious hereafter.

It was not Christ's *teaching* only that wrought this change of view, it was still more His *Person*. In that Person the purpose of God was illustrated. He contrasted with men not only as good with sinful, but as perfect with imperfect. In Him these powers were seen in full development, which in men labour under imperfection. *Intellect* was seen in Him in stupendous strength: after twenty centuries the intellect of Christ is still the wonder of the world. *Sympathy* was in Him unequalled in range and penetration, yet under perfect control. The *will* was in Him the equally ready minister of the exercise of power or of power's restraint. The *body* was wholly the servant of the spirit for holy uses. In these and other ways, Christ stood before men the incarnation, if I may so speak, of the highest results of education, the norm of what man in full development should be.

For men felt that He shone in this completeness not for His own sake but for theirs; that He was the 'ultimate symbol of Humanity,' and when He had passed from earth men said to one another, thinking of Christ, 'That is what God would have us be. Did not the Lord say, "Learn

of Me?" Well, let us to life's school, patiently: it is for education that we endure.'

And from that day to this, men have found that to have a living connexion with Christ is to become better educated men: whether by book paths or by the straighter if more shadowed prayer path, every man who follows Christ makes his way to a real lore, and receives, in place of the narrowness of interest and sympathy which marks the illiterate man, the 'abundant' overflowing life, which is the genuine stamp of education.

To have book-learning only, without the expansion of the whole disposition towards magnanimity of judgment and catholicity of interest and sympathy, is to be poor indeed. But to learn of Christ is to have every faculty trained and developed, to have unsuspected and unused powers called out, to gain width of outlook, maturity of judgment upon men and movements, reasonableness of hope, and progressive self-conquest.

The time for laying the foundations of this matchless learning is the experimental years of youth; and he who applies himself to the instruction of the Master in these first years, is the man most likely to make the most enviable progress. But still, all life is this education's opportunity; and there is a message of encouragement for those whose meridian of energy and ambition is long past in the words, 'It is for education that ye endure.' For, if the lessons were over, would not the wise Master have released the scholar? Something then has still to be learned. 'Now I am beginning to be a learner,' said S. Ignatius as he was led to martyrdom. Up to the very last, then, we may learn. Nay, it is then we begin to learn, or rather begin to pass from learning to real knowledge. *Now we know in part; then we shall know even as we have been known.* In that knowledge shall be our eternal life.

It is for education, then, that we endure. God dealth with us as with sons. Already then, it appears, we are the sons of God: it is not yet manifest what we shall be. Our coming adulthood, our fulness of knowledge, is veiled. We only know that when Christ, our unseen Educator, who is forming us—mind, heart, and will—for God, shall be manifested, we shall be *like Him*; for we shall see Him as He is. And our education then will be complete.