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as we shout aloud 'and do not hold back,' raising our voice 'like a trumpet,' declaring to our people their rebellion and proclaiming the full-orbed justice of the Lord, and His love for the poor and oppressed (Isa. 58). And for those whom God calls to remain in the capital of the Empire, there is a responsibility to perceive one's present privileges and opportunities in the light of our *Hispanidad* and Latin American heritage to look upon all of this in the context of a pastoral vocation to *all* of Latin America: 'who knows but that you have come to the Kingdom for such a time as this!'

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The Reaction Against Classical Education in the New Testament

E. A. Judge

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This is one of the most incisive and scholarly articles ever published by the Evangelical Review of Theology*. Its implications for Christian Education are indeed profound.* (Editor)

In talking of 'Christian Education' one advances well beyond the framework of New Testament thought. Indeed, insofar as we are talking about schooling, we have to say that it is a matter that is not dealt with in the New Testament at all. The fact that some of the ministries in the churches, notably teaching, are described in educational terms, and that educational metaphors are sometimes used of church life, is not at all a good reason for thinking that the principles of upbuilding in Christ can be transferred to schooling in particular. The subject is available for metaphor because it is not being dealt with in itself. This only sharpens the problem of why the New Testament writers were not concerned with schooling. In other cases, such as economics, where the New Testament does not seem to face a subject in our way, we may say that it is because such questions were not conceptualised in our way at the time. But with education the opposite applies. By New Testament times the Greeks had for centuries both practised education and discussed it in essentially the same terms as we do.[1]

Hellenistic education proceeded through primary, secondary and tertiary levels roughly corresponding to ours. Grammatical and literary studies were dominant at the lower levels, but linked with mathematics, music and physical training. Girls and boys were treated alike. But from adolescence boys were admitted to the privileged ephebic

[1] F. A. G. Beck, *Greek Education, 450–350 B.C.*, London: Methuen, 1964; id., *An Album of Greek Education*, Sydney: Cheiron Press, 1975; H. I. Marrou, *A History of Education in Antiquity*, London: Sheed & Ward, 1956.

education in the gymnasium, originally intended for military training. It became a kind of public school system in the elite sense, conferring social status. From Roman times one might seek official registration in the old boys' union of 'those who were from the gymnasium', provided one's family had been in it for several generations.[2] For tertiary p. 167 education one might expect to move to a major centre, to study under a famous rhetorician (a sophist), or under a philosopher. These two types of school were distinguished by two basically different curriculums, not unlike our distinction between Arts and Sciences, and they were highly critical of each other. The rhetoricians specialised in the training of a man for public life, while the philosophers concentrated upon the theoretical analysis of man and the universe.

Broadly speaking this is the pattern of education that has persisted, witness especially the tradition of the British Public School or the German Gymnasium, into our own lifetimes. Central to it has always been the study of the classical authors. Students in St. Paul's day concentrated upon the same writers, and by much the same methods of grammatical analysis and literary commentary, as would a modern Classics student—Homer, the Athenian dramatists, and Demosthenes; or Cicero, Horace and Vergil if they were being educated in Latin. But behind the ascendancy of these studies in nineteenth-century church schools lies a paradox. Classical literature embodes ideals profoundly in conflict with those of the Bible: polytheism, for example, and an ethical stance that fostered exploitative sexual and social relations. In the early centuries the churches denounced this as poison, to which church training in the Bible was the antidote. But why did it not arise as a problem in the New Testament?

A simple explanation would be that the churches were made up of uneducated people. This was frequently asserted against them by their critics in the next two centuries. It was taken up as a serious historical explanation in the early part of this century, when the newly found papyrus letters were held to show that the New Testament letters came from a similarly sub-literary level of culture.[3] Paul seemed to endorse this in 1 Cor. 1:26–29, and perhaps, it was said, could not even write himself, simply adding his signature to what he had dictated as in Col. 4:18. But we now have a petition and a letter from Loliianos, the public grammar-school teacher from Oxyrhynchus in the mid-third century, p. 168 which shows that he also preferred to dictate.[4] Indeed, not writing one's own letters was the mark of a gentleman, who could afford a secretary. Paul's low rating of the Corinthians is probably sarcastic. The commonest opinion now is that the churches were partly drawn from educated circles. It has been shown that the papyrus letters of ordinary people do not document the level of Greek seen in the New Testament. It is to be identified rather with the professional prose used by technical writers of the time. This was the contemporary Greek of educated people, though distinctly modern compared with the already ancient classical Greek of the Athenian fifth century. There was a vogue starting

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[2] See the applications for scrutiny of credentials published by J. R. Rea, *The Oxyrhynchus Papyri*, Vol.46, London: Egypt Exploration Society, 1978, nos. 3276–3284.

