

# **THE WAY TO THE HEART OF THE PUPIL**

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The way to the heart of the pupil by Hermann Weimer

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**HERMANN WEIMER**

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PUPIL



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THE  
WAY TO THE HEART  
OF THE PUPIL

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## Preface for American Readers

**T**HIS book found in the land of its origin, and also, far beyond the limits of the German language, an enthusiastic reception. The public has given it almost undivided applause. Only here and there my statements have been doubted. As these doubts were expressed to me in private, I feel it my duty not to keep silent regarding them, in order that my American reader may know what they are. This also gives me an opportunity to correct some wrong conceptions of my meaning.

The following objections to my conclusions have been made:

I. One critic contends that with love alone we could not educate the young. Fear is an important means of education. "But," my critic says, "you oppose its use as such." If the critic had read my book attentively, my statements on pages 34 and 89 would have shown him his error. Indeed, I have found through experience at conferences, that some colleagues regard me as the apostle of soft-heartedness. They confuse the idea of living warmth of heart with

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weak-willed kind-heartedness, although I have sought, on pages 45 and 49, to correct the mistake. They think of energy only in combination with a certain amount of heartlessness. Yet a determined will manifests itself only in tenacity of purpose, and this virtue a feeling man may have, as well as the hard-hearted.

The first and greatest preacher of charity was certainly not a man of wax. He carried on a war to the knife with his enemies, the pharisees and scribes. In Pestalozzi do we always see only his good heart? Did he not stick to his life work with unexampled tenacity, until his last breath?

2. This brings me to another objection. Some one has said: "We cannot all be Pestalozzis. You demand too much. You erect an ideal which nobody can realize." In answer, I ask: "Is there any ideal that can be realized?" Aims, yes, but ideals, no. In ideals we find models of perfection which may exist in our minds, but not in the actual world. Should we reach them, they would no longer be ideals. Therefore should we abandon our ideals? Not if we are to remain human beings worthy of the name. There is no spiritual action which is not, in final analysis, dependent upon ideals.

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Science strives, as we know, fundamentally for the knowledge of absolute truth. Every adept of science knows that this is unattainable. If science should, on this account, renounce its endeavors, it would be compelled to abandon all striving after truth, and that would mean its speedy collapse.

In what does the value of ideals consist, if they are unattainable? Chiefly in this, that they give us the direction in which our thinking, wishing and acting move. Without a certain guidance, we do not walk, but reel through life, just as chance pushes and drives us. We become the plaything of very different influences. Even ideals cannot guard us against mistakes and faults. No man is so clear-headed and strong of will as not to be misled from the appointed road. But, as the compass-needle is attracted to the right or left by iron, and yet always turns back to its old direction, so he to whom the ideal is not a vain idea, but the helm of his life, will always find, often after periods of uncertain wandering, the right path. This path leads him forward and upwards. He does not irresolutely accept things as they are, but moulds them as he wishes them to be. Clinging to his ideal, the teacher finds therein, during