[3] G. A. Deissmann, *Light from the Ancient East*, London: Hodder & Stoughton, 1910; for the history of the debate in the past 25 years see E. A. Judge, 'The social identity of the first Christians: a question of method in religious history',*Journal of Religious History*, Vol. 11, No.2, December, 1980, pp.201–217; and for discussion of some recently published papyrus documents, id., *Rank and Status in the World of the Caesars and St. Paul*, Christchurch: University of Canterbury, 1982, pp.9–20.

[4] P.J. Parsons, *The Oxyrhynchus Papyri*, Vol.47, London: Egypt Exploration Society, 1980, no.3366, text reproduced with discussion by E. A. Judge, 'A state school teacher makes a salary bid', in G. H. R. Horsley ed., *New Documents Illustrating Early Christianity: A Review of the Greek Inscriptions and Papyri Published in 1976*, North Ryde: Ancient History Documentary Research Centre, 1981, pp.72–78.

in Paul's day for trying to reimpose this as the standard of educated expression. By a massive effort of educational archaism it subsequently prevailed in the schools, so that the great Fathers of the Greek church in the fourth century, notably John Chrysostom, wrote in the style of 800 years before. These classicisers were well aware that Paul did not use the Attic diction now essential to the educated man. They had lost sight of the fact that Paul was writing in the form of the language current amongst educated people in his day.[5]

Nor need we attempt to say that as a Jew Paul would not have been at home with Greek.[6] Judaism, like Hellenism, passed into an archaising phase in later antiquity, so that to read the Talmud one might think there had been little cultural contact between the two. But the very existence of the New Testament, as of Philo and Josephus, shows how closely interlocked the two cultures were. Modern studies have shown that one must allow for a diversity of cultural arrangements in the Judaism of the first century.[7] Paul would have had the opportunity of a Greek education even in Gamaliel's school at p. 169 jerusalem. The Talmud means by 'Greek wisdom' specifically the formal education that was necessary to cosmopolitan life.[8] Even Bar Kokhba, the last great Jewish nationalist in the second century, found it easier to write his letters in Greek, as recent discoveries have shown.[9]

The terminology of education arises occasionally in the New Testament letters. But it is used for the discussion of other matters. Neither *paideia* (the general word for the education of children) nor *gymnasia* (the word for training), nor the cognate forms, is used with reference to the central intellectual content of education (though an instance of this occurs in Acts 7:22). In Heb. 12:5–7 *paideia* is used of the paternal discipline which shows that God is treating us as sons. The word is in effect taken back to its root meaning, disregarding the educational sense it would normally carry in Greek. This is so even when it is applied to the actual upbringing of children as in Eph. 6:4. Similarly in 1 Tim. 4:8 *gymnasia* is explicitly identified as physical training (which is what the word literally meant), while in 2 Pet. 2:14 it is taken up pejoratively as a figure of calculated and practised acquisitiveness. A cynic might say that it was not the last time that education has fallen out between the punishment and the sport.

On the other hand what the New Testament churches were doing could in some respects very readily have been described in educational terms. There is a considerable amount of teaching going on and great emphasis is placed on growth in understanding. But when analogies are sought for this, as in 2 Tim. 2:2–6, they are not drawn from

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[5] L. Rydbeck, *Fachprosa, vermeintliche Volkssprache und Neues Testament*, Uppsala: Universitetsbiblioteket, 1967; E. A. Judge, 'St. Paul and classical society', *Jahrubuch fur Antike und Christentum*, Vol.15, 1972, pp.19–36; id., 'Paul's boasting in relation to contemporary professional practice', *Australian Biblical Review*, Vol.16, 1968, pp.37–50.

[6] E. A. Judge, 'The conflict of educational aims in New Testament thought', *Journal of Christian Education*, Vol.9, No.1, June, 1966, pp.32–45.

[7] M. Hengel, *Judaism and Hellenism*, Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1974; id., *Jews, Greeks and Barbarians*, Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1980; S. Freyne, *Galilee from Alexander the Great to Hadrian*, Notre Dame: University Press, 1980.

[8] R. J. Z. Werblowsky, 'Greek wisdom and proficiency in Greek', in *Paganisme, Judaisme, Christianisme: Influences et Affrontements dans le Monde Antique (Melanges offerts a Marcel Simon*), Paris: Boccard, 1978, pp.55–60.

[9] He excuses himself from using Hebrew because he 'could not make the effort', B. Lifshitz, 'Papyrus grecs du desert de Juda', *Aegyptus*, Vol.40, 1962, P.241.

education. Not only then do the letters not deal with the educational system as a problem for believers, but they fail to recognize what was going on in the churches as a kind of schooling. The whole matter seems to be of no concern to them.

Nevertheless, the basic significance of education as a cultural boundary-marker is clearly registered by Paul. When he says in Rom. 1:14 'I am under obligation both to Greeks and to barbarians,' he refers to the classic distinction made by Greeks between those who shared their *paideia* and those who could not speak Greek at all. Similarly, when he speaks in the same sentence of 'the wise' and 'the foolish', he refers to the distinction within Greek culture between those who were highly educated and those who were not. The word p. 170 *anoetos* means 'mindless'. Julian was to use it at the end of his rescript on Christian teachers for the children of Christian parents, who need to be cured by a proper Hellenic education.

Yet Paul does not grapple with these problems. He simply rides over them, and supersedes the issue of educational development by taking his followers on to the infancy of a new life in Christ.[10] It is not a matter of reconstructing the existing system, but of starting a new way of life as an adult. In what may well be his earliest letter, we find Paul dwelling on the theme of the nurse who suckles the child she has not borne.[11] He is very interested in the beginnings of the new life, but otherwise his mind jumps to adulthood. Childhood is something to be left behind.[12] Those who are still there[13] are restricted in their response to others. Similarly in Hebrews, it is seen as a defect to be still learning the ABC[14] when one should oneself be a teacher of others. The reference to the 'first principles' picks up a term from elementary education, but the term 'teacher' does not come from the Greek schools so much as from Jewish tradition—a teacher of the law or the gospel as the case may be. The object of the teachi ng is moral discrimination.[15] Paul does however twice pick up a distinctively Greek technical term of schooling and apply it to the experience of the believer. In Gal. 3:24 the *paidagogos* supplies a metaphor for the law in relation to Christ. The *paidagogos* was the servant who walked the child to school, his 'custodian'. He is not the teacher. Similarly in 1 Cor. 4:15, Paul uses the same metaphor to distinguish his own paternal relationship to his converts in Christ from that of the countless others who were only custodians. The consistently deprecatory use of educational terms is probably not a coincidence. For although Paul shows no sign of finding primary or secondary ed ucation a source of problems, there are very clear indications that he had thrown himself into a total confrontation with those who espoused the reigning values of higher education.

It is tantalisingly unclear whether Paul had had a full-scale rhetorical education at tertiary level. To a modern observer he seems a great controversialist. His letters are overwhelming in their argumentative drive. They turn the mind with insistent logic or appealing metaphor, and compel assent with pleas or reproaches. Yet we know from the fourth-century Fathers that he did not conform at all to the complex p. 171 rules of classical rhetoric. Moreover, he poured scorn on the rhetoric of his rivals, who one may

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[10] 1 Cor. 3:1.

[11] 1 Thess. 2:7–11.

[12] 1 Cor. 13:11.

[13] 2 Cor. 6:13.

[14] Heb. 5:12; 6:1.

[15] Heb. 5:14.

assume followed the standard pattern. It is my belief that he deliberately refrained from the formal techniques of persuasion because he rejected the moral position one must adopt to employ them, and that he was driven into a confrontation with those in the churches who did use them by the fact tht his own followers were disturbed by his irregularity. They would have liked him to have done it properly too.[16]

For Paul it was not simply a question of style. He rejects also the substance of academic debate. Rational calculation in the Greek tradition is vitiated by idolatry.[17] The fundamental error of the Greeks over the nature of God makes their reasoning futile. The same terminology is used to condemn disputatiousness within the church at the end of the letter.[18] By 'disputes over opinions' he refers to legalistic arguments in the Jewish tradition. The Pastoral epistles criticise such a spirit of argumentation that had by then established itself in church life.[19] In 1 Cor. 1:20 Paul challenges the three main types of tertiary scholar of his world: the rationalistic philosopher ('the wise'), the Jewish legal expert ('the scribe') and the rhetorician ('the debater').

Whereas in other respects (for example in the field of personal relations and the ministries in church) Paul is very ready to forge his own vocabulary, here he by no means concedes their terms to his opponents. Wisdom (*sophia*), reason (*logos*) and knowledge (*gnosis*) are all ideals central to his own position. He stigmarises what is invalid in the case of others by qualifying the terms with phrases such as 'of the world' or 'according to the flesh'. The error lies in exalting these ideals into self-sufficient powers. Paul disclaims any 'excessive' reliance upon speech or wisdom,[20] and pin-poi nts 'persuasiveness'[21] as the particular excess he wishes to avoid. This is because his test of truth is that it comes from God and is demonstrated in positive human relations. The way to the treasures of wisdom and knowledge concealed in Christ is through the hearts that are 'knit together' in love.[22] Against that we find set two terms unique in the Pauline vocabulary: 'persuasiveness of speech' (2:4), and 'philosophy' (2:8) which is coupled with p. 172 'empty deceit'. Both the great divisions of Greek higher education are explicitly discounted at this point.

In asserting a new source and method of knowing about the ultimate realities of the world, and about how one should live in it, Paul is occupying the territory that belonged to higher education. He is promoting a new kind of community education for adults. This involved him in a confrontation with his own churches because they wanted him to adopt the status in life that was appropriate to a tertiary teacher.

When Paul says,[23] 'we are not, like so many, peddlers of God's word', he is criticising his rivals at Corinth for accepting professional status. They took payment for their teaching. They also had their professional credentials verified (3:1). It turns out that the Corinthians actually objected to not being able to pay Paul for his services (11:7) but that he was determined not to give in on this point, though he readily accepted support from

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[16] For an analysis of the epistle to the Galatians in rhetorical terms see the *Hermeneia* commentary by H. D. Betz, Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1979.

[17] Rom. 1:21.

[18] Rom. 14:1.

[19] 1 Tim. 1:4; 6:3, 4; 6:20.

[20] 1 Cor. 2:1.

[21] 1 Cor. 2:4.

[22] 22. Col. 2:2.

[23] 2 Cor. 2:17.

other churches (11:9). It is a matter of status (12:14). They should depend upon him as their parent, and not the other way around. In other words, in their case (presumably because of the construction they placed upon it in distinction from the attitude adopted in other churches) he will not put himself under an obligation to them. Gifts and benefactions in the ancient world were a recognized way of establishing social patronage. One's dependents might be classified as friends, but it was a friendship that was created from above and placed the privileged recipient under commitments. To refuse such a benefaction, on the other hand, constituted a breach of friendship, and one could slip into the exhausting rituals of formal enmity. The tense and contentious atmosphere of the second letter to the Corinthians may well imply that Paul is being drawn into a confrontation of this type.[24]

That correct professional behaviour as a teacher is at stake is shown by another trail of complaints that Paul plays back to the Corinthians. His critics complain that 'his letters are weighty and strong, but his bodily presence is weak and his speech of no account'.[25] Notice the coupling of physical bearing with quality of speech. Beauty and truth p. 173 support each other in the Greek ideal, and Paul's authority is discounted because he is physically unimpressive. The fact that he could write powerful letters, which they concede, ought to mean that he had the capacity to deliver himself of persuasive speech as well. One must assume that he deliberately chose to add to the handicap of a poor physique the default of not adopting the arts of rhetoric. He will not use the techniques expected of a man in his position. This is confirmed by another term he quotes from his critics. He is 'unskilled in speaking'.[26] The word *idiotes* means 'unprofessional'. It was to live across the centuries to haunt Paul's memory. In the trial of Phileas, bishop of Thmuis, under Diocletian, the governor, Culcianus, attempting to break the bishop's resistance, challenges him with the non-professionalism of Paul's style, using this very term.[27] The fact that Paul concedes this point to the 'superlative apostles'[28] proves that his rivals were performing in the church at Corinth as professional rhetoricians or sophists, and presumably being paid for it into the bargain.

The problem with Paul was that he would not compete. He refuses to class or compare himself with some of those who commend themselves.[29] We know what is referred to here from a papyrus letter written by a university student in Alexandria to his father at home in Oxyrhynchus.[30] Neilus complains of the difficulty he has had in finding decent teachers,

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[24] See the unpublished Ph.D. thesis of Macquarie University by P. Marshall, 'Enmity and other Social Conventions in the Relations between Paul and the Corinthians'; S.C. Mott, 'The power of giving and receiving: reciprocity in Hellenistic benevolence', in G. F. Hawthorne ed., *Current Issues in Biblical and Patristic Interpretation: Studies in Honor of Merrill C. Tenney*, Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1975, pp.60–72; and F. W. Danker, *Benefactor: Epigraphic Study of a Graeco-Roman and New Testament Semantic Field*, St. Louis: Clayton 1982.

[25] 2 Cor. 10:9, 10.

[26] 2 Cor. 11:6.

[27] H. Musurillo, *The Acts of the Christian Martyrs*, Oxford: University Press, 1972, no.27, col.8 (based on the Bodmer papyrus); for the new Chester Beatty papyrus being edited by A. Pieterstoa, see G. H. R. Horsley, *New Documents Illustrating Early Christianity: A Review of the Greek Inscriptions and Papyri published in 1977*, North Ryde: Ancient History Documentary Research Centre, 1982, no.106.

[28] 2 Cor. 11:5.

[29] 2 Cor. 10:12.

[30] C. H. Roberts, *The Oxyrhynchus Papyri*, Vol.18, London: Egypt Exploration Society, 1941, no.2190.

since the cleverer one he had hoped to use had died. There was a shortage of sophists, and he had had to settle for Didymus. 'What makes me despair is that this fellow who used to be a mere provincial teacher sees fit to compete with the rest.' Paul suffered a double handicap: he would not do it properly anyway, and thus could not attempt to compete with the rest. The term for the competition in the student's letter is Paul's term *synkrisis*, 'comparison'.[31]

Self-recommendation is the point at which Paul draws the line. It may seem a conventional triviality to us living in a culture which has fully absorbed the Pauline principle. But the long paroxysm into which p. 174 Paul enters over the matter reveals how fundamental and agonising a break he was making with what was expected in his day. GraecoRoman culture set a high value on self-esteem. Not to praise oneself was to neglect one's own virtues. But Paul regards boasting as folly. Yet his argument with his competitors draws him inexorably into it ('you forced me to it'[32]) and he suddenly launches himself into a formal and long-sustained recital of his credentials.[33] It recognisably conforms to the schematic conventions of self-display as we know them from other sources. But Paul, in an appalling parody, inverts the contents of his self-eulogy, in order to boast of his weaknesses. Again we face the difficulty that this too has become a convention in our culture. But for Paul's day it is an unprecedented atrocity, which must have profoundly shocked his listeners. Why did he do it? Because he had learned from the case of Christ the paradox that weakness and humiliation put one in the position where God's power prevails.[34]

This is a revolutionary point in our cultural tradition. The valuesystem upon which Greek education had been built up is deliberately overthrown. Paul was not apparently concerned with the threat which classical literary studies represented to children at primary and secondary levels. But he reacted powerfully against the perversion of human relations which he saw inculcated by the ideals of higher education. It was a perversion because it enshrined the beautiful and the strong in a position of social power. In his own case he deliberately tore down the structure of privilege with which his followers wished to surround him. In its place he set out a fundamentally new pattern of human relations in which each is endowed by God with gifts to contribute to the upbuilding of the others.

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FAITH AND CHURCH

[31] See a study of this matter by C. B. Forbes in a forthcoming number of *New Testament Studies*.

[32] 2 Cor. 12:11.

[33] 2 Cor. 11:22–33.

[34] 2 Cor. 12:9–10.